



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

A Meeting of the **COUNCIL** will be held in the Council Chamber - Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham RG40 1BN on **THURSDAY 19 SEPTEMBER 2019 AT 7.30 PM**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Susan Parsonage', written in a cursive style.

Susan Parsonage
Chief Executive
Published on 11 September 2019

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

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.



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.
29.		APOLOGIES To receive any apologies for absence	
30.		MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 July 2019	17 - 50
31.		DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST To receive any declarations of interest	
32.		MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS To receive any announcements by the Mayor	
33.		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 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 www.wokingham.gov.uk/publicquestions	
33.1	Wescott	Daniel Hinton has asked the Executive Member for Business and Economic Development the following question: Question What action is WBC taking to safeguard our local economy following the shameful retaliation of a local landowner who has closed the Denmark Street car park and cut off a local amenity simply because planning consent wasn't granted for the overly expensive flats on the site?	
33.2	Bulmershe and Whitegates	Teresa Caswell has asked the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure the following question:	

Question

What is being done to re-open the external toilets at the Wokingham Waterside Centre? These toilets are important facilities for general park users and attendees of Reading parkrun.

33.3 None Specific

Jim Swann has asked the Executive Member for Climate Emergency the following question:

Question

Following the declaration of a climate emergency in Wokingham, will the Council please confirm when they will implement a campaign to stop parked cars from idling unnecessarily, which causes local hotspot air pollution and increased emission?

33.4 Wescott

Anthony Walker has asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Question

This question concerns road safety issues for children attending Floreat Montague Park School. Prior to August 2018, parents were told that a work plan had been agreed between Wokingham Borough Council and the builder, David Wilson Homes to install zebra, toucan or pelican crossings in place for September 2018 to enable children to cross William Heelas Way on the way to and from school. None of these crossings have been installed and despite numerous requests to both WBC and the builder, no satisfactory responses have been given.

We understand that the road is un-adopted, which appears to have put us in a 'It's not my responsibility zone', however this is in essence a public road being used by young school children to cross from the houses to their school and their safety must be paramount. Therefore could WBC confirm what action is being taken and give a definitive timescale for a resolution?

33.5 Wescott

John Hutt has asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Question

Safe access paths to Floreat Montague Park School, located by the island crossing adjacent to Baker Crescent, have been arbitrarily closed by the builder, David Wilson Homes for the entire school year 2018/2019 and remain closed to date. This necessitates children taking a diversion involving the crossing of two additional roads. What actions and

when can WBC ensure that the developer opens the footpaths again within a reasonable date from the, now, new school term, bearing in mind the weather and lighting conditions are going to be changing soon and thus increase the associated risk to our children?

33.6 Bulmershe and Whitegates

John Bailey has asked the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure the following question:

Question

For some time the exterior public toilets at the Waterside Centre at Thames Valley Park have not been open, causing considerable inconvenience for people visiting this popular Thameside recreational area. Please could you advise me of the plans for the cleaning, maintenance and ongoing improvement of this important facility?

33.7 Wescott

Peter Dennis has asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Question

Montague Park is a relatively new development within Wokingham however it appears that several important infrastructure things have been neglected. For example the promised community centre is due to be handed over as an empty shell, no finish and fitting. This is not useful for anyone, the road crossing are incomplete and in poor repair (lines on road are worn) and one of which is dangerous (I nearly flattened a jogger one weekend). What is the Council doing to rectify this situation?

34.

PETITIONS

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

35. None Specific

PRESENTATION OF THE TENANTS' CHARTER

To receive a video presentation from Steve Bowers, Chairman of the Tenant and Landlord Improvement Panel (TLIP), on the Tenants' Charter which has been developed by the Involved Tenants and has been subject to review and approval by the TLIP.

The presentation is expected to be approximately 10-20 minutes in duration after which there will be an opportunity for Member questions of no more than 10 minutes in duration.

51 - 84

RECOMMENDATION: The Involved Tenants would like to:

- 1) ask the Council to note the aspirations outlined in the Tenants' Charter and continue to work in partnership with them to achieve these;
- 2) recommend that Wokingham Borough Council's progress in terms of addressing this Charter is formally reviewed in two years' time.

36. None Specific **TREASURY MANAGEMENT - OUTTURN REPORT** **85 - 114**

To consider the Treasury Management Outturn Report for 2018-19 as recommended by the Executive.

RECOMMENDATION: The Executive recommends that Council approve:

- 1) the Treasury Management Outturn report for 2018/2019; and
- 2) the actual 2018/2019 prudential indicators within the report.

37. None Specific **CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION** **115 - 120**

To consider proposed changes to the Constitution as recommended by the Constitution Review Working Group.

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

- 1) that Sections 4.4.23 and 4.4.43 [Wokingham Borough Wellbeing Board] be amended as set out in paragraph 1 of the report;
- 2) that Section 5.5.7 Arrangements for the Meeting [Individual Executive Member Decision] be amended as set out in paragraph 2 of the report;
- 3) that additions be made to Section 13.2.1 Application and Scope, as set out in paragraph 3 to the report.

38. **MEMBER QUESTION TIME**
To answer any member questions

A period of 30 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.

38.1 Winnersh

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey has asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Question

Can the Executive Member for Highways guarantee that the works on the Winnersh Relief Road Part 2, including the roundabout for the NWDR (needed for access for residents of Woodward Close), be completed and opened first before other parts of the roads projects so Winnersh and Wokingham residents can see the benefits of the road projects, especially if they are hopefully completed on time and on budget?

38.2 None Specific

Chris Smith has asked the Executive Member for Finance and Housing the following question:

Question

Can the Executive Member provide an update on the annual statement of the accounts?

38.3 None Specific

Michael Firmager has asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Question

Can the Executive Member for Highways provide me with a status update on the Council's plans to ease congestion?

38.4 None Specific

Alison Swaddle has asked the Executive Member for Climate Emergency the following question:

Question

You have stated publicly that you intend to ask residents for their ideas on how Wokingham Borough can reach Carbon Neutrality by 2030, please can you update us on when this consultation will begin and what form it will take?

38.5 None Specific

Graham Howe has asked the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure the following question:

Question

Food waste recycling has been in place for some months now. Can the Executive Member please update me on the progress made thus far?

38.6 None Specific UllaKarin Clark has asked the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement the following question:

Question

Could the Executive Member for Planning please give me the results of the Housing Target Consultation?

38.7 Twyford Pauline Helliar-Symons has asked the Executive Member for Business and Economic Development the following question:

Question

Can you please confirm to Council, in light of the recent acquisition of the Waitrose property asset in Twyford, the performance of the Property Investment Portfolio as a whole?

38.8 None Specific Gary Cowan has asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Question

How many Staff/Members have received Penalty Charge Notices since the scheme was introduced?

38.9 None Specific Charles Margetts has asked the Executive Member for Children's Services the following question:

Question

Could the Lead Member for Children's Services agree to make representations to our local Members of Parliament and Government concerning the need to ensure that our schools are effectively funded?

38.10 None Specific Abdul Loyes has asked the Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Services the following question:

Question

How do we support the providers of care to our vulnerable adults in the Borough?

38.11 None Specific Paul Fishwick has asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Question

I understand that the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan funding only covers the Wokingham Town area. What plans are in place to cover the rest of the Borough?

38.12 None Specific

Andrew Mickleburgh has asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Question

The 4 and X4 bus services provide a frequent and well-used service between Wokingham Town Centre and homes in Earley close to Wokingham Road. However, the absence of direct connections between most of Maiden Erlegh and Lower Earley and Wokingham Town Centre makes it very difficult for residents who depend on public transport when they need to visit the Council Offices to access services, and to use the many other facilities in Wokingham Town Centre.

Is there any planning underway that would address this issue?

38.13 None Specific

Sarah Kerr has asked the Executive Member for Climate Emergency the following question:

Question

Along with yourself and Cllrs Burgess and Croy, I attended Extinction Rebellion's first public meeting in Wokingham at the beginning of the month. You in fact were the guest speaker at the event. We all know the climate crisis we face. Extinction Rebellion exists to ensure we act and we act now. It makes three demands of governments:

- Tell the truth by declaring a climate and ecological emergency
- Act now to halt biodiversity loss and reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2025
- Create and be led by a citizen's assembly on climate and ecological justice.

This Council has already declared a climate emergency and thus taken the first step towards action. Will the Executive Member for Climate Emergency consider taking the next step by giving his full support to Extinction Rebellion's ethos and all of its aims by setting up a local citizen's assembly within the next 3 months to inform local policy on how to tackle this crisis?

38.14 None Specific

Adrian Mather has asked the Executive Member for Climate Emergency the following question:

Question

In order to objectively track progress towards this Councils declared goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2030 and to be able to continuously and accurately monitor total CO2 emissions levels compared to the current base level.

Can the Executive Member confirm the current monitoring mechanisms that are in place now and include in his answer any that may need to be urgently added or upgraded to enable the Council to accurately monitor total CO2 emissions levels?

38.15 Wescott

Maria Gee has asked the Leader of Council the following question:

Question

The closure of the Denmark Street Car Park at the end of the August Bank Holiday came as a surprise to residents. However, there had been rumours circulating in the media about its closure since the middle of July. This car park is used by many visitors and is preferred to multi storey car parks by wheelchair users and other blue badge holders due to its proximity to the town centre and the flat access. Its loss is therefore both the residents and the town's loss. Given the rumours that were circulating about closure, can you please confirm the individual dates when each member of the Executive became aware of this decision?

38.16 Wescott

Rachel Bishop-Firth has asked the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure the following question:

Question

The new estate on Montague Park has been provided with a community centre. This community centre is, unfortunately, a completely empty shell. There are no floors, toilets, or heating – never mind chairs, tables, an area to plug in a kettle or anything else which would make this community centre useable by the community.

A very dedicated church group are looking at how they could turn this empty shell into a functioning community centre. They estimate that the cost of doing so will be around £260,000. They are actively seeking grants, but raising this amount of money is clearly a major challenge for any local voluntary organisation.

If it's possible to raise this kind of money and get the

building fitted out, there is then another problem. There will be substantial running costs.

The empty shell which has been provided is directly underneath flats. This means that it could be suitable for running quiet daytime events, for example a prayer group, parent and toddler group, or a coffee morning for the elderly. These groups are unlikely to raise the level of funds which would be needed to keep the centre going. The community centre would not be suitable for parties or most other evening events, which limits the amount of income that it can generate.

What does the Council now plan to do with this facility, in order to provide Montague Park residents with a community centre?

38.17 None Specific

Clive Jones has asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

Question

Can the Leader of the Council let us know what has happened with the responses to the Council's recent Housing Consultation whilst confirming what the next steps in the consultation process will be?

38.18 Emmbrook

Imogen Shepherd-DuBey has asked the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement the following question:

Question

We are very glad to see that the Berkshire Concrete business that was operating from Toutley Depot, has finally moved out. This was a sub-let tenant that moved in without the appropriate planning permission and it then took WBC a year and a half of considerable effort to evict them. Please can you advise what measures Wokingham Borough Council is going to put into place to ensure that this does not happen on Wokingham Borough Council property again?

38.19 Wescott

Andy Croy has asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

Question

Could the Leader give me the dates of Executive or Corporate Leadership Team meetings at which the close of the private car park in Denmark Street has been on the agenda?

38.20 None Specific Caroline Smith has asked the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure the following question:

Question

Elevate is a service to help young adults into work, further education, training, work experience or just work - it has been surpassing all expectations in delivering on its main aim, helping 321 young adults over the last 3 years, which is great for the young adults of Wokingham.

I understand it has received some funding from the EU. Please can the Councillor concerned confirm if WBC will be keeping this very valuable service operating in the future regardless of EU funding?

39. 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

40. 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

41. 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.

42. 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

42.1 None Specific

Motion 420 submitted by Paul Fishwick

National statistics indicate that emissions from transport continue to grow - increasing by four percent overall since 1990, including by six percent since 2013.

Road transport is the primary source of this increase. Whereas vehicles have become more fuel efficient this has been offset by increased travel demand.

These emissions are a key pollutant to the air that we breathe, causing major environmental and health issues. The negative impacts on the environment include the direct effects of pollutants on vegetation, and indirect effects on the acid and nutrients status of soils and ground and surface water.

In terms of health, in 2016 a landmark report published by the Royal College of Physicians and the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health suggested that '...every year in the UK, outdoor pollution is linked to around 40,000 deaths' ... and that '...air pollution can have a damaging effect from when a baby is in the womb and continue throughout life to older age, playing a role in many chronic conditions such as cancer, asthma, heart diseases and neurological changes linked to dementia'.

This report concluded that "Real change will only occur when everyone accepts this responsibility and makes a concerted effort."

As the Highway Authority, Wokingham Borough Council has a specific duty to bring forward measures to improve air quality.

Wokingham Borough Council has three declared Air Quality Management Areas but tackling the overall poor air quality across our Borough is the key objective.

There are significant opportunities for sustainable transport options to simultaneously support clean economic growth, increase physical activity, and reduce emissions contributing to local air pollution.

This Council commits to introduce a Low Emissions Transport Strategy that will sit under the Local

Transport Plan and will include clearly stated objectives, SMART targets, strategies and tactics.

42.2 None Specific

Motion 421 submitted by Ian Pittock

This Council does not support the expansion of Heathrow Airport.

42.3 None Specific

Motion 422 submitted by Gregor Murray

Full Council on 18th July voted unanimously to declare a Climate Emergency across Wokingham Borough and to commit itself to being carbon neutral by 2030.

In order to achieve this crucial aim, and to live up to our environmental responsibilities it is essential we take immediate steps to reduce the amount of carbon we either directly or indirectly use each year.

It is clear that no responsible council can take action on climate change without seeking to drastically reduce the amount of single use plastics consumed by the council in it's every day operations.

We acknowledge that single use plastics can be preferential in the care and wellbeing of disabled and other vulnerable residents. However, wherever possible and practical, we should seek to remove all non-essential single use plastics from Council operations.

In face of the overwhelming evidence about the impact that single use plastics have on the environment including contributing to carbon emissions in its manufacture, Wokingham Borough Council commits to leading our residents by example by ensuring that all non-essential single use plastics are eliminated from use within the Council Shute End building, and all Council controlled environments, as soon as possible.

This would be achieved by:

- Phasing out the purchase of single-use plastic products through services commissioned by the council and as soon as practicable
- Bringing regular reports to future Climate Emergency committee meetings, describing the Council's plans to eliminate single-use plastic from the organisation, including a timetable for doing so.
- Working with Council staff, Wokingham Borough's businesses, community groups and

residents to share advice, ideas and best practice on using sustainable alternatives

- Working with local schools to support the aspiration of Wokingham Borough's young people to eliminate plastic waste from our environment
- Seeking to work with neighbouring councils to tackle single use plastic used across the wider Berkshire area.

CONTACT OFFICER

Anne Hunter
Tel
Email
Postal Address

Democratic and Electoral Services Lead Specialist
0118 974 6051
anne.hunter@wokingham.gov.uk
Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham, RG40 1BN

This page is intentionally left blank

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

HELD ON 18 JULY 2019 FROM 7.30 PM TO 11.05 PM

Members Present

Councillors: Bill Soane (Mayor), Malcolm Richards (Deputy Mayor), Keith Baker, Parry Batth, Rachel Bishop-Firth, Laura Blumenthal, Chris Bowring, Shirley Boyt, Rachel Burgess, Jenny Cheng, UllaKarin Clark, Stephen Conway, Gary Cowan, Andy Croy, Richard Dolinski, Carl Doran, Lindsay Ferris, Michael Firmager, Paul Fishwick, Maria Gee, Guy Grandison, Charlotte Haitham Taylor, John Halsall, David Hare, Emma Hobbs, Clive Jones, Pauline Jorgensen, John Kaiser, Sarah Kerr, Abdul Loyes, Angus Ross, Charles Margetts, Adrian Mather, Ken Miall, Andrew Mickleburgh, Stuart Munro, Gregor Murray, Barrie Patman, Ian Pittock, Daniel Sargeant, Imogen Shepherd-DuBey, Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey, Caroline Smith, Chris Smith, Wayne Smith, Alison Swaddle and Simon Weeks

16. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors Prue Bray, Jim Frewin, Pauline Helliar Symons, Graham Howe, Dianne King, Tahir Maher and Oliver Whittle.

17. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 22nd May 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

19. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor presented awards to recipients of the Mayor's Roll of Honour.

The first recipient was Earley Air Cadet Squadron. The staff team were a group of ten volunteers who helped to develop young people between the ages of 12 to 20, teaching them skills such as team work, first aid, leadership and cooking. The award was collected by Pilot Officer Sacha Walton.

The second award was awarded to Emma Bardon, Sharon Bailey and Claire Revie from Norreys Church, who had helped to keep activities including the community café and after school club running at a time of staff shortages.

The Mayor informed Council of the third recipient of a Mayor's Award, Derek Davis from the Earley Environmental Group, who was awarded an award in his absence. Derek Davis had helped to restore the noticeboards which detailed the history of Earley, working without charge for his time or materials.

20. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

20.1 Alex Davies had asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question. In his absence a written answer was provided:

Question

It is my understanding that the property developer Taylor Wimpey gave, as part of

Sandford Farm development, £30,000 towards the repair of the dilapidated footbridge crossing the River Loddon near the development. This access route would open up walking routes to Twyford, Hurst, Dinton Pastures etc. Please can you tell me when this bridge will be overhauled and opened?

Answer

The Council is considering this issue as part of the Loddon Long Distance Footpath Project which aims to link the Blackwater Valley Footpath to the Thames Trail. We are about to start the design stage of the first phase of this project which currently envisages linking the Sandford Farm (Taylor Wimpey) site to the Showcase Cinema via Dinton Pastures Country Park. Once we have completed the detailed design for this section we will be able to programme the construction works and provide proposed date for opening this important new link to the public. In the meantime you may not be aware that the Council has very recently completed the first two phases of the Bader Way Cycleway which links the Sandford Farm (Taylor Wimpey) site to Dinton Pastures via Mohawk Way.

20.2 John Walker asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question which was asked by Joe Jones in his absence:

Question

Following the cancellation of the East Reading Mass Rapid Transit scheme, the Thames Valley Park "Park and Ride" site would seem to be unnecessary. But there are still construction activities on the site. Would Wokingham Borough Council pause the construction activity on the site in order to consider the use of a trial park and ride service making use of one of the currently unused office car parks on the TVP site; this would make it possible to assess the likely level of take up and whether the Business Case still holds good in the light of the operational costs that were not originally included?

Answer

Thames Valley Park, park and ride was awarded funding by the Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership (TVBLEP) based on a business case which did not consider the East Reading MRT project; which I must also say as a local Member I objected to at the time of the project. Whilst this project would have added to the benefits of the park and ride, there are sufficient benefits without it to progress the scheme in the knowledge that it will provide value for money. The main objective of the scheme is to reduce congestion on the A4 corridor. The park and ride will provide car parking spaces and an alternative travel choice for residents around Wokingham Borough to access Reading town. The site will be served using the existing shuttle buses used by employees working at the Thames Valley Park utilising the spare space that they have on the way back to the station after they have dropped people off; so that makes a good sensible use of the bus and means that they are going with people in it in both directions. Hopefully, it will be greener.

With regard to using private land, it is not within our gift unfortunately as to what land we use. The site we are currently constructing is one that we own. In addition, the option of trialling the use of existing Business Park car park capacity was investigated at the time and discounted in the Option Appraisal in 2017. Any trial ahead of completing the final park and ride project would therefore be a costly duplication even if it were possible to obtain the currently vacant site.

Work on the site is well progressed and we expect the completion in Autumn, and we really do hope that it will improve the amount of people using buses, going backwards and forwards to Reading.

20.3 John Mullaney asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Question

In the Full Business Case for the Park and Ride at Broken Brow which was submitted to the Berkshire Local Transport Board (BLTB), there were no operational costs included. This was brought to the attention of the BLTB in a report considered at the meeting of the BLTB at which the business case was approved. The answer to the reason why there were no operational costs was that they would fall to the operator.

Can it be clarified: Will Wokingham Borough Council have operational responsibilities for the site and what is the operational budget that has been projected for the site and what is the envisaged scope that this budget will cover?

Answer

Yes, Wokingham Borough will be operating the car park which means managing day to day operations and maintaining it in its entirety including all the lighting, drainage and ticketing systems. Income from the parking will be used to pay for that as well as contributing to the bus service. It is currently projected that, even with a relatively low usage, the car park will cover its own costs and with a high usage it would actually generate income for the Council.

Supplementary Question:

Why not save on the sighted operational costs and reassess the site which is currently only at the drainage installation phase? There is a growing cross party concern that this development will become another insufficiently scrutinised, and consequentially derelict, park and ride facility in the wrong location. Why not consider any number of alternative uses more appropriate to a riverside location than a derelict car park? SOAR, Save Our Ancient Riverside, have received many suggestions from concerned Wokingham and Reading residents that we would be happy to share. Will this Council demonstrate to their residents that they are a Council on board with the climate emergency, and that they are committed to protecting the environment? Will they agree to meet with SOAR to consider alternative uses and a reappraisal of this development before it is too late, and this green space is squandered and lost forever.

Supplementary Answer:

I think I answered part of that in the previous answer, in that the work is well underway, and that we do not have the access to the other land that might be appropriate. However, I am always willing to meet SOAR. I went to your public meeting when you were objecting to the MRT, and I would certainly be happy to speak to you about ideas that you have got.

20.4 Alexandra Smith asked the Executive Member for Children's Services the following question which was asked on her behalf in her absence:

Question

In the draft SEND strategy the Council states that it will identify need as early as possible. We have parents here tonight who have been waiting longer than the statutory 20 weeks for a draft plan, and the OFSTED report states that staff shortages are impeding the timely delivery of plans. What steps have the Council identified to address this unacceptable situation?

Answer

The answer is that we have difficulties recruiting experienced SEN case managers. It is not a Wokingham problem, it is a nationwide problem. So how are we addressing it? Extra funding has been made available to the Council for recruitment. We are in touch with a recruitment agency who specialises in recruiting such experienced staff and we have had some success. We are hopeful that it will not be long before we will be able to meet the deadline of 20 weeks.

20.5 Tom Mayer has asked the Executive Member for Children's Services the following question:

This question was withdrawn prior to the meeting.

20.6 Annabel Yoxall asked the Executive Member for Children's Services the following question:**Question**

All children with special needs require intervention as early as possible in order to achieve the best possible outcome. In the case of ASD, families are waiting in excess of twelve to eighteen months and beyond just to receive an initial assessment. This has a huge negative impact on children's ability to learn and their self-confidence as they fall further behind peers. What is the Council doing in order to reduce this waiting time?

Answer

The answer is the same as I have already given to Alexandra Smith's question.

Supplementary Question:

The Member of Coronation, Councillor Keith Baker, recently stated on a Wokingham residents' Facebook group, in response to a question on the housing consultation, that, and I quote "£80,000 is actually a drop in the ocean for both the overall expenditure of the Council and the cost of action to address the SEND issues." Therefore, given that £80,000 is considered a 'drop in the ocean', can the Council fund measures to immediately begin to reduce the backlog in assessments, both for ASD cases and for SEND applications?

Supplementary Answer:

I am afraid that is not a follow up to your question. That is a new question and it cannot be answered.

20.7 Ruth Rae asked the Executive Member for Children's Services the following question:**Question**

Some parents are having to seek legal aid in order to challenge decisions made by the Council on EHCP requests. This is both costly and stressful for parents. National figures show that the vast majority of appeals are decided against councils. Are the Council using the rejection of SEND provision as a cost-cutting measure?

Answer

The answer is no, I can assure that that is not the case. We are committed to meeting our legal duties and obligations in accordance with the Children's Act 2014. What has happened in the last year is an increase, about 15%, in the need for Education, Health and Care Plans, and in addition to what I have already said tonight, this has caused a problem,

which we are working very hard to solve.

Supplementary Question:

A Freedom of Information request is in place to gather information from Wokingham Borough Council on the number of appeals and the number lost, as well as the amount spent. However, the aggregate figure shows that in 2016/17 Councils nationally spent £28.2million on such tribunals and lost in 89% of cases. Does the Council accept that the rejection of EHCP's that are subsequently overturned on an appeal, are a waste of taxpayers' money, causing unnecessary stress on families and children and prevent children from achieving the best possible outcome?

Supplementary Answer:

As I have already stated, we are doing our very best to provide these plans for the children as quickly as possible. We are aware that we are so far not being able to fulfil the commitments of 20 weeks. We are working on it. We do understand how difficult it is and how stressful it is for parents and for children. You have to believe me when I am saying that we are doing out utmost to sort out this very unfortunate situation.

20.8 Marcus McDowell asked the Executive Member for Children's Services the following question:

Question

According to the OFSTED report, "several parents described an inequitable system where some access private assessments because of lengthy delays, while others are not able to do this". How does the Council justify discriminating against children from less wealthy backgrounds in this manner?

Answer

We do not and I repeat, do not, discriminate against anyone. A private assessment does not give anyone more or quicker access to an assessment. The assessment is done by staff at Wokingham Borough Council. Everyone is being treated the same.

Supplementary Question:

I would like to say that that is not true. I know from speaking to parents that they have paid to get assessments to fill in the child psychologist report and to get Occupational Therapists' reports, which could be provided by Council funding? I would like you to please look at this and say how you will be able to help people from less wealthy families access the same care and support as those from wealthy families.

Supplementary Answer:

I am not privy to that information you have just given. Obviously it will have to be looked at.

20.9 Juliet Sheratt asked the Executive Member for Children's Services the following question which was answered by the Executive Member for Finance and Housing:

Question

On the Wokingham Facebook Group, UllaKarin Clark, the Conservative Member for Emmbrook, commented that WBC are trying to find a suitable location to build an additional school for the provision of special needs education. In this comment, she mentioned that funding is an issue. How does the Council prioritise funding for children

and young adults with special needs and disabilities when it is able to find £80k to fund a consultation on housing in the Borough?

Answer

These are not competing demands. The Council needs to ensure that there is adequate provision available for children that have additional needs. Funding is prioritised so that the Authority meets its statutory duties and obligations. Where there are needs the Council will do all it can to ensure that needs are met. Children are an ongoing priority for this Council and we will do all we can to ensure that all children grow up happy and healthy.

The housing numbers are a major concern of many residents in the Borough and by making sure that we have housing numbers which are defensible at appeal, we save the Council hundreds of thousands of pounds, and protect the Borough from opportunistic developers using complexities which exist in the planning system around housing numbers. Showing we have the support of our residents in this quest to ensure we have the right housing numbers is important as we negotiate with Government to ensure we get numbers that are sustainable and meet the Borough's needs.

Supplementary Question:

Going back to the earlier quote from the Member for Coronation regarding the 'splash in the ocean', why does the Council consider that there is plenty of money for both the housing consultation and addressing the SEND crisis, and yet cannot find the money to fund a desperately needed facility for the provision of SEND education?

Supplementary Answer:

I will answer your question with a question. Do you think there is anybody in this room that would rather spend on potholes than disadvantaged children, or anything else for that matter? I can assure you we would not. The truth is we have to do everything. We do not have a choice. At the end of the day we have a very limited budget, and as everyone has heard, we are one of the lowest funded authorities in the country, but no, children do take priority.

UllaKarin Clark, Executive Member for Children's Services provided the following answer: I do not know if you aware but we are extending Addington with 50 places and we are looking at providing a site so we can build another Addington. We are not ignoring you or your children and there will be money provided for a new school once we have allocated a site. We will get help from the Department of Education.

21. PETITIONS

The following Members presented a petition in relation to the matter indicated.

The Mayor's decision as to the action to be taken is set out against each petition.

Councillor Imogen Shepherd- Dubey	Imogen Shepherd-Dubey presented a petition of 58 signatures regarding the demolition of the derelict garages located between No 8 &9 Tanhouse Lane. <i>To be forwarded to the Executive Member for Highways and</i>
-----------------------------------	--

	<i>Transport.</i>
Councillor Stephen Conway	<p>Stephen Conway presented a petition of 13 signatures regarding introducing residents-only parking arrangements for Ruscombe Road, Twyford.</p> <p><i>To be forwarded to the Executive Member for Highways and Transport.</i></p>

22. PAY POLICY STATEMENT

The Council considered the Pay Policy Statement, set out at Agenda pages 29 to 40.

It was proposed by John Halsall and seconded by John Kaiser that the recommendation be agreed.

Rachel Burgess expressed concern that the Policy did not make reference to gender pay. Whilst she understood that it was not a legal requirement to include this information, the Council had a gender pay gap of 14%, which was 7% higher than the local authority average, and 11% higher than Reading Borough Council. The median gender pay was 26%. The Council needed to proactively put measures in place to close the gap.

Andy Croy also emphasised that he felt that the Policy should reference the gender pay gap and asked that this information be included in future.

Pauline Jorgensen indicated that the Council's senior officers were a good mix of both males and females.

John Halsall emphasised that a separate report on the Gender Pay Gap was considered by Personnel Board.

Upon being put to the vote it was:

RESOLVED: That the Pay Policy Statement for 2019 be approved.

23. CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION

The Council considered a report proposing amendments to the Constitution, set out at Agenda pages 41 to 78.

It was proposed by Chris Smith and seconded by John Kaiser that the recommendations within the report be agreed. Andy Croy requested that each of the recommendations be voted on individually and this was agreed.

With regards to the proposal that the requirement that all licensing and appeals sub-committees be politically balanced, be removed, Rachel Burgess commented that she felt that there was no reasons why they could not always be politically balanced.

Imogen Shepherd-Dubey suggested that an annual report to the licensing and Appeals Committee should detail the political balance of each sub-committee.

Lindsay Ferris outlined the reasons why the proposal had been put forward and was sure that every effort would be made to ensure that licensing and appeals sub-committees would be politically balanced and that they would not be politically balanced only in an emergency. He advised that in the last municipal year he personally had sat on nine out of eleven sub committees to help ensure that the political balance requirement was met.

Chris Bowring also emphasised that the proposed removal of the political balance requirement for licensing and appeals sub-committees was purely a practical measure.

Chis Smith reminded Council that it was not a legal requirement that licensing and appeals sub-committees were politically balanced.

With regards to the proposal to review Members' Allowances every two years, Andy Croy commented that he felt that Members' Allowances should be reviewed annually.

Upon being put to the vote it was:

RESOLVED: That

- 1) it be agreed that the requirement for Licensing and Appeals Sub-Committees to be politically balanced be removed.
- 2) the following changes to the Constitution as recommended by the Constitution Review Working Group be agreed:
 - a) that Section 2.2 Members' Allowances Scheme be amended as set out in Appendix 1 to the report;
 - b) that Section 4.2.1.1 Timing and Order of Business [Annual Council] be amended as set out in paragraphs 2 and 3 of the report;
 - c) that Section 4.4 [Wokingham Borough Wellbeing Board] be amended as set out in Appendix 2 to the report;
 - d) that Section 8.4.10 Licensing and Appeals Sub-Committee Procedure Rules be amended as set out in paragraph 5 of the report;
 - e) that Section 12.1.10 [Insurance, Risk and Opportunity Management] be amended as set out in Appendix 3 to the report.

24. APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBER TO THE THAMES VALLEY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

The Council considered a report regarding the appointment of a substitute Member on the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel, set out at Agenda pages 79 to 82.

It was proposed by John Halsall and seconded by John Kaiser that Council consider the nominations put forward by the political groups on the Council and decide which Councillor should be appointed as the substitute Member on the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel (Joint Committee) for the remainder of the 2019/20 Municipal Year.

The nominations put forward by the Political Groups were voted on and it was:

RESOLVED: That Councillor Emma Hobbs be appointed as the substitute Member on the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel (Joint Committee) for the remainder of the 2019/20 municipal year.

25. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

In accordance with the agreed procedure the Mayor invited Members to submit questions to the appropriate Members

25.1 Pauline Jorgensen asked the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure the following question:

Question

Thank you for responding to residents' concerns with regards the area of land in my ward known as Area DD, which I have been fighting to protect as natural green space. Is it possible to protect this area for future generations?

Answer

I would love to yes and as you know Pauline, the Council's assets play a very important role within the organisation by creating capital values for the benefit of all of the residents, of which area DD is but one, and these assets which are becoming increasingly important in the current difficult financial situation

Having said that, whilst the site is included within our Local Plan for mixed use development, I have persuaded the Executive to hold this site as we consider a new council wide housing strategy to run from 2019-2024. In addition this site is located in an area of high urban development and provides an additional area of undeveloped green space which is valued by our residents, and hence my persuasion.

That is not to say that future development of the site will not occur, this could take any form such as leisure, retail or much needed housing and as the current Executive Member it is not possible for me to say what future decision may or may not be made by members of any future administration.

But I am sure this will only be done in conjunction with a full consultation of residents and other interested parties.

Supplementary Question:

I am glad you recognise Area DD as a valuable green space in a built up area and a haven for wildlife. This site was first considered for development many years ago and I understand that you feel that you cannot bind future administrations, especially those of a different political hue, however, I am not entirely satisfied with the position. I have talked to hundreds of my residents and they have all been clear with me that the overwhelming view is that they would like this area to remain as a green haven for wildlife. I would welcome your support and advice as to how we might achieve that Parry.

Supplementary Answer:

Whilst this administration is in charge I will do my best to support you.

25.2 Gary Cowan asked the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure the following question:

Question

It was brought to my attention that several trees have just been felled in a protected copse opposite 10/12 Barker Close RG2 9NQ, which is privately owned land. I was very surprised to find out after the trees were felled that this Council gave permission to a local resident to fell these protected trees on land not in their ownership.

As the Ward Member, I was not made aware of this. Also, I am not aware of any site visit by the Council yet I have been informed that the permission to cut down these trees was based on a survey which I have never seen and which I would appreciate a copy of.

Can you explain why and if the Council permitted to allow the felling of protected trees on private land to someone who is not the landowner but a private resident.

Answer

The decision to approve this Tree Works Applications (TWA) was not based upon a survey provided by the applicant but the professional assessment of the Council's Senior Tree Officer assesses, which includes a site visit. This assessment informs her decision which is given in the decision letter. The Tree Officer's comments are not always included in the decision letter but often are.

In this instance, removal of trees covered by the TPO 1449/2012 was on health and safety grounds. The birch (T6), had a large main stem cavity with extensive decay - the 'target', had the tree failed catastrophically, was a domestic garden. T7, another birch, had excessive lean towards the adjacent property and the root plate had started to lift with fresh soil cracking around it. Again the 'target' was a domestic garden. The Council will in the future ensure that the phrase 'removal consented on health and safety grounds' is included in the decision letter where appropriate.

The goat willows on site, some of which were subject to the application, would not have been present at the time of the TPO (and therefore not covered by the Area TPO). They were included in the approval in order to make the extent of the works clear to the applicant and the public.

The tree works applications are available online and Councillors are sent a hard copy in the internal mail. Records on CIVICA from the Registration Team indicate that the relevant Councillor and the Parish Council were sent a record of this application on 30th April 2019. The decision letter was issued on 6th June.

Supplementary Question:

I have no record of a correspondence concerning the TPO, nor to my knowledge have any of the neighbours, so I would question that point. I did ask for the Officers' survey which the eventual reply was that the decision letter does not always include one, as the Executive Member did say. Without having any record of this how can we have checks and balances as to what is and what is not? More critically the decision letter to the tree surgeon states that to prune trees T1, T2 and 33, all protected trees, to protect the sunlight and aesthetics, and this is private trees on private land. My concern is if the reason to prune trees on private land, what hope has the Council got to deliver on climate emergency when it approves the pruning of TPO trees for aesthetic reasons on someone else's land? I have no idea what has been pruned or cut down but I do know it was done in the bird nesting season. Can I ask if the Council will revisit the site as soon as possible and establish what trees have been cut down, what has been pruned, establish why it was done in bird nesting season and let me know.

Supplementary Answer:

Yes, I can do that no problem.

25.3 Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey asked the Executive Member for Climate Emergency the following question:**Question**

What are we doing for climate emergency: are we planning on putting solar panels on all Council buildings including affordable housing and new schools, if not why?

Answer

My colleague Councillor Graham Howe has been working on a solution to precisely this question for just under a year. As a result of the dedicated work of Councillor Howe and the Council Officers in identifying suppliers and partners, I am delighted to announce today that yes we will be seeking to install ethically manufactured solar panels and potentially other alternative energy generating devices onto the roofs of the Borough's schools, leisure centres, libraries and some other suitable Council owned properties, starting during the next school year. I must stress that this is not the work of an instant. There are many technical hurdles that have to be overcome when pairing state of the art energy generating equipment with some of schools, many of which are many decades old, and taking into consideration the fact that it is electricity near our children. I will not commit to when installation work will begin but I will keep all Councillors up to date of when that is going to happen.

I am also pleased to announce that our ambition is that once all costs have been taken into account, any cost savings or profits of selling energy to the National Grid will be passed back to individual schools to supplement their discretionary budget. We estimate that as a result of these programmes, with energy accounting for almost 6% of most schools' annual budgets, there will be a saving of potentially up to 25%. Our priority will be to ensure that Council run and maintained schools were included in this scheme first. We also seek to make this available to the Borough's academies as this initiative is for the benefit for children across Wokingham Borough Council and also aligns with policy stated by other parties. We ask for their support in this.

Supplementary Question:

Thank you for doing something which is very much at the heart of the Liberal Democrats as well. We also want to know if you are planning to do any new technology such as heat exchange or something like this?

Supplementary Answer:

We will be looking at all forms of alternative energy generation, as there are many, many, many new technologies that are coming online every single day. Unfortunately, although this problem is decades old, some of the technology is still in its infancy so we will need to be able to assess it against a set of criteria that we have not yet created in order to be able to understand whether it will generate the type of energy versus the cost of installation but we will look at all options in terms of alternative generation of energy. We will report back to all Members, shortly.

25.4 David Hare asked the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure the following question:**Question**

Will Wokingham Borough Council undertake to ensure that every tree that is cut down in the Borough is replaced? Whoever cuts the tree down will replace it with an appropriate number of trees, within the area of Wokingham Borough, within 6 months, the appropriate number being sufficient to replicate the carbon uptake of the cut-down trees within 3 years.

Answer

Outside of the context of a planning application, the Council is not able to monitor the felling of trees on private land or to enforce replacement planting, unless the trees are covered by a Tree Preservation Order.

It is very rare for the Council to grant a planning consent where the number of trees lost exceeds those proposed for planting, indeed in the vast majority of cases the number of trees planted vastly exceeds those that are lost. Whilst it would be difficult to provide a definitive answer on numbers of trees planted, it is worth noting that the Council has secured the planting of approximately 45,000 new trees on the eleven SANGs that have been completed so far in the Borough.

- Rooks Nest Wood - 10,000
- Buckhurst - 6,500
- Kentwood - 5,500
- Old Forest Rd Meadows - 2,500
- Hazebrook Meadows - 2,500
- Shinfield SANGs - 3,000
- Eldridge Park - 4,000
- Keephatch Meadows - 11,000

Altogether that is 45,000.

Supplementary Question:

That is very positive and that is a good thing but we must go on planting trees. For every tree you cut down which is say 50 years old, you have to plant at least 10 trees to make up for the carbon that will come into the atmosphere because the old tree is cut down. This is the problem. It is not a one for one, a new for old. You have to plant more trees. Will the Council endeavour to plant many more trees because of that situation?

Supplementary Answer (provided by Gregor Murray, Executive Member for Climate Emergency):

The short answer is yes. The slightly longer answer is I have already made contact with several different agencies and well known charities who will hopefully be able to support us in planting more trees.

25.5 Ian Pittock asked the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement the following question:

Question

Regarding the housing consultation. I am sure that we all wish there to be as large a response as possible. I understand, with some relief that responses are flooding in. There has, however, been some noise around concerning the lateness of delivery of letters to residents and other time related issues. Can you please confirm the latest date by which residents can respond to the consultation?

Answer

I do appreciate your concern of trying to make sure that we get as many people to respond as possible. Residents have until 23rd, which is next Tuesday. We have extended it by a day to allow extra to come in via the Wokingham Community Forum. We had another successful Forum last night in Shinfield. You will be pleased to know that we have well over 40,000 people that have already responded and it is uniform across the Borough, so everything is going well.

25.6 Caroline Smith asked the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure the following question which was answered by the Executive Member for Finance and Housing:

Question

The Earley Residents and Councillors are extremely pleased with the announcement that Area DD will not be developed in the immediate future but what I would like to understand is why the Earley Councillors were not informed before the public announcement and only found out by reading an item in the local papers?

Answer

I must admit as a Council we are doing so much at the moment, I find it difficult to report it, let alone reporting on things that I do not do, but I do understand why the Earley ward councillors are concerned.

I am pleased that Earley residents and local ward councillors are in support of our decision not to progress with the plans to develop Area DD for housing in the immediate future and please accept my apologies if any local ward councillors feel they were not informed before the decision became public.

Area DD, as it has been said, is Council owned land that was designated for housing in the Local Plan and so previously approved in principle as part of a standard consultation exercise. However following further consideration the Executive took the decision not to progress the site for housing for the foreseeable future.

Going forward the Council will, wherever possible, inform relevant ward councillors and members of the Affordable Housing Implementation Group of any key decisions relating to the development of Council owned land for housing.

25.7 Laura Blumenthal asked the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure the following question:

Question

I know this Council is working to improve South Lake and its water garden - please can you summarise the work that is on the horizon which my residents can look forward to?

Answer

There is currently a collaborative project in place working alongside Countryside Services; Biodiversity Officer and Localities to help improve the areas at South Lake.

With funding sparse we have pooled money together to carry out reed bed works to improve the ecology of the area as well as the look of the site. Over the Autumn /Winter period vegetation clearance works will also be taking place alongside the lake to reduce rhododendron which should aide the ecology of the lake and support its inhabitants.

Volunteers have been utilised in partnership with Countryside Services to carry out works to clear out the pond (water garden) of rubbish, water soldiers and bulrushes.

In recent years, stretches of footpath on both sides of the lake have been upgraded and a bund on the embankment introduced to assist the security of the dam.

As one of many of our parks and open spaces there is no set budget for this site and any available funds must be spent to serve all areas we look after across the Borough. Our contractor carries out scheduled work to cut back vegetation around the lake and pond and keep it litter free as far as practicable. Any additional works carried out would be on a health and safety basis and we are always willing to work in partnership with different services and Parish/Town Councils to improve areas wherever possible.

Supplementary Question:

Would you agree with me that the South Lake Angling Club deserves special thanks for all the work that they have done to maintain the health of the lake and making it a more pleasant place for all residents?

Supplementary Answer:

Yes, I do agree with you Laura. I think they do a great job and they did lay some barley bales around the lake earlier this year which has helped make the water healthier for the wildlife. I thank them for their ongoing hard work to make the lake better for all of us.

25.8 Jenny Cheng asked the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure the following question which was answered by the Executive Member for Highways and Transport:

Question

A number of elderly residents have tripped over the uneven paving in Woodley Precinct and broken bones or fallen unconscious. Outside Waitrose and around the trees are the worst areas which has been raised with this Council with photographic proof. An inspection by this Council was carried out recently and a few areas addressed, but not these accident hotspots. Please can you explain what will be done to fix the slabs in these areas and potentially save a life?

Answer:

I will take this one as it is my responsibility and not Parry's, although not personally.

I know we have been in a lot of conversations about Woodley Precinct and people falling over broken slabs and that sort of stuff, with you and Laura, for quite some time, so thank you for your perseverance. It is inspected regularly on a monthly basis for safety defects by Volker Highways safety inspectors. Any safety defects that have been identified as a safety issue will be repaired or have been repaired or made safe as per the Wokingham Highway Inspection Plan (WHIP).

Regarding the areas around the trees, the issue is really the roots. The slabs and blocks have been replaced where possible and concrete fillets replacing the remainder of the areas where tree roots prevent slabs and blocks being re-fixed, have been put in place. However, the real problem is that we have got trees pushing up the blocks all the time and we need to find a better solution to that.

The area outside and around Waitrose, all slabs and blocks that are considered a highway

safety risk have been replaced and re-set and again these works were carried out at the end of June.

The Highways Officer responsible for the precinct would be very happy to meet with both Ward Councillors for South Lake on site to walk around and discuss any issues and explain what is considered a dangerous safety defect on behalf of WHIP, and I would be happy to come as well.

There is a long-term issue regarding the undulations caused by the roots, as I mentioned, outside the Card Factory and the newsagents and we are currently looking at possible improvements. There is also an issue with continued damage to large volumes of broken slabs at the Headley Road end of the precinct with vehicles continuously using this area to drop off and pick up. This area is also being looked at for making it a more robust area or to restricting parking to try and avoid the damage caused by the lorries.

In the meantime, we will continue to inspect the precinct and repair it to keep it safe until we get a permanent solution.

Supplementary Question:

Thank you for offering to come and meet us. Please could the Executive Member for the Environment come and meet us too since it concerns trees?

Supplementary Answer (provided by Parry Batth, Executive Member for Environment and Leisure):

Yes of course.

25.9 Imogen Shepherd-DuBey asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

Question

I have noted that one of our councillors, who left the Council last year, did not get removed as a Non-Executive Director of WBC Holdings until June this year

Can we have the information on how much money has been paid to ex-Councillors, in this way?

Answer

The companies have paid £ 3,350 to one ex-Councillor who was requested by the company to continue as a director after their term as a Councillor ended. This sum was for the period 04 May 2018 to 12 June 2019.

Supplementary Question

If this Councillor is no longer part of this Council, why are they occupying a space that is reserved for our councillors? What did they do for Wokingham Borough Council during that time?

Supplementary Answer

The appointments are made by the Board themselves. The particular Councillor was considered by the Board to have a particular expertise and as I say the appointment ended on 12 June so I have not really much idea what he was doing.

25.10 Maria Gee asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

Question

Will our Council be joining many other councils across the UK and the Houses of Parliament by flying the rainbow flag on the date of our local Pride celebration, which this year will be 31st August?

Answer

The answer is yes.

Supplementary Question

It has been 65 years since the death of the genius and war hero Alan Turing who was shamefully persecuted by the state. It is 50 years since the Stonewall uprising and 16 years since the repeal of Section 28, yet in the 3 years Thames Valley Police recorded 42 homophobic and transphobic hate crimes and other incidents in the Bracknell and Wokingham area. This is a very ugly truth. Will the Leader of the Council lead the way by stating that he abhors attacks on individual groups including our LGBT+ residents, commends those attempting to drive out homophobic and transphobic crimes and abuse, and commits to creating an inclusive community by supporting a Wokingham Borough Pride event in 2020?

Supplementary Answer

The Council welcomes diversity, recognises the interests of all minority groups and the importance of enabling equality for all, so if it is within the gift of the Council, the answer is yes.

25.11 Andy Croy asked the Leader of the Council the following question. Due to time constraints the following written answer was provided:

Question

Heathrow Airport, by making the area accessible for multinational companies seeking a UK base, is a major driver of economic growth in the Thames Valley. It is this economic growth which drives demand for extra housing in the Borough and which encourages people to move here.

Air travel is also a major contributor towards carbon emissions and climate change.

Wokingham Borough Council currently supports the expansion of Heathrow Airport by the addition of a third runway. WBC is therefore supporting a policy which will lead to increased demand for housing and which will increase carbon emissions.

There are two motions on this agenda, which imply WBC is opposed to increased housing demand and is committed to reducing carbon emissions.

Will the Leader commit to ensuring that WBC's policy will change to opposing the Third Runway at Heathrow and make a submission to the Heathrow Consultation to this effect?

Answer

We have to accept that we want to continue to make Wokingham Borough attractive to both businesses and residents and a consequence of that is that people will want to come here and will need somewhere to live. Accessibility to Heathrow is known to be a key factor in our healthy economy and quality of life, and this in turn attracts people here.

We have, in the past, supported the Heathrow expansion due to the economic advantages it will bring. However it is important that the operation of Heathrow both as it is now or in any expanded form, addresses the impact on the environment and its contribution to climate change.

We continue to monitor the situation with regard to the expansion and any negative consequences there might be for the Borough, particularly with regard to our ambitious target of making Wokingham Borough carbon neutral by 2030.

The Heathrow consultation suite of documents is very large and we are continuing to digest their contents. The report entitled Environmentally Managed Growth explains how Heathrow intends to expand without negatively impacting on the environment and specifically details surface access (traffic), air quality, aircraft noise and carbon. These relate mainly to the airport and its more immediate surroundings. With respect to Carbon in particular, the airport and airlines will be incentivised to reduce emissions and invest in new technology and climate change is a major concern across the aviation industry. However, the Airports Commission's initial analysis has concluded that a new runway is deliverable within the UK's carbon obligations.

We remain concerned about growth in traffic levels and welcome some of the measures Heathrow have proposed such as committing to at least 50% public transport mode share by 2030. We need to ensure that this is possible for people travelling from Wokingham Borough, so the Western Rail Link is an essential piece of infrastructure which we need to ensure is in place regardless of whether the expansion goes ahead. We also need to continue to manage investment in transport infrastructure and the location of development to ensure that we make alternatives to private car use a viable option for many so that the impact of any growth is lessened.

In summary, we recognise that the proposed Heathrow expansion could potentially bring both positive and negative consequences to the region and the Borough. We have a short time to investigate what this will mean for Wokingham before responding to the consultation and then make a decision on whether there should be a shift in our position on the expansion proposals.

26. MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND WARD MATTERS

26.1 Shirley Boyt asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Question

In January 2019 our previous Mayor officially opened a new development of 20 houses in my Ward. Sutton Close is a mix of shared ownership and social rented homes. I have a press cutting here quoting Councillor Kaiser. "I was delighted to open this new development which brings 20 affordable homes to Wokingham Borough", he said. Sadly these homes are not quite as affordable as the residents were led to expect. In addition to Council Tax these residents are having to fork out an additional £100 each month in maintenance charges to the Housing Association. According to the Housing Association this is because the Council will not be adopting the road. I would like to ask the Executive Member responsible why the Borough has no plans to adopt this road?

Answer

It would have been nice to have that in writing so that I can actually do some investigation

beforehand, but if you would like to I will give you a written reply.

26.2 Charlotte Haitham Taylor asked the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement the following question:

Question

Thank you for coming to visit Silchester Place in Shinfield South to see what Taylor Wimpy have been subjecting my residents to over the last 2 years whilst constructing behind their homes. There are very many serious health and safety breaches that their building contractors are exhibiting onsite, such as builders using angle grinders in shorts, without helmets, and builders on roof tops without hard hats, just to name two. Please can you advise me what the best course of action is and what your commitment is to stop this happening in the future in my Ward?

Answer

We did have a very good meeting with residents and I have to say we have got two very good workers working in the team, Connor Corrigan and Chris Howard, who have done a fantastic job for residents, but I think we have got to the stage now that we are going to have to raise the bar. We have taken it upon ourselves that we are going to write to the Chief Executive of Taylor Wimpy, including some support from John Redwood, and see what we can do, but it is serious. We need to now take action against Taylor Wimpy because it is not acceptable.

26.3 Andrew Mickleburgh asked the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement the following question:

Question

Despite verbal assurances from the developers that they would secure the land at the former Auto Trader House site at Danehill if they gained planning permission, which has now been won, the site remains in a derelict and dangerous state. It is almost continuously occupied by travellers and is a cause of great concern to nearby residents. What steps is the Executive Member for Planning able and willing to take to ensure that the developer makes this site safe and secure without any further delays?

Answer

I do know the site because I was on the Planning Committee and I was part of the Planning Committee that supported the refusal of that application. I am going to have to take that away, but I am with Enforcement tomorrow so I will speak to Jason and see what we can do because when we visited the site, how long ago was it, 18 months ago, it was a dreadful mess then so we do need to do something so I will take that away.

26.4 Andy Croy asked the Executive Member for Regeneration the following question:

Question

I would like to thank Councillor Cheng for speaking up for the people of Woodley. The Town Centre falls entirely in my Ward, and I would just like to ask Charlotte when Wokingham Town Centre had a couple of million pounds, I know there was more which came from the Town Council, this Borough spent a couple of million pounds on the regeneration of Wokingham town centre to take away exactly the same problems of uneven surfaces and trees. When will Woodley get the same money spent on it?

Answer

It is actually something that we have been talking about this week. Regeneration does not stop at Wokingham in the town and in my speech tonight I am going to be talking about where else we are going to be looking at. The town of Woodley is an example where actually the paving slabs are something that are a concern to us and we have talked about it this evening. The advantage of Wokingham Town was we were able to pool resources in order to deliver the Market Place and that is the kind of thing we need to be going and working together with parishes and towns in order to deliver regeneration right across the Borough.

The advantage of CIL is that it is paid out to Towns and Parishes and Towns and Parishes get more even if they have got a Local Plan. I think in future that will be a really great thing for us doing things in partnership and I would certainly like to look at Woodley and see if there is something that we can do in partnership there.

26.5 Chris Smith asked the Leader of the Council the following question:**Question**

I notice that in the local paper that Arthur Hill pool, the sale of that has fallen through, and this is a pool that is very close to my heart because as a primary school pupil at Hillside Primary, it was a place I was taken to learn to swim, so I know exactly how valued this is by the local community. Is there anything this Council can do to either purchase or fund the running of that pool, and protect it from the cuts of the Labour controlled Reading Council?

Answer

May I take it away with me because it is a little bit sprung on me? I am not sure what we can do in Reading but I will certainly have a look at it.

26.6 Rachel Burgess asked the Leader of the Council the following question:**Question**

Residents in my ward of Norreys are increasingly concerned about drug use and drug dealing in Wokingham Town Centre and other parts of my Ward. I appreciate that this is a criminal matter but with Police and Council resources both increasingly stretched how can I reassure my residents that the Council is doing all that it can to work with the Police to address their concerns?

Answer

I think I really need to have notice of that question Rachel. I am very happy to look into it but it covers a whole load of aspects which I do not have an answer to just off the top of my fingers.

26.7 Stephen Conway asked the Leader of the Council the following question:**Question**

Will the Leader of the Council accept my thanks for his personal commitment to delivering a new library for Twyford? I am particularly grateful for his willingness to work cross party on this issue of great importance to Twyford residents.

Answer

Thank you very much.

26.8 Laura Blumenthal asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Question

My residents in Kingfisher Drive are so happy that this Council is resurfacing their road, especially the service roads. Please can you share when this work will begin?

Answer

I am informed that the work should begin towards the end of September. Obviously that is dependent on what happens with previous roadworks and weather and all that sort of stuff, but we are pretty sure that is around the right day.

26.9 Imogen Shepherd-Dubey asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Question

Within my Ward of Emmbrook we have got a number of roads that have trouble with speeding on certain roads around the Ward. We occasionally get vehicle activated signs but they do not seem to get moved around the hotspots very often, and they do not seem to be available very often. They seem to be the only effective way that we have as a Borough Council of tackling speeding in 20 and 30mph zones. I would like to ask the Lead Executive for Highways what other actions WBC could take to reduce speed in these zones, and could we possibly get more equipment put into circulation?

Answer

We are happy to do speed watches in co-ordination with the Parish Council. In addition we did actually put a speed camera in Old Forest Road relatively recently to try and encourage people to keep their speed down before all the building work finishes and it becomes an area that does not have a lot of fast through traffic. Yes, that is one of the things. The complexity is that we actually not only have to find the device, and we have a couple of them in stock, we also have to find a lamppost to put them on and get the power sorted out. It does take a while but we have certainly put one in Old Forest Road recently, and if you have got any other suggestions I would be happy to see if we can put some more in from time to time for you.

26.10 Rachelle Shepherd-Dubey asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Question

What is being done with the Winnersh Relief Road part 2? They were supposed to be moving the utilities and so far the only thing I have seen them do is put up some nice new boards and that is it.

Answer

I will have to give you a written reply to that Rachelle.

26.11 UllaKarin Clark asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Question

I would like to know why the ticket machines in Carnival Pool car park have changed?

Answer

The Carnival Pool car park ticketing machines were changed today I believe because recent legislation has banned the use of ANPR, which is the number plate recognition technology through CCTV for use by local authorities in the majority of circumstances. Local authorities can now only enforce parking restrictions by camera in the following instances: school keep clear markings; bus stop stand clearways; red routes and bus lanes. The result is that the ANPR systems used in Carnival Pool multi-storey cannot be used anymore and we are not able to enforce using them so we therefore we have to change the machines.

27. STATEMENTS BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, EXECUTIVE MEMBERS AND DEPUTY EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

John Halsall, Leader of the Council:

I was honoured to be elected Leader at the last Council meeting, since which time it has been a privilege to meet many of our officers. We have a magnificent team led by an impressive team of Directors who do great things with the sole objective of serving our residents as best they might at optimal cost. They are an ambitious team and have in the main a 'can do' attitude, willing to do new things and generate new thought processes. Sometimes an idea which seems sound has unforeseen consequences and we need to change. I believe in encouraging this positive attitude and experimenting with new ideas and technology full in the knowledge that not everything works, and maybe we have to backtrack. The only way of avoiding this is to do nothing at all.

We are, as you know, the lowest funded unitary. All the money that we spend comes from our residents or our commercial activities. Almost 80% of our available funds go to adults and children's services to look after the vulnerable. We cannot do everything that we want without a big increase in financial burden on our residents. To avoid this we need to constantly define new ways of generating new income, something which my predecessor started, reducing costs and improving services through technology and better methods. It is really disappointing therefore to have Members of the Opposition criticising our staff and what they do. Worse still information is being given to the press that is incorrect, harmful to our staff and not checked with the Executive Member as to its veracity.

Last summer, unprecedented demand, high staff turnover and leadership instability led to deterioration in the quality of services for children. It could have compromised the safety of some children and young people had it not been urgently addressed. It was. The new senior leadership team have taken steps to establish stability and improve services. I am delighted that Ofsted have acknowledged that things are improving. They made many positive observations about our work. This is testament to the quality of our staff and the hard work and dedication they put in daily to improve the lives of children and young people in our Borough. It has made me very proud to be the Leader of the Council watching this.

There are two motions tonight which are significant to the Administration's objectives; climate change and housing numbers. We must do everything in our armoury to reduce the required housing numbers because that is what we believe most of the Borough wants us to do. Even then we may fail in our endeavour. The response to the consultation to date has been exceptional. It is wrong to conflate the obligation to produce a Local Plan with any other services which we are obliged to deliver, including adults and children's. We must do all of them and still balance the budget. That is what a sound Conservative administration does and has done for the last 20 years in the Borough. Despite losing all

our Government grant which was a large proportion of our income, there has been no services lost. We still collect the rubbish every week, our roads are in better shape than our neighbours', our libraries and leisure centres have constantly increased footfalls, our care homes are really excellent, our home care is really excellent and our schools are the envy of our neighbours. The Borough is where people want to live. This is due in the main to our Officers, who are second to none. I hope all Councillors can join me in praising and supporting them.

UllaKarin Clark, Executive Member for Children's Services:

Following on from what Councillor Halsall said, this summer we were subject to an Ofsted inspection under the new ILACS framework. The judgement was 'Requires Improvement to be Good' which we consider to be an accurate appraisal of the current position in Children's Services. An unprecedented escalation in demand, coupled with high staff turnover and leadership instability in the summer of 2018 led to a deterioration in the quality of services for children and could have compromised the safety of some children and young people had this not urgently been addressed. However, this perilous situation was recognised and addressed by the new Senior Leadership Team who have taken steps to establish stability and to begin to improve services. Because of the recent instability, at this point in time we would not have expected a 'Good' judgement and we recognise that services for children are still too variable, but we are pleased that Ofsted have acknowledged that things are improving under the new, stable Leadership Team, and that they made many positive observations about our work with children and young people. This is testament to the quality of staff and the hard work and dedication that they put in daily to improve the lives of children and young people in Wokingham.

I am very proud to be the Executive Member for Children's Services which has a relentless focus on the safeguarding and achievement of all children. We have a first class Children's Leadership Team who know what needs to be done to improve services and is working tirelessly to ensure that services for all children and young people are good. The five areas identified by Ofsted for improvement to be good are; stability of the workforce, specifically children with disabilities team and longer term teams; effectiveness of child in need and child protection plans; quality and effectiveness of the social work support that disabled children and their families receive; level of critical scrutiny and quality of supervision provided by frontline managers; oversight and impact of the Corporate Parenting Board. None of this was a surprise to the Leadership team and work was already underway before the inspection to make these improvements.

Additionally, there appears to be some confusion between the Joint Local Area SEND inspection in Wokingham in March 2019 and the ILACS inspection in June 2019. The authority was subject to a Joint Local Area inspection of its Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, which we call SEND services in March 2019. I would ask interested parties and particularly the press to check with me as to the veracity of reports made to them, and I have made my phone number available.

Now, I would like to report on the Northern House School. In short there is no further movement regarding the School since we first received notification from the Trust of their intention to withdraw from the running of the School. We are awaiting a decision from the Regional Schools Commissioner as to who they have appointed as a replacement. In the meantime we are continuing to place children at the School and we are supporting those young people and their families during a period of uncertainty. We are intending to place another 6 children there in September. This School will play an important role in providing future SEND placements for Wokingham but it will be necessary to renegotiate

arrangements both on cost and formal provision with a new provider Trust and it is unlikely that this will happen quickly.

We spoke earlier about the recruitment of SEN staff and I would like to tell you that an additional £250,000 have been made available to improve staffing levels, and it will be used to appoint additional SEN case managers. We have now filled our vacancies with the exception of two posts; the Team Manager and the SEN Case Manager. We still have some interim staff but it is the intention of our new Director, Carol Cammiss, to ensure that they are replaced with permanent staff over the coming months. We can already now see that additional resources are now beginning to positively impact on workloads and engagement with families.

Finally, Foundry School, work is ongoing to develop the school site. The local school, Keep Hatch, along with Ashridge Nursery, have met with senior officers to explore how the site can be best developed. There are issues that need to be resolved around the vehicle entrances, but overall there is support for the moves. We are going to move our staff from both the social care and the education and it is intended that we are going to submit a planning application for Foundry in August.

Charlotte Haitham Taylor, Executive Member for Regeneration

I wanted to start tonight by mentioning and thanking Councillor David Lee who was the previous Leader, a couple of Leaders ago. He was the original person who had the vision for the town centre and the drive to start the regeneration of this town. There were of course many naysayers, not just 10 or 12 years ago, but even some still today, but I am really pleased that we did not listen and we did not let the town die and shrivel. We have been rewarded by a town now that is pushing forward and bringing new investment, new leisure facilities and indeed new, fresh footfall.

Yesterday, crowds of hugely excited children, the next generation to enjoy this town, and their parents gathered at the gates of the new play park of Elms Field for the formal launch. They were the very first to enjoy it and try out all of the fabulous new, inclusive and accessible play equipment. The launch was a massive success, and if you were not there then just look at the photographs because they tell the stories in themselves. If you have not already been down to the park, please go and take a look. The play area has been specially designed using sustainably sourced wood, which looks fantastic, in and around the established trees, and the new elms, English oaks, birches and maples, which have been added in and around the park. Tonight I also wanted to thank the team of Officers and the builders who have managed to deliver this part of the scheme on time for all of us to enjoy over the summer holidays. People were already sitting out on the new grass, on rugs in the stunning new park and with areas also left to wildflower meadows lots of new wildlife will also be available to find a sustainable home here and hopefully we can also support Britain's shrinking bee population too. The park has also been fitted out with bins for recycling so there is absolutely no excuse to leave your litter and you can also recycle it whilst you are there on site. The park will also become the beating heart of the town with integrated electric and water and is now truly fit for outdoor events for the 21st century throughout the year, so everyone can come from right across the Borough to enjoy it.

Yesterday was another milestone in Wokingham's regeneration, but it does not stop here. Buildings are going up around the park very quickly. Aldi is already open, the hotel is near completion and we are in varying stages of discussion with over 10 different realtors who see Wokingham as a great place to come and to trade, but the regeneration should not

stop at Wokingham, as I intimated earlier, and this is perhaps best demonstrated in our investment in other parts of the Borough. The Bulmershe leisure centre is progressing at pace, and I am sure you will hear more about that, and also we are looking further north in the Borough, heading to Twyford. I am excited that the Executive will be asked to kick off the new library project there next week. This demonstrates that everywhere in the Borough is being looked at and considered, and that the Conservatives have a long term view regarding investment in our residents and their future, to ensure that this Borough continues to thrive.

Charles Margetts, Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Services:

I have now been in post for 8 weeks and would like to update you and fellow Members on progress in Adult Social Care in Wokingham and also plans for the future. This is an absolutely vital service which supports some of the most vulnerable people in the community and promotes the wellbeing and independence of many more. The picture nationally is very difficult in this sector. Since 2010 councils have had to bridge a £6billion funding shortfall to keep the system going. Demand for care however endlessly increases. Nationally in England there are 1.8million new requests for adult social care a year, the equivalent of 5,000 a day. A recent ADAS report states that the average Adult Social Care department is predicting an overspend this year of nearly £900,000, and that 89% of Adult Social Care Directors have no confidence or only partial confidence that their budget will meet their statutory duties by the end of 2019/20. This leads to unprecedented pressure on Adult Social Care staff who, to my mind, should be valued as NHS workers across the UK.

Turning to Wokingham I wanted to start with a couple more statistics. Adult Social Care consumes around 40% of the Council's annual budget. The complexity of what we do here is extraordinary. We support over 2,000 vulnerable adults, 27,000 care and support payments each year are made to do this. All of this is achieved with around 140 full time posts. To manage something of this complexity with such few people is a reflection on the hard work of our Officers, all of our staff basically from the new Director all the way down to the grass roots.

I mentioned earlier the national situation with Adult Social Care finances. In Wokingham, despite all the pressure, we are forecasting to keep to our current budget. The climate going forwards is very challenging but the Department is focused on keeping expenditure under control and doing as much as possible with the taxpayer's pound. The officers have put in considerable effort into improving forecasting to enable us to pick up problems coming forwards and to be as efficient as possible. We do many things well here within Adult Social Care in Wokingham. We have some of the shortest waiting times for social worker assessments in the country. During 2018-19 84% of older people who received reablement were still living in their own homes 3 months later, another example of high performance which keeps pressure off the NHS. 98% of our residential homes, 92% of our nursing homes and 94% of domiciliary care providers are classed as 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by the CQC. Our Mental Health Team has recently received the prestigious accreditation from the Royal College of Psychiatry. I want to pay tribute to Christine Dale and her two service managers and their team for this achievement. Our Deprivation of Liberty Safeguarding Team continue to perform very well. However, the future is not easy. The national picture predicts that by 2025 8% of all people over 65, will have dementia. 42% of the budget is currently spent on services for those with learning disabilities. We are expecting a 10% increase by 2025. The total number of people aged 18 to 64 with a mental health disorder living in the Borough will increase again greatly by 2025. I think it

really is high time that central Government got its act together and produced a national long term Social Care Plan for the whole country.

Our priorities for the next 12 months are:

- an action plan to tackle social isolation across the Borough;
- to improve the way we review care packages across the Borough;
- to ensure residents get the correct quality of service and the taxpayers' pound is spent on the services that need it;
- to work our partners in the voluntary sector to ensure their efforts are focused alongside ours to deliver the complete package of services;
- to work with our partners in health and to provide a plan to improve primary care in the Borough; and
- to improve our financial forecasting to ensure that whilst the national picture is difficult, we make every effort to remain on budget; development and a review of help for young people with a learning disability focused on preparing them for adulthood; and
- an early integrated transition across children's and adults.

So, plenty to do.

Parry Batth, Executive Member for Environment and Leisure:

I would like to focus on some of the items under my watch that will benefit the residents of Wokingham Borough.

Ageing Actively Wokingham, just to support Charles here, this is an initiative to reduce social isolation and loneliness through physical activity for older people living in the Borough. To support these people the Sports and Leisure Team recruited 12 volunteers in the early part of 2019 and trained them to become Senior Peer Mentors with a view of supporting other, older residents in the Borough. Keeping active will help improve mental and physical wellbeing and reduce loneliness and isolation. Sessions are in place in Wokingham Borough Council's sheltered schemes, the Borough's country parks and the walking for health programme.

Second item, the Emmbrook 3G. The Emmbrook 3G pitch will provide the School and the community of Wokingham with a wonderful football facility. The work is due to start in July, construction taking place in 12-14 weeks. The pitch will not only enhance the School's PE provision but will also create facilities for the local community. The pitch will be adaptable for 5, 7, 9 and 11 a side games.

Bulmershe leisure centre was briefly mentioned. Construction of the new £14.5million leisure centre is going well. The site will include a 6 lane 25m swimming pool, teaching pool with moveable floor so larger groups of ages and abilities can fit, a larger gym plus a Live Well gym for people living with long term health conditions. It will also benefit from a 4 court sports hall and additional studio and a café.

Waste and recycling collection. The new food waste collection service is really going well. A target of 1.46kg per week per household has been met and that is going really well.

28. STATEMENTS FROM COUNCIL OWNED COMPANIES

John Kaiser, Non-Executive Director Loddon Homes and WBC Holdings Ltd:

I have not got much to say at the moment purely and simply because the Boards have changed substantially. We have had Councillors that have left and we have also been

joined by Members from cross-party. I will be bringing forward so far as the housing company is concerned, an Affordable Housing Strategy, which will probably be within the next couple of months. I am working on it with Officers and that is across the different housing providers, the HRA, our own companies and also the houses we are providing within the Town Centre.

Optalis are in the same position. Of course we are changing all the Board members. We are looking at Optalis, Optalis is a company that produce quality care, and we are just really looking at whether or not the services we get from Optalis, whether they suit our residents' requirements. I am sure we will be coming back with that again, so that is all I really have to say on the companies.

29. MOTIONS

29.1 Motion 416 submitted by Sarah Kerr

The Council considered the following Notice of Motion submitted by Sarah Kerr and seconded by John Halsall.

'Local Authorities have a statutory requirement to demonstrate their compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) of the Equalities Act 2010. This Act requires Local Authorities to consider how their work affects people of different ages, disability, sex, sexual orientation, religion or beliefs, marital status, pregnancy and maternity and gender identity. Everyone that lives in, works and visits Wokingham Borough needs to have confidence that this is being done throughout the Borough. This Council will evidence its compliance with the PSED through undertaking Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA's) when required, and ensure they are included in public reports and are easily accessible on the Council's website. In addition, all newly elected Members will have PSED and EqIA training as part of their induction. Executive Members will also have to undertake PSED and EqIA training.'

Sarah Kerr commented that her grandfather was visually impaired and that when Market Place had first opened she had realised that there may be some difficulties for those with visual impairments in getting around the Market Place. She had found that those with visual impairments had not been consulted at all stages of the design process. The Council was required to have a regard to a number of considerations in accordance with the Public Sector Equality Duty, including evidencing its compliance with the Equality Act 2010. An Equality Impact Assessment was a way doing so. Sarah Kerr indicated that Officers underwent mandatory training on the subject and suggested that all Members should undertake the available online training. The online training should also be available to any new Members as part the Members' induction and at the first Executive Briefing of a municipal year. Sarah Kerr also suggested that EQIAs or Initial Impact Views should be published on the Council's website, and that report templates make reference to the fact that regard had been made to the Public Sector Equality Duty.

John Halsall stated that the Motion reaffirmed the Council's commitment to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty of the Equality Act 2010. He agreed that Members should undergo training.

In accordance with Rule 4.2.13.12, the Leader of the Council, moved a closure Motion. However, this was not agreed by the Mayor who felt that there had not been sufficient debate of the Motion.

Imogen Shepherd-Dubey felt that equalities had been underrated by the Council in the past, particularly when it came to people with disabilities. She referred to the moving of disabled spaces at Carnival Pool. She therefore wanted to see a higher prioritisation of equalities.

Clive Jones emphasised that there needed to be change of culture. He wanted to see all Executive Members trained on equalities within 3 months of taking office.

Andrew Mickleburgh commented that equalities should be at the heart of policy and strategy and that regular refresher training should be offered to Members.

Following debate the Motion was then put to the vote and was declared by the Mayor to be carried.

RESOLVED: That Local Authorities have a statutory requirement to demonstrate their compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) of the Equalities Act 2010. This Act requires Local Authorities to consider how their work affects people of different ages, disability, sex, sexual orientation, religion or beliefs, marital status, pregnancy and maternity and gender identity. Everyone that lives in, works and visits Wokingham Borough needs to have confidence that this is being done throughout the Borough. This Council will evidence its compliance with the PSED through undertaking Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA's) when required, and ensure they are included in public reports and are easily accessible on the Council's website. In addition, all newly elected Members will have PSED and EqIA training as part of their induction. Executive Members will also have to undertake PSED and EqIA training.

29.2 Motion 417 submitted by John Halsall

The Council considered the following Notice of Motion submitted by John Halsall and seconded by Gregor Murray.

'Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) believes the world is now in a climate emergency. More concerted and urgent action is needed at local, national and international level to protect our planet for future generations. As such, this Council commits 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 and report within six months as to what actions are required.'

It was moved by Carl Doran and seconded by Clive Jones that the Motion be amended as follows:

'Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) believes the world is now in a climate emergency. More concerted and urgent action is needed at local, national and international level to protect our planet for future generations. As such, this Council commits 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, and report back within six months as to what actions are required.'

The Executive Member for Climate Change will set up a cross-party working group on the climate crisis to investigate and propose further recommendations to help achieve a carbon neutral Borough, reporting back within six months.

The working group will invite, consult and involve as wide a participation from our local community as possible, in order to create a broad consensus of how we contribute to the fight against the climate crisis.'

Carl Doran commented that whilst he welcomed the commitment to declaring a climate emergency he had felt that the original Motion did not go far enough. Actions that would be taken to address the climate emergency needed to be agreed and residents engaged in and supportive of this process. He hoped that the Working Group would be able to make representations to Government to urge them to take on board recommendations and give the additional powers and funding to ensure that the Council was carbon neutral by 2030.

Clive Jones suggested that the Working Group also work on Wokingham Council's ethical framework to ensure that all the Council's suppliers were committed to a carbon neutral future.

The amendment to the Motion was accepted by the proposer of the original Motion and therefore became the substantive Motion

A number of Members emphasised the importance of the Council acting to address the climate emergency and to work in the interests of future generations. Stephen Conway referred to initiatives in Twyford. Angus Ross questioned whether consideration could be given to putting solar panels on the Shute End building and also asked that a Tree Strategy be developed. Rachel Burgess commented that small actions were not unimportant but big action such as removing support for a third runway at Heathrow, was vital. Paul Fishwick stated that whilst 2030 was ambitious to become carbon neutral, the Council could not sit around any longer. Pauline Jorgensen asked that when the Council considered the carbon impact of things that it might do, that it also look at the pollution impact of some of the alternatives. Sarah Kerr suggested that the Council offer free trial periods in vacant shop units to eco-friendly businesses. She also suggested that all reports regarding policies make reference to the impact of these policies on the environment.

The Motion was put to the vote and was declared by the Mayor to be carried.

RESOLVED: That Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) believes the world is now in a climate emergency. More concerted and urgent action is needed at local, national and international level to protect our planet for future generations. As such, this Council commits 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 Executive Member for Climate Change will set up a cross-party working group on the climate crisis to investigate and propose further recommendations to help achieve a carbon neutral Borough, reporting back within six months.

The working group will invite, consult and involve as wide a participation from our local community as possible, in order to create a broad consensus of how we contribute to the fight against the climate crisis.

30. CONTINUATION THE MEETING

At this point in the meeting, 10.20pm, in accordance with Procedure Rule 4.2.12 (m), the Council considered a Motion to continue the meeting beyond 10.30pm for a maximum of

30 minutes to enable further business on the Agenda to be transacted. This was proposed by Chris Bowring and seconded by Pauline Jorgensen.

Upon being put to the meeting, the Motion was declared by the Mayor to be carried.

30.1 Motion 418 submitted by Wayne Smith

The Council considered the following Notice of Motion submitted by Wayne Smith and seconded by Gary Cowan.

‘Wokingham Borough Council understands and supports the need to provide homes, as it does the Government’s desire to speed up delivery. That is why we are a proactive planning authority, seeking to shape future development through a carefully managed approach, which is enabling the delivery of sustainable, infrastructure rich new communities, including schools, new strategic roads, neighbourhood centres, sports hubs and improved public transport, in addition to 35% affordable housing.

Since 2006, over 8,200 new homes have been provided and outstanding planning permissions are in place to deliver a further 7,000 new homes. In addition, current allocations will deliver a further 2,300 new homes.

Looking at future delivery from now: our housing permissions, allocations and windfalls are capable of delivering 10,700 homes between 2019 and 2036 (equates to an average of 630pa). This compares with the projected demographic growth of new households of 555pa calculated by the 2014-based ONS projections used by the standard method for calculating local housing need (despite more recent ONS figures in the 2016-based ONS projections demonstrating that this figure is an overestimate; the real growth is more likely to be around 486pa).

The standard method for calculating local housing need is designed to require more homes to be built above that required by demographic growth, which is flawed for Wokingham Borough. Building more homes drives up house prices rather than lowering it because of the 20-30% premium on the cost of new homes. Developers will not build housing for sale at lower prices. Also the focus on workplace earnings fails to recognise that residents travel out of the borough to high value, well paid jobs, and that flexible working with work registered out of the Borough, where in reality work is undertaken locally, often at home. The real and necessary response would be to allow us to focus on affordable housing and self-build products, both of which directly help our residents.

The Council supports the Executive to oppose any housing need calculation over and above the demographic growth by whatever means the Executive has at its disposal.’

Wayne Smith commented that the Council was committed to taking its fair share of housing. The Council was currently targeted to build 840 homes a year, Reading 631, Bracknell, 615 and West Berkshire 520. The Motion was about getting the right housing numbers for the Borough.

Gary Cowan referred to the challenging housing number and pressure on infrastructure.

It was moved by Ian Pittock and seconded by Clive Jones that the Motion be amended as follows:

‘Wokingham Borough Council understands and supports the need to provide homes, as it

does the Government's desire to speed up delivery. That is why we are a proactive planning authority, seeking to shape future development through a carefully managed approach, which is enabling the delivery of sustainable, infrastructure rich new communities, including schools, new strategic roads, neighbourhood centres, sports hubs and improved public transport, in addition to 35% affordable housing.

Since 2006, over 8,200 new homes have been provided and outstanding planning permissions are in place to deliver a further 7,000 new homes. In addition, current allocations will deliver a further 2,300 new homes.

Looking at future delivery from now: our housing permissions, allocations and windfalls are capable of delivering 10,700 homes between 2019 and 2036 (equates to an average of 630pa). This compares with the projected demographic growth of new households of 555pa calculated by the 2014-based ONS projections used by the standard method for calculating local housing need (despite more recent ONS figures in the 2016-based ONS projections demonstrating that this figure is an overestimate; the real growth is more likely to be around 486pa).

The standard method for calculating local housing need is designed to require more homes to be built above that required by demographic growth, which is flawed for Wokingham Borough. Building more homes drives up house prices rather than lowering it because of the 20-30% premium on the cost of new homes. Developers will not build housing for sale at lower prices. Also the focus on workplace earnings fails to recognise that residents travel out of the borough to high value, well paid jobs, and that flexible working with work registered out of the borough, where in reality work is undertaken locally, often at home. The real and necessary response would be to allow us to focus on affordable housing and self-build products, both of which directly help our residents.

The Council ~~supports the Executive to~~ oppose any housing need calculation over and above the demographic growth by whatever means the Executive has at its disposal **and agrees to ensure that what is actually built meets the needs of existing residents.'**

Ian Pittock emphasised that it was vital that the Council as a whole and not just the Executive, acted.

The amendment to the Motion was accepted by the proposer of the original Motion and therefore became the substantive Motion.

A number of Members indicated that they supported efforts to reduce the Council's housing numbers.

Carl Doran commented that there was a lack of suitable infrastructure and that the 35% affordable housing target had not been met in many cases. He did not support undertaking a housing consultation as he felt that the answer was already known.

Andy Croy suggested that the Council not support a third runway for Heathrow Airport.

Stephen Conway stated that there was a need for more housing, particularly affordable housing but the scale requested by the Government was unsustainable. The green belt should be safe from housing.

Gary Cowan and John Kaiser emphasised that development was to meet the needs of

prospective and new residents rather than existing residents.

Charlotte Haitham Taylor referred to the scale of development in Shinfield. Whilst she supported new housing, especially affordable housing, not at the current housing numbers.

Lindsay Ferris emphasised that the Council could not continue to accommodate the current housing numbers. It was time for the Council to fight before it was too late and he supported a cross-party consultation.

Charles Margetts referred to several applications in his ward that had been refused and had gone to appeal, which the Council had then won. The cost of these appeals had been high.

Clive Jones stated that there was a shortage of the right types of homes and that there needed to be more 1 and 2 bedroom properties.

It was moved by Wayne Smith and seconded by Pauline Jorgensen that the Motion be amended as follows:

‘Wokingham Borough Council understands and supports the need to provide homes, as it does the Government’s desire to speed up delivery. That is why we are a proactive planning authority, seeking to shape future development through a carefully managed approach, which is enabling the delivery of sustainable, infrastructure rich new communities, including schools, new strategic roads, neighbourhood centres, sports hubs and improved public transport, in addition to 35% affordable housing.

Since 2006, over 8,200 new homes have been provided and outstanding planning permissions are in place to deliver a further 7,000 new homes. In addition, current allocations will deliver a further 2,300 new homes.

Looking at future delivery from now: our housing permissions, allocations and windfalls are capable of delivering 10,700 homes between 2019 and 2036 (equates to an average of 630pa). This compares with the projected demographic growth of new households of 555pa calculated by the 2014-based ONS projections used by the standard method for calculating local housing need (despite more recent ONS figures in the 2016-based ONS projections demonstrating that this figure is an overestimate; the real growth is more likely to be around 486pa).

The standard method for calculating local housing need is designed to require more homes to be built above that required by demographic growth, which is flawed for Wokingham Borough. Building more homes drives up house prices rather than lowering it because of the 20-30% premium on the cost of new homes. Developers will not build housing for sale at lower prices. Also the focus on workplace earnings fails to recognise that residents travel out of the borough to high value, well paid jobs, and that flexible working with work registered out of the borough, where in reality work is undertaken locally, often at home. The real and necessary response would be to allow us to focus on affordable housing and self-build products, both of which directly help our residents.

The Council oppose any housing need calculation over and above the demographic growth by whatever means the Executive has at its disposal and agrees to ensure that what is actually built meets the needs of existing residents.’

The amendment to the Motion was accepted by the proposer of the original Motion and therefore became the substantive Motion.

Upon being put to the vote, the amended (substantive) Motion was declared by the Mayor to be carried.

RESOLVED: That Wokingham Borough Council understands and supports the need to provide homes, as it does the Government's desire to speed up delivery. That is why we are a proactive planning authority, seeking to shape future development through a carefully managed approach, which is enabling the delivery of sustainable, infrastructure rich new communities, including schools, new strategic roads, neighbourhood centres, sports hubs and improved public transport, in addition to 35% affordable housing.

Since 2006, over 8,200 new homes have been provided and outstanding planning permissions are in place to deliver a further 7,000 new homes. In addition, current allocations will deliver a further 2,300 new homes.

Looking at future delivery from now: our housing permissions, allocations and windfalls are capable of delivering 10,700 homes between 2019 and 2036 (equates to an average of 630pa). This compares with the projected demographic growth of new households of 555pa calculated by the 2014-based ONS projections used by the standard method for calculating local housing need (despite more recent ONS figures in the 2016-based ONS projections demonstrating that this figure is an overestimate; the real growth is more likely to be around 486pa).

The standard method for calculating local housing need is designed to require more homes to be built above that required by demographic growth, which is flawed for Wokingham Borough. Building more homes drives up house prices rather than lowering it because of the 20-30% premium on the cost of new homes. Developers will not build housing for sale at lower prices. Also the focus on workplace earnings fails to recognise that residents travel out of the borough to high value, well paid jobs, and that flexible working with work registered out of the borough, where in reality work is undertaken locally, often at home. The real and necessary response would be to allow us to focus on affordable housing and self-build products, both of which directly help our residents.

The Council oppose any housing need calculation over and above the demographic growth by whatever means the Executive has at its disposal and agrees to ensure that what is actually built meets the needs of residents.

30.2 Motion 419 submitted by Keith Baker

The Council considered the following Notice of Motion submitted by Keith Baker and seconded by Laura Blumenthal.

'Recently a major political party has been embroiled in a large number of allegations of statements and speeches which express serious anti-Semitic sentiments. Up until now this had not really emerged locally but recent local newspaper reports have suggested that this area is not immune. Get Reading reported on 22nd May that "Reading Labour scraps anti-Semitism training session because of a pro-Palestinian speaker." This was followed up by an article in the Jewish Chronicle on the same day, 22nd May expanding this same story.

Nationally the Equality and Human Rights Commission have now opened an investigation into the Labour Party following complaints about anti-Semitism. On 28th May they posted

“The Equality and Human Rights Commission is today launching a formal investigation to determine whether The Labour Party has unlawfully discriminated against, harassed or victimised people because they are Jewish.”

I do not envy the Reading Labour Party or any other political party as they wrestle with how to deal with these matters and I wish them well in dealing with anyone who has expressed anti-Semitic views.

I hope all Councillors will put party politics aside and support this motion:

This Council abhors any attack on individual groups, including our Jewish residents and commits to lend support to anyone attempting to drive out such anti-Semitic views from our local political scene regardless of any political allegiance.’

At this point in the meeting, 11pm, in accordance with rule 4.2.8.1, the Mayor put the Motion to vote without further discussion.

Prior to the vote being held, six Members, in accordance with Rule of Procedure 4.2.15.5, requested that a recorded vote be taken on the proposed Motion.

The voting was as follows:

For	Against	Abstained
Keith Baker		Malcolm Richards
Parry Batth		Bill Soane
Laura Blumenthal		
Chris Bowring		
Shirley Boyt		
Rachel Burgess		
Jenny Cheng		
UllaKarin Clark		
Andy Croy		
Richard Dolinski		
Carl Doran		
Michael Firmager		
Guy Grandison		
Charlotte Haitham Taylor		
John Halsall		
Emma Hobbs		
Pauline Jorgensen		
John Kaiser		
Abdul Loyes		
Charles Margetts		
Ken Miall		
Stuart Munro		
Gregor Murray		
Barrie Patman		
Angus Ross		
Daniel Sargeant		
Chris Smith		

Wayne Smith		
Alison Swaddle		
Simon Weeks		

RESOLVED: That recently a major political party has been embroiled in a large number of allegations of statements and speeches which express serious anti-Semitic sentiments. Up until now this had not really emerged locally but recent local newspaper reports have suggested that this area is not immune. Get Reading reported on 22nd May that “Reading Labour scraps anti-Semitism training session because of a pro-Palestinian speaker.” This was followed up by an article in the Jewish Chronicle on the same day, 22nd May expanding this same story.

Nationally the Equality and Human Rights Commission have now opened an investigation into the Labour Party following complaints about anti-Semitism. On 28th May they posted “The Equality and Human Rights Commission is today launching a formal investigation to determine whether The Labour Party has unlawfully discriminated against, harassed or victimised people because they are Jewish.”

I do not envy the Reading Labour Party or any other political party as they wrestle with how to deal with these matters and I wish them well in dealing with anyone who has expressed anti-Semitic views.

I hope all Councillors will put party politics aside and support this motion:

This Council abhors any attack on individual groups, including our Jewish residents and commits to lend support to anyone attempting to drive out such anti-Semitic views from our local political scene regardless of any political allegiance.

TITLE	Tenants Charter – Modernising the customer experience in Wokingham Borough Council
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Full Council on 19 September 2019
WARD	None specific
LEAD VOLUNTEER	Steve Bowers – Chairperson of the Tenant and Landlord Improvement Panel (Involved Tenant Volunteer)

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

- Negative perceptions of council housing challenged and a more positive language used, resulting in the community feeling respected, equal and valued
- Wokingham Borough Council tenants receiving a more personalised service
- Introduction of self-serve opportunities for tenants, making processes more streamline, efficient and increasing productivity of the Housing, Income and Assessments service
- Increased knowledge about future patterns of housing need and demand and tenants having the opportunity to shape the communities in partnership with the council
- Building new homes and refurbishing others to a ‘fit for a lifetime’ standard – adaptable homes so people do not have to move in response to age, disability etc.
- Eco-friendly homes – environmentally friendly, lower cost for tenants and supporting Wokingham Borough Council’s climate change agenda
- Increased accessibility to the council housing service – self-serve, digital engagement but also supporting more traditional methods e.g. appointments etc for those who still wish to have this form of contact
- Offering tenants more choice
- Responding to the ageing population
- Tenants who once may have been struggling, are more confident about their finances – leading to a reduction in rent arrears and increase in revenue to be invested in to the housing service
- Greater transparency in relation to health and safety – accessible through the online personalised customer record
- Assurance that the housing service fulfils its data protection obligations

RECOMMENDATION

The Involved Tenants would like to:

- 1) ask the Council to note the aspirations outlined in the Tenants Charter and continue to work in partnership with them to achieve these;
- 2) recommend that Wokingham Borough Council’s progress in terms of addressing this Charter is formally reviewed in two years’ time.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The purpose of the report is to formally introduce the Tenants Charter to the Council.

The Tenants Charter has been developed by the Involved Tenants and has been subject to review and approval by the Tenant and Landlord Improvement Panel.

This charter sets out the views of Wokingham Borough Council's Involved Tenants' on what is needed to modernise the customer experience and ensure continuous improvement.

It is intended as a series of aspirations, rather than demands, and to stimulate a broader discussion within the council as a corporate body.

There are ten key priorities of Wokingham Borough Council tenants in the modernisation of housing services:

1. Tackling the stigma associated with being a council tenant
2. Identifying future patterns of tenant need and demand
3. Maximising the accessibility of council services
4. Modernising tenant engagement techniques to increase active involvement
5. Creating an easy 'friction-free' customer experience for tenants
6. Giving tenants greater choice on who does repairs and when
7. Responding to an ageing tenant population
8. Helping tenants manage their personal finances more effectively
9. Greater transparency regarding tenant health and safety inspection results
10. Developing a protocol for the analysis and protection of tenant data

Background

Several factors make it timely to reflect on the future of housing services for council tenants:

- The emerging lessons from the Grenfell Tower disaster in 2016 – notably the need for a greater focus on health and safety, tenant involvement in refurbishment schemes and transparency over landlord decision-making.
- The government’s housing Green Paper of 2018 which promised enhanced consumer regulation applicable to councils and housing associations and challenged landlords to raise service standards and levels of resident engagement.
- The emerging opportunities for digital transformation of service delivery and resident involvement in respect of increased efficiency and an improved tenant customer experience.
- Other social trends such as an ageing population, increasing demand for disability and social care support, increasing customer expectations (particularly amongst younger generations) and the rapid rise of social media and so on.

We believe that the council and tenants need to respond to these issues by working together to plan for the modernisation of housing services over the next decade and beyond if:

- Current levels of satisfaction are to be maintained, and
- Opportunities to increase efficiency are to be realised.

Where this Charter refers to new digital technologies, explanatory text boxes explain the options available to Wokingham Borough Council and how the council and its tenants can benefit.

Where suppliers are named, this is for illustrative purposes and does not constitute an endorsement.

Some of the proposals can be implemented relatively easily, some will require additional funding and others will require corporate agreement by full council.

List of Background Papers	
Tenants Charter – Modernising the customer experience in Wokingham Borough Council	
Tenants Charter Video – to be viewed at the meeting	

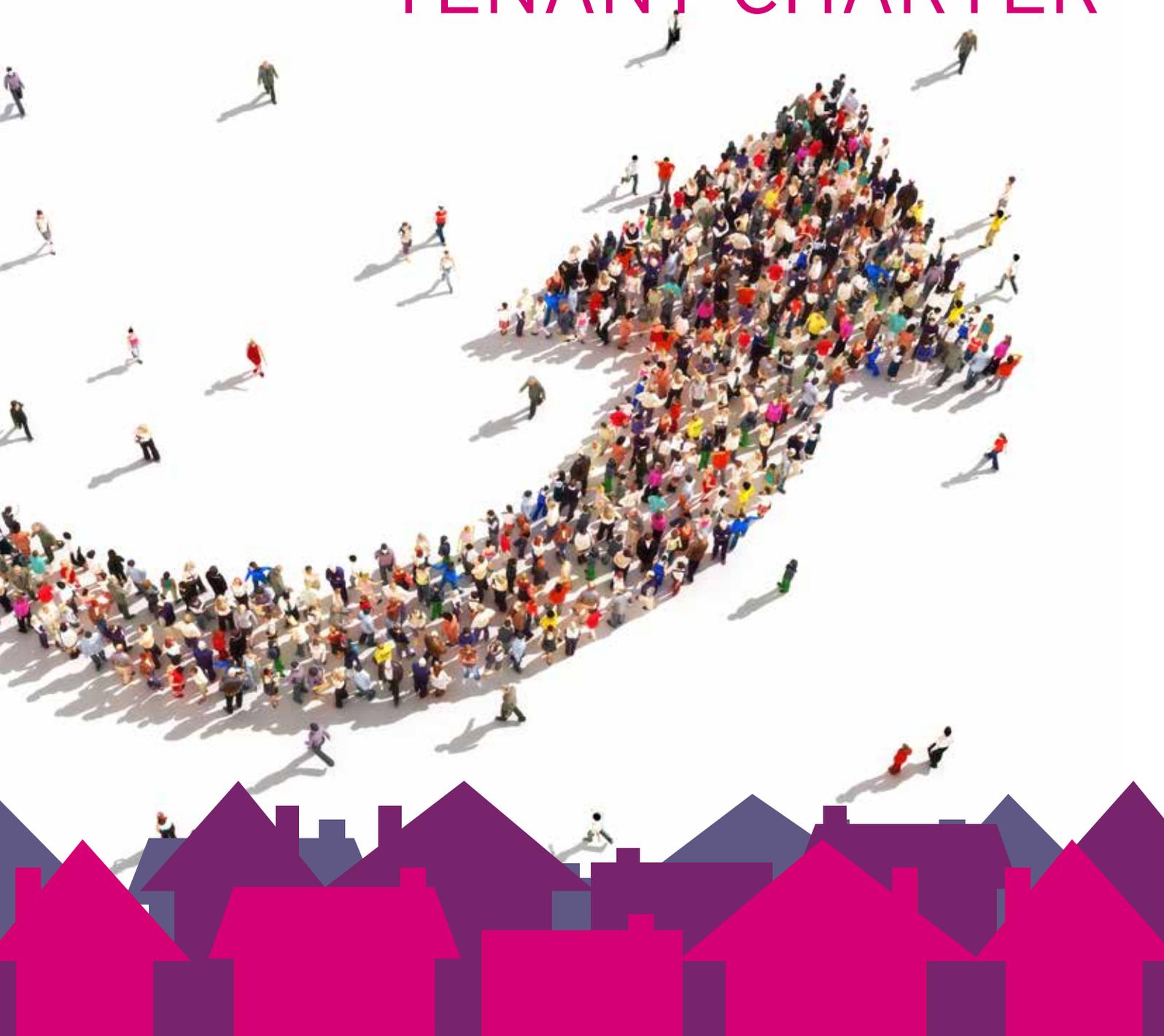
Contact: Steve Bowers	
Email: Steve.Bowers@wbcinvolved.com	

This page is intentionally left blank

Modernising the tenant customer experience in Wokingham Borough Council



TENANT CHARTER



Modernising the tenant customer experience in Wokingham Borough Council: A tenant charter

Contents:

The purpose of this Charter

Acknowledgements

Key priorities

Tackling the stigma associated with being a council tenant

Identifying future patterns of tenant housing need and demand

Maximising the accessibility of council housing services

Modernising tenant engagement techniques to increase active involvement

Creating a 'friction-free' customer experience for tenants

Giving tenants greater choice on who does repairs and when

Responding to an ageing tenant population

Helping tenants manage their personal finances more effectively

Greater transparency regarding health and safety inspection results

Developing a protocol for the analysis and protection of tenant data

The purpose of this Charter

Several factors make it timely to reflect on the future of housing services for council tenants:

- the emerging lessons from the Grenfell Tower disaster in 2016 – notably the need for a greater focus on health and safety, tenant involvement in refurbishment schemes and transparency over landlord decision-making
- the government's housing Green Paper of 2018 which promised enhanced consumer regulation applicable to councils and housing associations and challenged landlords to raise service standards and levels of resident engagement
- the emerging opportunities for digital transformation of service delivery and resident involvement in respect of increased efficiency and an improved tenant customer experience
- other social trends such as an ageing population, increasing demand for disability and social care support, increasing customer expectations (particularly amongst younger generations) and the rapid rise of social media and so on.

We believe that the council and tenants need to respond to these issues by working together to plan for the modernisation of housing services over the next decade and beyond if:

- current levels of satisfaction are to be maintained, and
- opportunities to increase efficiency are to be realised.

This charter sets out the views of Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) involved tenants' views on what is needed. It is intended as a series of *aspirations*, rather than demands, and to stimulate a broader discussion within the council as a corporate body.

Where this Charter refers to new digital technologies, explanatory text boxes explain the tech options available to WBC and how the council and its tenants can benefit. Where suppliers are named, this is for illustrative purposes and does not constitute an endorsement.

Some of our proposals can be implemented relatively easily, some will require additional funding and others will require corporate agreement by full council.

We recommend that WBC's progress in terms of addressing this Charter is formally reviewed in two years' time.

Acknowledgements

This Charter has been produced by the involved tenants of Wokingham Borough Council (WBC).

The Charter was commissioned, managed and signed-off by Steve Bowers, Chair of the Tenant and Landlord Improvement Panel.

Technical input for, and the drafting of, the Charter was undertaken by Ross Fraser.

Special thanks are due to Simon Price, Hannah Linder and Kim Jakubiszyn of the WBC housing department for assistance in this project and their ongoing commitment to effective tenant engagement in the Borough.

Key priorities

There are **ten key priorities** of WBC tenants in the modernisation of housing services:

1. Tackling the stigma associated with being a council tenant
2. Identifying future patterns of tenant need and demand
3. Maximising the accessibility of council services
4. Modernising tenant engagement techniques to increase active involvement
5. Creating an easy 'friction-free' customer experience for tenants
6. Giving tenants greater choice on who does repairs and when
7. Responding to an ageing tenant population
8. Helping tenants manage their personal finances more effectively
9. Greater transparency regarding tenant health and safety inspection results
10. Developing a protocol for the analysis and protection of tenant data

We now set out our aspirations in respect of these key priorities.

1. Tackling the stigma associated with being a council tenant

Many tenants recall the days when council housing was sought-after and provided accommodation for different social classes, united in the need for a family home. Even today, the offer of a home in the Council's new developments is an exciting life-enhancing opportunity.

Sadly, over the last forty years the image of council housing has suffered and it is seen by many – particularly the media - as second-class accommodation comprised of run-down neighbourhoods inhabited by feckless crime-prone layabouts.

Nine in ten (91%) social housing tenants say they are portrayed negatively by the media



SEE THE PERSON.
#RespectTheIndustry

This stigma impacts on the life chances of council tenants and on their self-esteem.

We would like to see WBC tackle the issue of stigmatisation through:

- a proactive media campaign to challenge negative perceptions of council housing in the local and regional media – partly through generating regular information for the media on how tenants actively maintain their communities and help support disadvantaged residents. The media work would also involve the speedy correction of inaccurate information
- an overhaul of the language used by councillors and council staff when referring to council housing – abandoning all references to 'estates' in favour of more positive terms such as 'communities' or 'neighbourhoods'
- specifying a requirement - in commercial and employment contracts – that contractors, service delivery partners and employees treat tenants fairly and do not stigmatise them
- maximising the attractiveness of future housing schemes by increasing the level of tenant involvement in their design, amenities, transport links and so on
- a more proactive council lead – working with local tenants - in the monitoring of appearance and maintenance of neighbourhoods

- investment in activities – like community fun days – that celebrate local communities and enhance tenant self-esteem
- ensuring that all data on the tenant and their home to be held in a single digital customer record

Single digital customer record

- The ability for customers to view the data the council holds on them is a legal right since the introduction of GDPR
- The integrated single customer record makes it easier for tenants to access the data
- The record will be the core of WBC's engagement with its tenants
- It will drive recognition of the need to personalise all services to tenants
- The record will cover all data on the tenant and their home and will be updated in a timely manner
- The tenant can view the record in digital form at any time - upon request - and amend if inaccurate
- WBC will inform the tenant of any update that it makes to the record
- With prior tenant consent, relevant details from the tenant/property record will be made available to WBC staff/contractors, such as whether the tenant has a disability, any special cultural factors to be considered when visiting the property and so on

2. Identifying future patterns of tenant housing need and demand

Planning the future means recognising demographic trends such as an ageing population, more single adult households, increased ethnic diversity of residents and so on and matching this demand with new housing supply.

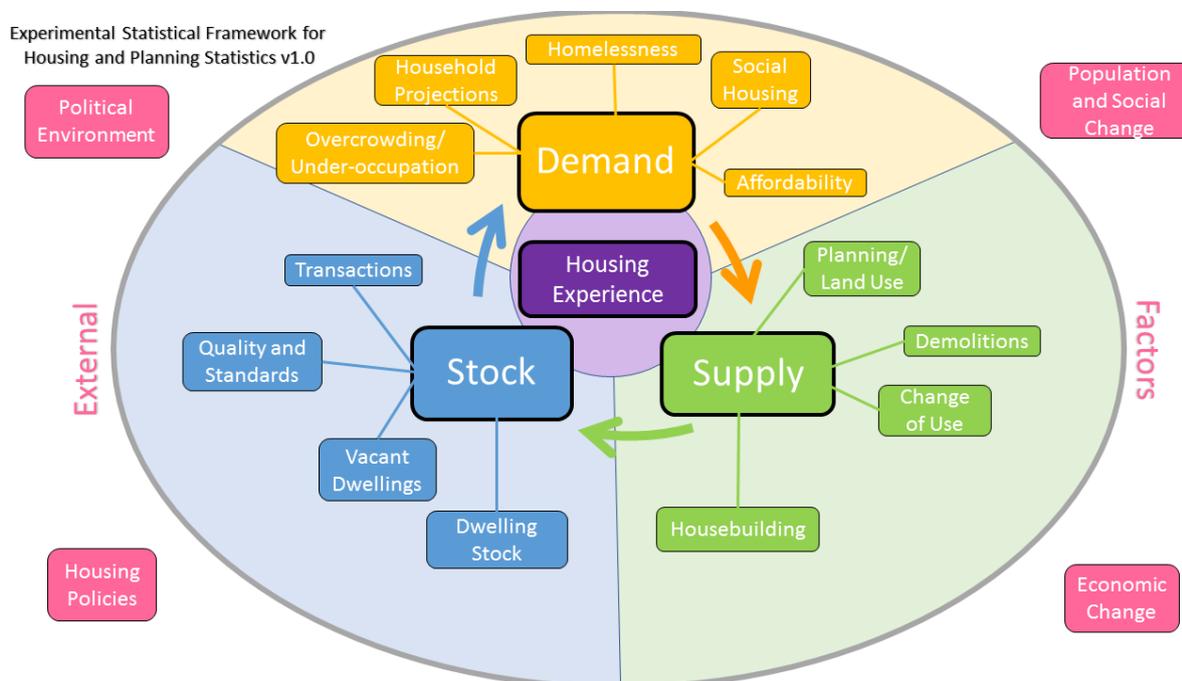


Diagram source: Government Statistical Service

It also involves recognising changing inter-generational housing and service experience aspirations. In simple terms, our children and particularly our grandchildren will have different expectations in terms of the housing service they want.

We would like to see WBC tackle the issue of future patterns of housing demand through:

- greater choice about the type of housing and the tenancy terms being offered - not everyone wants the same thing
- building new homes and refurbishing others to a 'fit for a lifetime' as a core design standard - adaptable homes that mean tenants don't have to move in response to age or disability
- ensuring that new or refurbished homes are designed to eco standards – including but not limited to installation of solar panels, power walls, rainwater butts and so on
- We also aspire to greater tenant involvement in the design of research into future tenant housing need and demand.

We believe that council planning will be improved where:

- tenants have a greater role in planning policy development – through tenant representatives becoming members of the council's Strategic Development Location Group

- tenants can play a key role in analysing the research data that informs planning policy, particularly regarding projections of future housing need amongst current council tenants
- We would like involved tenants to be formally consulted on allocations and lettings policy and practice – especially in any review of the ‘banding system’.

3. Maximising the accessibility of council housing services

We would like to see WBC take practical steps to improve the accessibility of council housing services. We welcome the new Customer Delivery Officer (CDO) initiative but think WBC can and should go further.

Some of these steps involve changing how existing resources are deployed – others involve the use of new technology.

Changes to use of existing resources

- Extend council office opening hours – including Saturday opening
- Freephone for all calls to council switchboard (like the freephone service that already exists for reporting repair requests)
- Minimising call waiting times for housing services by ensuring that the Customer Delivery Officer function is fully staffed – particularly at peak times

Use of new technology

- Introduction of a digital inclusion strategy to ensure that no tenants is left behind by the digital transformation of service delivery
- Provision of a laptop/iPad and free Wi-Fi for all sheltered housing schemes
- Introduction of reporting apps – for repairs, Anti-social behaviour (ASB), neighbourhood condition – allowing photos of issues to be uploaded by tenants (as residents can already do in respect of reporting issues related to roads and highways)
- Introduction of ‘virtual customer service assistants aka *chatbots*’ to answer frequently asked questions (FAQ’s), direct customers to sources of information, perform simple tasks etc.in order to help tenants who have physical or learning disabilities or simply speed up call centre queues for everyone
- Adoption of a *Cloud-first IT environment* – making it easier to undertake data analysis, develop bespoke apps, free up time for digital transformation and so on

Reporting apps

A reporting application (app) is a self-contained programme with an interface that helps the user accomplish reporting tasks by managing the display of data in a computer browser.

Providing that the right IT infrastructure is in place, social landlords can buy apps 'off-the-shelf', develop them 'in house' or outsource app development to a specialist digital design agency.

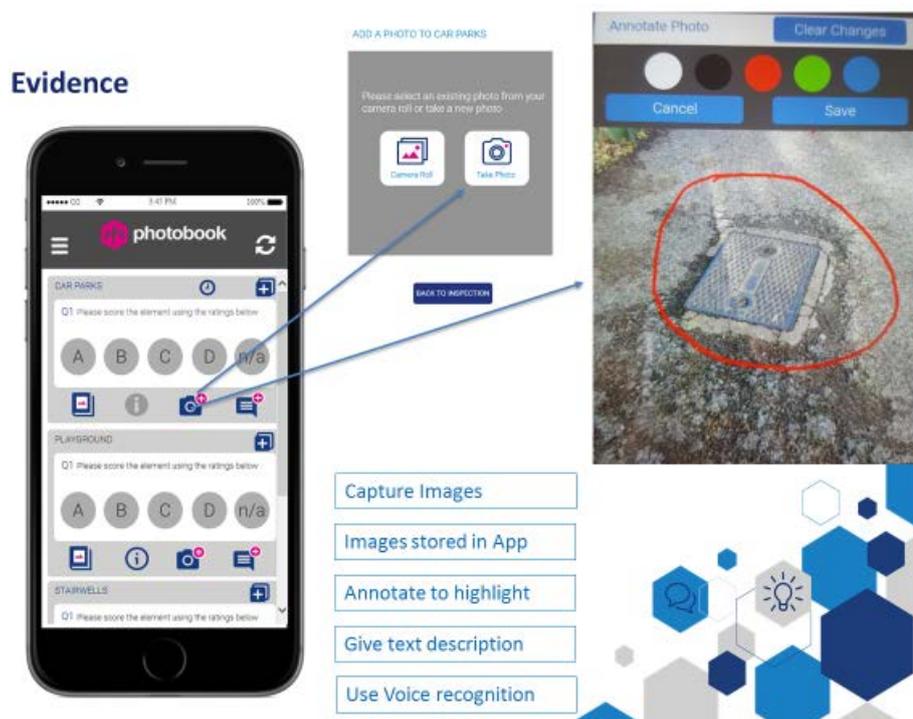
A good example of a reporting app is the HouseMark Photobook.

This is an affordable and easy-to-use app and web portal designed to streamline processes for inspection of neighbourhoods, repairs and voids, health and safety, mutual exchanges, parking (including abandoned vehicles) and so on.

The app user can upload photos of new problems and both landlords and tenants can use the photobook to track the speed and quality of issue rectification.

Although the app was designed for use by staff, some of the social landlords using the app are enabling involved tenants and 'neighbourhood champions' to use the system to report on the condition of their neighbourhood.

The app allows landlords and tenants to save time, work smarter and to use the photo record to ensure that all parties fully understand the issues to be resolved.



There are many other reporting apps available on the market covering ASB, repair requests and so on.

Cloud First IT strategy

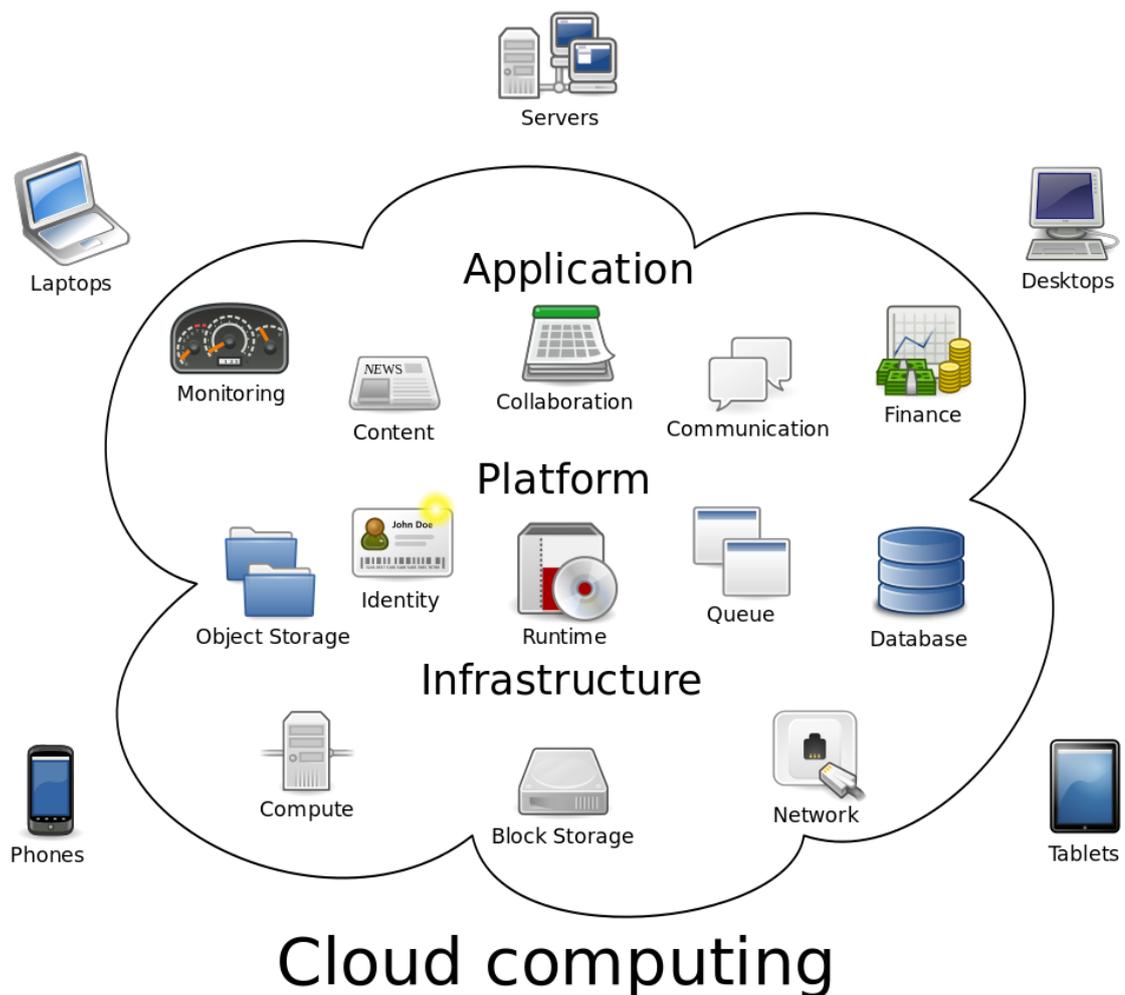
Cloud computing is a metaphor which describes how the group of networked IT elements required to providing digital services need not be individually managed by users. Instead, the entire provider-managed suite of hardware and software can be thought of as an amorphous cloud managed by an external provider via a service contract.

Agility is one of the big advantages of this approach. The speed with which new servers can be provisioned and the ability to 'pay-as-you-go' for data storage and other services are extremely important for delivery of digital services.

Advocates of Cloud computing cite the specific benefits to organisations as:

- avoiding or minimising 'up-front' IT infrastructure costs
- enabling organisations to get their apps up and running faster
- making it easier to undertake data analysis
- spending far less staff time on managing and maintaining IT systems
- freeing up staff time for IT strategy, resident involvement in that strategy and the actual delivery of digital transformation

Both central government and the NHS have adopted a Cloud First IT strategy.



Chatbots/virtual assistants

A chatbot is a computer programme which uses artificial intelligence (AI) to conduct a conversation via auditory or textual methods.

Otherwise known as digital assistants, chatbots are often designed to convincingly simulate how a human would behave as a conversational partner. Chatbots are typically used in dialog systems for various practical purposes including customer service or information acquisition. Google's Alexa is probably the best known chatbot.

Some chatbots use sophisticated natural language processing systems, but many simpler bots scan for keywords within the input, then pull a reply with the most matching keywords, or the most similar wording pattern, from a database.

WBC could deploy a chatbot to:

- provide 24/7 advice on housing matters
- record tenant queries out-of-hours
- direct tenants to emergency assistance or the relevant housing officer
- provide updates on tenant involvement and information on future meetings
- perform simple tasks such as taking payments for rent or Council Tax.

Optivo housing association is set to be the first social landlord in the UK to introduce a chatbot next year. The digital assistant will be both staff and customer facing and will incorporate Optivo's planned use of internet of things (IoT) sensors in its homes.

(See section on *Responding to an ageing tenant population* for discussion of the role of IOT sensors)



4. Modernising tenant engagement techniques to increase active involvement

Traditionally, tenant engagement has been largely based around physical meetings. This has contributed to the over-representation of older tenants compared to younger residents.

We recognise this issue and would like WBC to work with us to increase active tenant involvement. We would like to see WBC take the following practical steps:

- increase the number of involved tenants through recruitment days and more face-to-face involvement opportunities and by varying the length and tone of communications to tenants
- introduce a new website for communicating with tenants
- supplement this by broadening the range of communication channels to include Face time, WhatsApp, Microsoft Messenger, Skype plus on-line housing surgeries with housing or benefits staff and 'virtual chat room' debates between councillors, staff and involved tenants
- appoint a specific officer responsible for updating and running all digital customer contact with tenants (with the support of an involved tenant/involved tenants)
- invest in tenant-led podcasts to ensure there is a regular stream of content

We believe that WBC should supplement its current statistical approach to measuring tenant satisfaction which captures **what** tenants think (the STAR system) with sentiment analysis, which better explains **why** tenants feel the way they feel.

The main use of sentiment analysis is to collect and analyse views expressed on **social media**. For example, retailers use sentiment analysis to judge consumer receptiveness to their products or to understand the impact their competitors are having on the market. Political parties use sentiment analysis to test out policies before they are formally launched.

Sentiment analysis can equally be applied to **surveys** of customers, staff and the general public.

For social landlords, the approach can be used to:

- analyse (structured) survey data
- (unstructured) data held in housing management and repairs IT systems
- follow and capture what is being said about the landlord on social media

Key word analysis techniques can also help social landlords understand the nature of the tenant debate - 'social collective intelligence' - or predict future repair costs.

Crowdscope has developed a system which generates 'social collective intelligence' for social landlords by:

- enabling interaction between tenants involved in a discussion forum or specific single-issue survey and
- then analysing the sentiments that tenants express on each other's opinions to produce rapid insight.

Lewisham Homes is currently hosting a pilot programme run by Field Dynamics and HouseMark which uses sentiment analysis as a component of predictive repairs cost modelling.

Field Dynamics apply an algorithm focused primarily on 'free text' comments or notes fields held over several years in customer relations management systems (CRMs) or other codified data sources – focusing on words such as 'renew handles', 'asbestos' or 'survey' or 'Discretionary Housing Payments'.

This 'soft' knowledge is then combined with 'hard' landlord data on previous asset management costs per property to:

- predict future maintenance costs on a home-by-home basis
- help the landlord decide future budgets
- help the landlord decide whether the replacement of a home is more logical than its continued repair.

5. Creating an easy 'friction-free' customer experience for tenants

Many of the most significant recent changes in human behaviour and customer expectations are being driven by the retail and technology sectors.

Mobile phones are now ubiquitous, online shopping and banking commonplace and retailers are competing over how to make customer transactions as quick and easy as possible. They recognise that transaction time is now as important as price to many consumers. Equally, the most successful retailers are reviewing their recruitment strategy for customer-facing staff and increasing the number of transactions can be undertaken directly by the consumer on a 'self-service' basis.

Unless WBC modernises the customer experience, it faces increased frustration and reduced satisfaction from tenants about why they can do things in other aspects of their life that they cannot replicate in their relationship with their landlord.

We would like to see WBC take practical steps to make the tenant customer experience easier and, if possible, 'friction free':

- recruiting as council housing staff helpful, knowledgeable, positive and sympathetic listeners with a commitment to customer service. It is better to employ people with the right personality traits and then train them, than to base recruitment primarily on the possession of formal qualifications
- deploying the new Customer Delivery Officers as a single point of contact for initial enquiries matched by easy access to specialists when required
- reviewing response time targets and steps to ensure that they are met in practice and that targets are agreed with involved tenants
- providing greater choice for tenants in terms of, for example, kitchen finishes and white goods supplied
- introducing *self-service housing* (see below)

Self-service in social housing

Most social landlords have either introduced a greater element of self-service for their tenants or are actively considering doing so.

Self-service is now an integral part of our daily lives. Self-service check outs at supermarkets are second nature and in banking, self-service apps are ubiquitous.

It is now commonplace to book medical appointments online and to receive texts reminding you to attend.

The aim of 'self-service' is to encourage most tenants to manage their accounts online.

This significantly reduces the transactional demand on the landlord, particularly around call-centre costs where staffing and 'on-costs' such as office space are significant.

Freed-up staff resources can be redeployed to dealing with tenants with multiple complex needs or for managing the introduction of Universal Credit.

Tenants benefit from – at a single touch – being able on a 24/7 basis to undertake transactions online, such as:

- Check rent balance and view statements
- Report repairs and make appointments
- Check repairs history
- Make a secure payment
- Report anti-social behaviour
- Update family/household details
- Log complaints and compliments
- Permissions for pets, satellite dishes and online surveys etc.
- Access information about the home – such as how to use the central heating systems or where to locate stop-cocks
- Access virtual on-line 3D property tours, based on computer aided design, for transfers / lettings, consultation on refurbishment schemes or new build projects or purchasing of furniture or white goods – supplemented by emailable 2D presentations.

For self-service to be successful, tenants need to **actively use the facility**. This requires an easy-to-use platform, training videos and drop-in sessions, a marketing campaign and the back-up option of speaking to staff for the c10% of the population that do not have access to the internet or whose disability prevents them from using online services.

Tenants are more likely to take-up self service housing if involved tenants have been part of the team that designs the self-service offer.

A typical self-service dashboard looks like this:



6. Giving tenants greater choice on who does repairs and when

Perhaps the most important single issue for tenants is day-to-day responsive repairs. Some repairs will be 'qualifying work' which is the landlord's responsibility and others will fall to tenants to organise themselves.

We would like to see WBC modernise its repairs operations by:

- introducing an accredited handyman service for 'non-qualifying work' – providing tenants with a list of trusted tradespeople who could do jobs which are not the landlord's responsibility – building upon existing WBC handyman arrangements for social care
- enabling tenants to order and cancel repairs directly with contractors for 'qualifying work' - using a list of council-approved contractors
- enabling tenants to be offered a range of hourly time-banded appointment options when they negotiate repair times with contractors

The combined effect of these changes would be to place council tenants in an equal position to private owner-occupiers when commissioning repairs – in itself, a modest contribution to tackling stigma.

Tenants would also like WBC to investigate the benefits of having a mixture of maintenance contractors – prime commercial, a directly employed labour force and (to support local economic development and help tackle climate change) local small contractors and handymen.

Tenants are already involved in the selection of prime commercial contractors but would like a say in the sub-contractors appointed by the prime contractor to undertake the actual work.

Providing a choice of contractor for responsive repairs

Several social landlords – such as Notting Hill Genesis and Metropolitan Thames Valley – are adopting an approach to responsive repairs developed by Plentific, a software development company working in the property management field. The Plentific model was originally developed for home owners, providing them with approved lists of pre-accredited handymen, but is equally applicable in social housing.

The system has been compared to Uber. Tenants raise a repair request and, if its one that the landlord is responsible for, the job is offered to a pool of pre-accredited contractors or local tradespeople. The selected contractor then contacts the tenant directly – via a proxy phone number - and together they fix the repair appointment. The system allows the tenant to use photos of the problem when requesting repairs.

But the system is more robust than Uber. The landlord gets several suppliers to choose from, whereas Uber offers only one. The pre-accreditation process for verified tradespeople (covering public liability insurance, Company House registration, ID, proof of address, VAT number and all appropriate qualifications) is far more extensive than Uber applies to its drivers. The cost of pre-accreditation is recovered by a levy on contractor invoices.

The technology has quickly become popular with housing staff as it cuts down the amount of time spent organising repairs, invoicing and sending payments. This will enable Notting Hill Genesis to achieve efficiency gains and redeploy staff to work more closely with tenants who have multiple complex needs. Housing officers are also able to access real time updates on active jobs, as well as a complete digital record of any messages, documents or invoices connected to the work. This digital property record can form part of 'real time' data on the condition of the landlord's stock and the performance of its supply chain.

The system generates new opportunities for local contractors and (if they perform well) a steady flow of work. They are paid immediately upon completion, though never in cash. Contractors tend to undertake the work more quickly – because they can often negotiate out-of-hours appointments with tenants and because they receive instant payment. Abortive visits are much reduced as there is now no excuse for the tenant to miss an appointment. The model can also be developed to add a landlord's direct labour organisation (DLO) and Tier 1/prime contractors to the supplier pool.

How it works.



A year-long pilot at Notting Hill Genesis found that the approach led to reduced repair times, a 20% reduction in job costs, improved asset and supply chain data and enhanced staff satisfaction. Notting Hill Genesis are now rolling out the approach on a phased basis to all its 60,000 homes.

When this is complete, Notting Hill Genesis plan to **allow tenants to select the contractor themselves** – although this will require rigorous controls about ‘qualifying work’ and job cost schedules before it can be introduced.

7. Responding to an ageing tenant population

Demographic experts are united in their prediction of an increasingly ageing UK population. This pattern is likely to be replicated in the composition of the WBC tenant population. The Council clearly needs to reflect this in its plans for future housing provision.

We would like to see WBC modernise its 'offer' to older residents in the following ways:

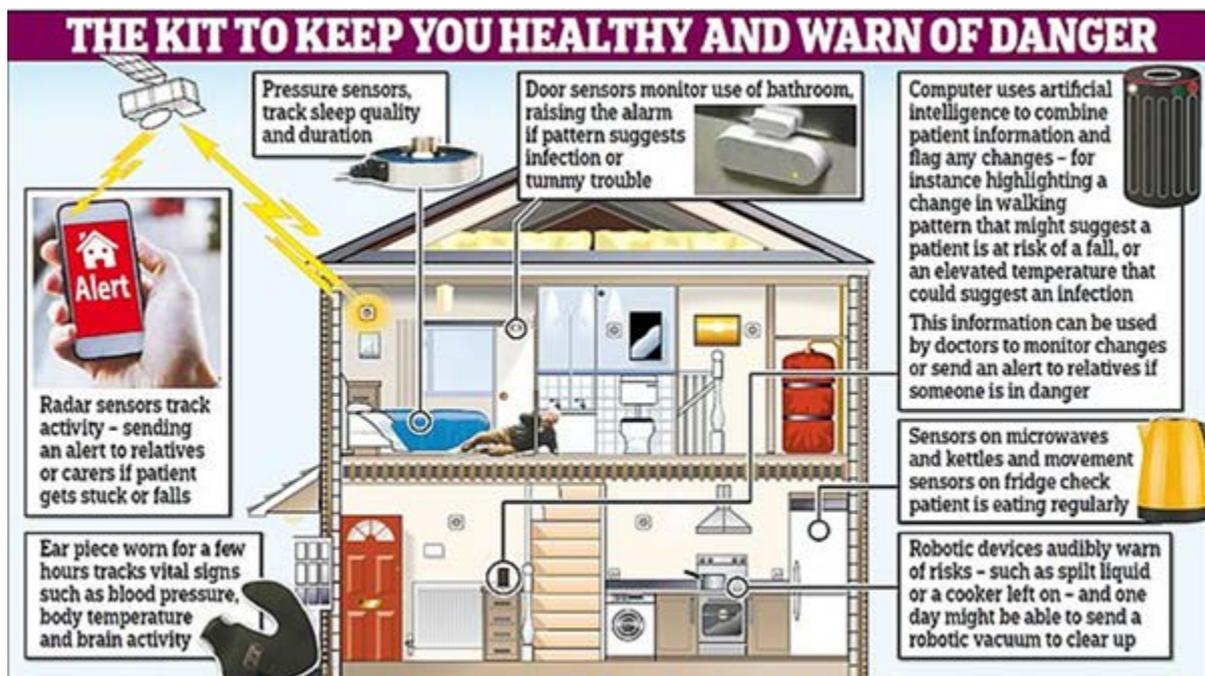
- future budgets should match actual projected need for aids and adaptations
- occupational therapist appointments and subsequent approved improvements should be undertaken in a timely manner
- more bungalows should be built - designed with wider doors etc
- adoption of a new core development standard – homes for a lifetime – for new homes and refurbishment funded via the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) by updating the borough Design Guide
- improved liaison between income collection staff and other agencies and greater support for local charities which act as a source of support and advocacy for tenants with financial issues
- more home visits - particularly for vulnerable tenants
- introduction of wearable technology – alerts for when a fall occurs and sensors to monitor non-standard behaviour patterns that might indicate imminent health risk
- developing a strategy to tackle loneliness amongst all tenants – including elderly tenants
- offering assistive technology to enable ageing tenants or those with a disability to live independently as long as possible.

Assistive technology

Assistive technology is a term used to refer to practical tools that can support functional needs of people who experience difficulties linked to disability or ageing. Examples of assistive technology in the home currently being adopted by social landlords include:

- Automated entrance/internal door/s
- Automated control of devices in the home such as TV, heating, curtains
- Intercoms between rooms
- Flashing devices e.g. a doorbell, which alert the deaf or hard of hearing person that there is someone at the door through a flashing light – coupled with a video intercom at front door
- TV listening devices, which allow the person with hearing loss to adjust the TV volume independently and to eliminate background noise
- Amplified telephones, which provide amplified and higher quality sound to assist people with hearing loss to use the telephone
- GPS tracking for dementia sufferers
- Stand-alone devices such as memory aids and alarms
- Fall, flooding or fire detection devices which can communicate an early alarm to a remote support team
- Linked sensors which can control devices to increase the safety of elderly or disabled people – such as appliances that automatically switch off when not in use - and monitor their wellbeing

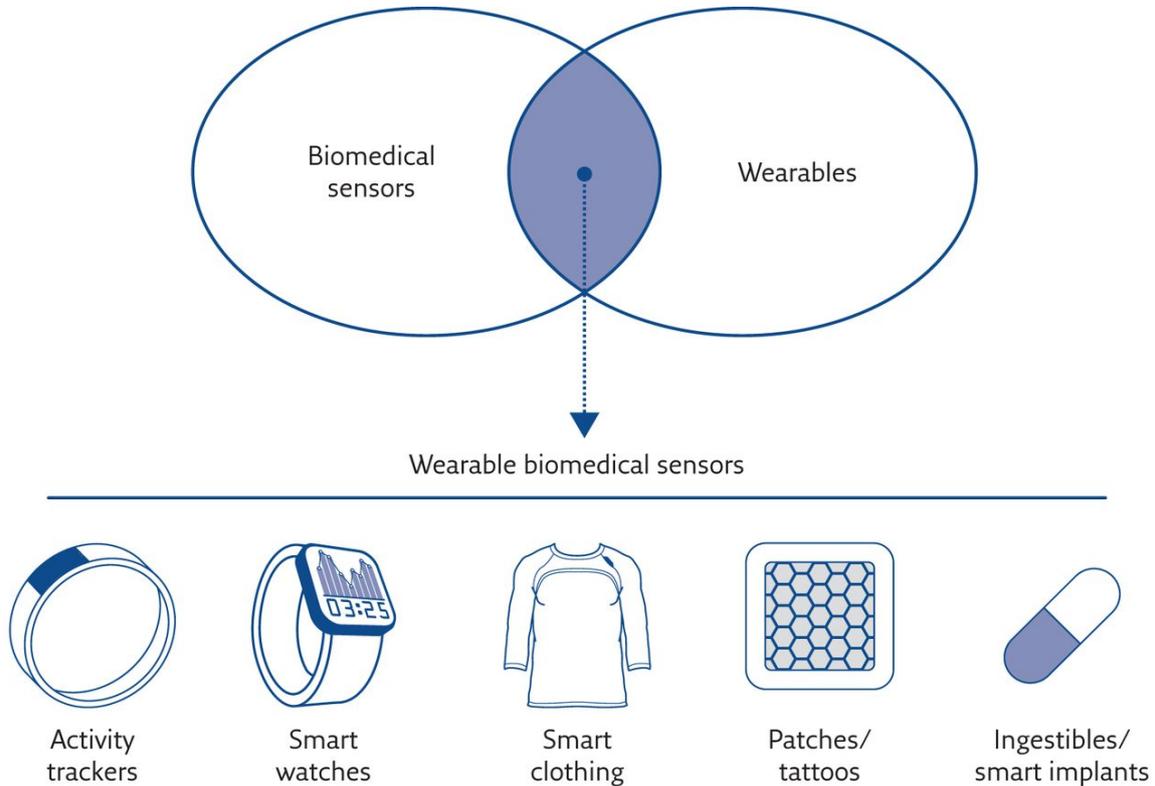
The following diagram from the *Mail Online* provides a useful visual description of how IOT (internet of things) sensors can help monitor tenant wellbeing.



Wearable technology

Wearable technology are smart electronic devices (electronic device with micro-controllers) that can be incorporated into clothing or worn on the body as implants or accessories.

Wearable devices such as activity trackers are an example of the Internet of Things. 'Things' such as electronics, software, sensors, and connectivity are effectors that enable objects to exchange data through the internet with a manufacturer, operator, and/or other connected devices, without requiring human intervention.



The sensors used in the Mail Online diagram above are often housed in the wearables like these.

Wearable technology has a variety of applications which grows as the field itself expands. It appears prominently in consumer electronics with the popularization of the smartwatch and activity tracker. Apart from commercial uses, wearable technology is being incorporated into navigation systems, advanced textiles, and healthcare.

8. Helping tenants manage their personal finances

With the impact of government austerity still being felt by tenants and the transition to Universal Credit enabling tenants on benefits to receive payment directly, it will become harder for WBC to maintain existing levels of rent collection and arrears.

We believe that by helping tenants manage their finances more effectively the Council can help itself.

We would like to see WBC modernise by tackling these issues via:

- a 'financial MOT' to support work with tenants – based on questions such as “have you got a water meter”, “have you got a warm home”, “how much are you spending on utilities”? etc.
- personal budgeting training courses for tenants - run by WBC Tenancy Sustainment Officers and with a specific focus on Universal Credit
- making money management apps available to tenants 'on demand' – to help them to understand their spending on recurring payments, assist with budget analysis and planning, help with saving or accessing credit etc

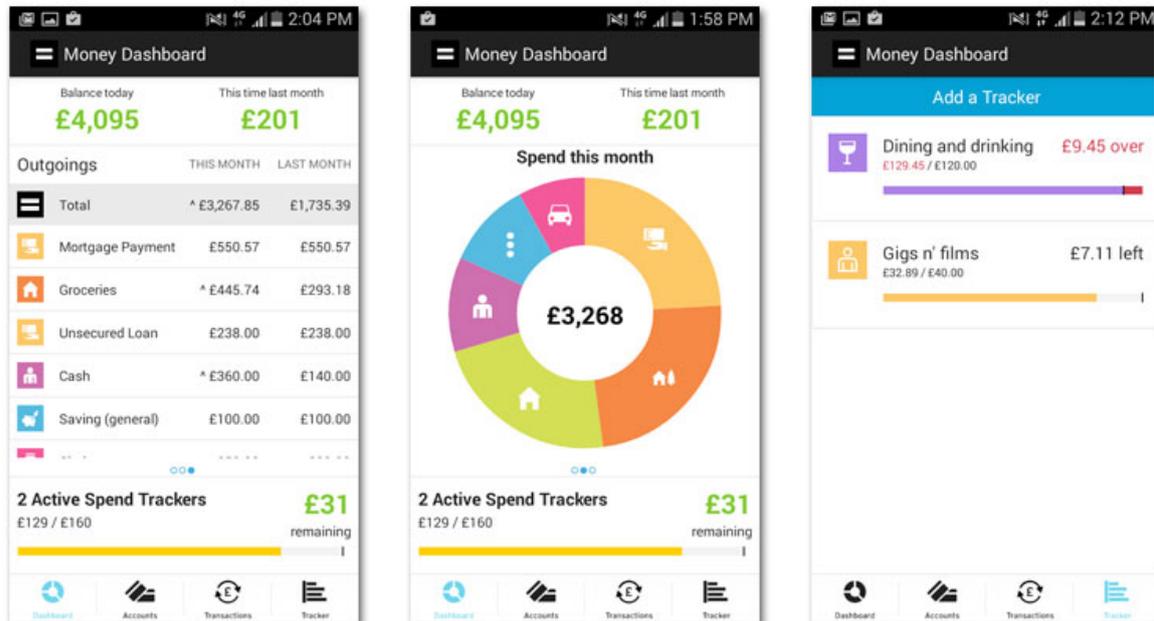
Money management apps

The introduction of 'open banking' in 2018 has led to a flood of new digital financial services including money management apps such as Youtility, Wonder Bill, Money Dashboard, Yolt, Squirrel and Moneyhub. Some of these apps are free whilst others require a modest annual charge (usually less than £10 per year).

Essentially, money management apps are 'part budget planner and part utility price comparison'. The apps use information from a user's bank statements and credit cards to automatically analyse bank transactions and assemble them into an easy-to-view-and-use display which:

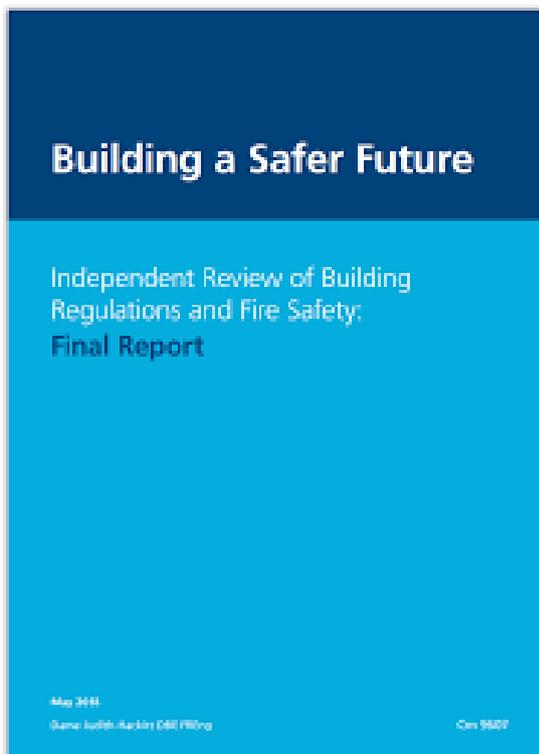
- compiles a list of all the app user's bills – focusing particularly on energy bills, insurance, streaming services, broadband, mortgage and rent payments and council tax bills
- helps the user to set monthly and annual budgets across different categories, track spending and set savings targets
- Enables the user to understand how they are spending their money and what their major expenses are
- allows the user to compare utility prices and switch to the best deal
- Alerts users when they have received a higher bill than normal, when a payment is due or when a utility contract is coming to an end.

A typical money management app looks like this:



9. Greater transparency regarding health and safety inspection results

The Grenfell Tower disaster has led to a renewed focus on the health and safety of council and housing association tenants. The government's Hackitt review of the building regulations (see below) has already led to several concrete proposals for change and improvement. We can expect the future enhanced consumer regulation promised in the government's housing Green Paper to increase the regulatory expectations placed upon social landlords in respect of health and safety.



We welcome WBC's current health and safety practice in the following areas:

- installation of safety aids – fire, smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) alarms - as standard in all new/existing council homes
- annual testing of gas appliances and alarms in all council homes
- annual testing of electric appliances and water (Legionnaires disease) in sheltered schemes and communal areas and community facilities

However, would like to see WBC be more transparent about the outcomes of these tests by:

- publishing smoke, gas, electric and CO monitoring inspection results as part of the digital personalised customer record
- publishing fire safety inspection results - as recommended by the Hackitt review – as part of the accessible online personalised customer record

10. Developing a protocol for the analysis and protection of tenant data

The objective of WBC involved tenants is to help WBC build the level of trust required to gain tenant consent to the use of their personal data for housing data analysis.

The development of machine learning, artificial intelligence, sentiment analysis and the science of data analytics now enables councils to find out more about their tenants' circumstances, needs and aspirations and to use that data to improve housing services.

However, this increased use of personal data creates increased risks of data security and accidental non-compliance with EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and UK rules which, together, place the onus on the council to hold an individual's data securely and with their consent.



We would like to see WBC modernise by:

- using data analytics to predict future housing service need and demand
- enabling tenants to be involved in process of data collection, analysis and findings
- ensuring that all use of tenant data is GDPR compliant
- involving tenants in the development of the Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs) required under GGPR which identify and analyse how data privacy might be affected by specific actions related to the capture and analysis of personal data
- developing a housing-led protocol for the use and protection of data held on tenants based on Information Commissioner (ICO) guidance and the practical execution of ICO guidance as set out in *Transparency and Trust* – the 2017 industry standard HouseMark guide to data protection in social housing

This page is intentionally left blank

TITLE	Treasury Management - Outturn report
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Council on 19 September 2019
WARD	None Specific;
LEAD OFFICER	Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers
LEAD MEMBER	Executive Member for Finance and Housing – John Kaiser

PURPOSE OF REPORT (INC STRATEGIC OUTCOMES)

To inform the Executive and Members of the public of the effective and safe management of the councils cash flow and investments. At the same time being able to make available resources to deliver service improvements and service continuity through the councils ambitious capital investment programme.

RECOMMENDATION

The Executive recommends that Council approve:

- 1) the Treasury Management Outturn report for 2018/2019; and
- 2) the actual 2018/2019 prudential indicators within the report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarises the Treasury Management operations during 2018/2019. It is presented for the purpose of monitoring and review, in accordance with Council’s treasury management practices. The council adhered to all agreed prudential indicators during 2018/2019.

The treasury management activities for 2018/2019 can be summarised as follows:

Capital investment funded by borrowing

Table 1 shows how much of the capital investment for 2018/2019 has been funded in year by available resources.

Table 1:

	2017/18 Actual	2018/19 Budget	2018/19 Actual
	£'M	£'M	£'m
Capital expenditure	89	147	132
Financed in year	(62)	(55)	(59)
Unfinanced capital investment	(26)	(91)	(74)

The unfinanced capital investment is the amount that needs to be funded by either internal or external borrowing.

Borrowing out turn

As mentioned above, to be able to fund the Councils ambitious programme of investment, borrowing is required. This can be achieved in two ways:

- Internal borrowing – the use of the Council’s internal cash reserves to fund the capital investment/expenditure.
- External borrowing - receive loans from other organisations (i.e. PWLB, banks and other local authorities)

To address this borrowing requirement the council looks at capital investment and depending on this, the treasury service organises the Council’s cash position to ensure that sufficient cash is available to meet the capital plans and cash flow requirements. The Council does not borrow all of this money externally but uses some of its internal cash reserves to fund this expenditure. This means that the Council’s capital financing requirement is higher than its external borrowing figures.

Further information on the 2018-2019 capital investment is reported to the Executive in May as part of the Capital Outturn Report.

The following points highlight the key activities on treasury management throughout 2018-2019

- 1) External borrowing increased by a net movement of £57m to £202.5m, consisting of:
 - a) General fund increased external borrowing by £60m
 - b) HRA repaid external borrowing by £3m
- 2) Internal borrowing increased by a net movement of £4.9m from £126.1m to £131m
- 3) Ratio of internal borrowing to capital financing requirement (Total borrowing) reduced by 6.2% to 37.3%. This ratio is reviewed on a regular basis to make sure we are getting best value for money by reducing financing costs and using internal recourses where possible
- 4) Total borrowing increased from £263.0m to £326.5m
 - Internal from £117.8m to £124.0m (net movement)
 - External from £145.2m to £202.5m
- 5) Average interest rate of borrowing for 2018/2019 was 2.42% over an average loan length of 23 years (this has been calculated from the loan portfolio)
 - a) This is lower than the PWLB rate of 2.69% for 23 years (PWLB rate @13-05-19)
 - b) Through strong cash flow planning and monitoring the council have been able to avoid potential additional financing costs of £0.5m per years when comparing if we borrowed at the PWLB rate.
 - c) These additional financing costs over the average loan life of 23 years would equal £12m,
- 6) Interest paid on loans during 2018-19 was:
 - a) General fund - £2.2m
 - b) A saving of (£1.7m) to budget. This saving has been achieved through cash flow planning, monitoring and maximising the borrowing opportunities available (i.e. borrowing from other local authorities rather than the PWLB)
 - c) HRA - £2.8m (agreed to budget)

Investment outturn

Cash flow balances vary significantly throughout the year due to differences in timing of income (council tax, grants etc.) and expenditure (running costs - revenue, and investment in assets and services – capital). Through careful planning and monitoring the council make investments which generate return as outlined below:

- Returns on investments including loans to Wokingham Housing Limited (WHL) and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) has increased to £2.6m from £1.3m in 2017-18
- The council overachieved its returns on investment budget by £0.6m
- The council achieved an average rate of return including internal investments of 1.61 % during 2018-2019. This is broken down as follows:

Local authorities	0.68%
Fund managers / Money markets	0.77%
Loans to subsidiaries	5.29%
Total average rate of return	1.61%
- The average rate excluding loans to subsidiaries was 0.69% which is very positive when compared to the 7 Average LIBID rate of 0.51% as at the 31st of March 2019
- In addition, the Council's investment properties achieved £0.5m gross investment return in 18-19 which is a part year affect and is estimated to make £2.8m gross recurring on an annual basis.

Prudential indicators debt and investment

During 2018-2019 the council did not break any of its prudential indicators

Note: Please see Appendix A for breakdown.

Background

The Council's treasury management strategy is largely influenced by capital investment. Revenue expenditure is balanced with expenditure matching income, and Short term borrowing and deposits. The key driver of the longer term treasury management strategy is capital expenditure and financing.

There are two aspects of treasury performance – debt management and cash investment:

- debt management relates to the Council's borrowing;
- cash investment relates to the investment of surplus cash balances

Further detailed breakdown of the council's performance in these area as summarised in the summary section above and the attached appendices.

Financial Analysis

The performance headlines of this year's treasury management activities are :

External debt as at 31 March 2019 was:

- General fund (non-housing revenue account): £125.8m
- Housing revenue account: £76.7m.

Capital Investment for 2018/2019 was:

- General fund (non-housing revenue account): £124.4m
- Housing revenue account: £7.6m

Investment return for 2018/2019 was £2.6m

For further detail on the Council's achievement on its ambitious capital programme please refer to the Capital outturn 2018-2019

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council continues to face severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of reductions to public sector funding and growing pressures in our statutory services. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions of approximately £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	Debt charges – £5m Returns on investment £2.6m	Yes Yes	Revenue Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	See the 2019/2020 treasury management strategy	Yes	Revenue
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	See the 2019/2020 treasury	Yes	Revenue

	management strategy		
--	---------------------	--	--

Other Financial Information
None

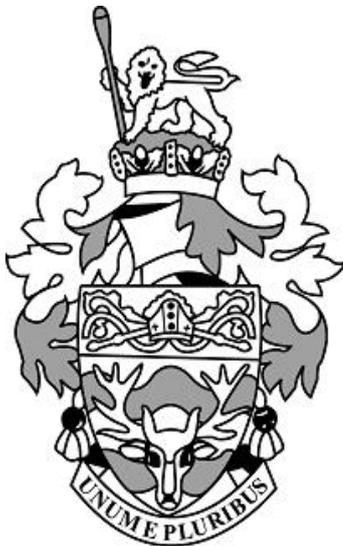
Stakeholder Considerations and Consultation
None

List of Background Papers
Appendix A – Detailed TMS outturn Appendix B – Prudential indicators Appendix C – Loan Portfolio Appendix D – Investment Portfolio Appendix E – Interest Forecast Appendix F – Glossary of terms

Contact Martin Jones	Service Business Services
Telephone Tel: 0118 974 6877	Email martin.jones@wokingham.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Treasury Management Outturn Report 2018-19

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. The Council's Capital Expenditure and Financing 2018/2019.....	3
3. The Council's Overall Borrowing Need	4
4. External borrowing and compliance with treasury limits and prudential indicators	6
5. Compliance with treasury limits and prudential indicators for investments	7
6. Conclusion	9

Appendices

Prudential and Treasury indicators	Appendix B
Loan Portfolio	Appendix C
Investment Portfolio	Appendix D
Interest rates forecast	Appendix E
Glossary of Terms	Appendix F

1. Introduction

This report presents the Council's treasury position for 2018/2019 in accordance with the Council treasury management practices. This is a backward-looking report reviewing performance to 31st March 2019.

The report provides a summary of the economic conditions affecting the Council's investment strategy over the last financial year. It analyses the capital outturn which is a key element of treasury management, driving the borrowing requirement of the organisation. It then shows how the Council has financed its borrowing between internal and external borrowing and how the Council has managed its short-term cash investments.

The Council's treasury management strategy is largely influenced by capital expenditure. Revenue expenditure is balanced with expenditure matching income, and short term borrowing and deposits. The key driver of the longer term treasury management strategy is capital expenditure and financing.

There are two aspects of treasury performance – debt management and cash investment:

- debt management relates to the Council's borrowing;
- cash investment relates to the investment of surplus cash balances.

2. The Council's Capital Expenditure and Financing 2018/2019

The Council undertakes capital expenditure on long-term assets. These activities may either be:

- financed in year, immediately through the application of capital or revenue resources (capital receipts, capital grants, revenue contributions etc.), which has no resultant impact on the Council's borrowing need or;
- funded by borrowing (internal or external).

Capital expenditure forms one of the required prudential indicators. Tables 1 and 2 on the following page show the actual capital expenditure and the funding.

Table 1: HRA and General fund

	2017/18 Actual £'000	2018/19 Budget £'000	2018/19 Actual £'000
Capital expenditure	88.6	146.5	132.3
Financed in year	(62.4)	(55.3)	(58.5)
Unfinanced capital investment	(26.2)	(91.2)	(73.8)

Table 2: HRA

	2017/18 Actual £'000	2018/19 Budget £'000	2018/19 Actual £'000
Capital expenditure	4.9	10.1	7.6
Financed in year	(4.9)	10.1	(7.6)
Unfinanced capital investment	0.0	0.0	0.0

Table 3: General fund

	2017/18 Actual	2018/19 Budget	2018/19 Actual
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Capital expenditure	83.0	136.4	124.4
Financed in year	(56.8)	(45.2)	(50.6)
Unfinanced capital investment	(26.2)	(91.2)	(73.8)

3. The Council's Overall Borrowing Need

The Council's underlying need to borrow for capital expenditure is termed the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). It represents the 2018/2019 capital expenditure financed by borrowing, and prior years' unfinanced capital expenditure which has not yet been paid for by revenue or other resources.

The Council's general underlying borrowing need (the CFR) is not allowed to rise indefinitely. The Council is therefore required to make an annual revenue charge, called the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP), to reduce the CFR. This ensures the general fund pays for the capital asset and is a proxy for depreciation. The total CFR can also be reduced by:

- the application of additional capital financing resources (such as unapplied capital receipts); or
- an additional revenue contribution to the statutory minimum revenue provision (MRP) each year through a Voluntary Revenue Provision (VRP).

This differs from the treasury management arrangements which relates to cash transfers. Short term treasury debt for cash flow purposes can be borrowed or repaid at any time, but this does not change the CFR.

The Council's CFR forecast for 2018/2019 year end is shown below, and represents a key prudential indicator. It includes PFI and leasing schemes on the balance sheet, which increase the Council's borrowing need. However no borrowing is actually required against these schemes as a borrowing facility is included in the contract.

	2018/19 Outturn £'000
Opening balance	271,463
Invest to Save	19,360
Town Centre Regeneration	30,382
Wokingham Housing Ltd	1,112
MRP Borrowing	2,559
S106 forward funded-(to be repaid once S106 is received)	6,579
CIL Forward Funded-(to be repaid once CIL is received)	1,189
Investment Fund	12,615
Prior year adjustment (Swap funding)	(1,291)
new loan	0
Sub Total	343,968

Less Minimum Revenue Provision	
MRP Charge	(2,746)
PFI Principal Charge	(2,770)
Contributions from services (MRP)	(133)
Contribution from income	(288)
Repayment of Loan Principle	(2,284)
Sub Total	(8,221)

Closing Balance	335,747
------------------------	----------------

Movement	64,284
-----------------	---------------

Table 5:CFR : HRA1

2018/19
Outturn
£'000

Opening balance	88,564
	0
Sub Total	88,564

Less voluntary Provision	
Repayment of Loan Principle	(2,284)
	0
Sub Total	(2,284)

Closing Balance	86,280
------------------------	---------------

Table 6: CFR : General Fund

2018/19
Outturn
£'000

Opening balance	182,899
Invest to Save	19,360
Town Centre Regeneration	30,382
Wokingham Housing Ltd	1,112
MRP Borrowing	2,559
S106 forward funded	6,579
CIL Forward Funded	1,189
Investment Fund	12,615
Prior year adjustment (Swap funding)	(1,291)
Sub Total	255,404

Less Minimum Revenue Provision	
MRP Charge	(2,746)
PFI Principal Charge	(2,770)
Contributions from services (MRP)	(133)
Contribution from income	(288)
Repayment of Loan Principle	
Sub Total	(5,937)

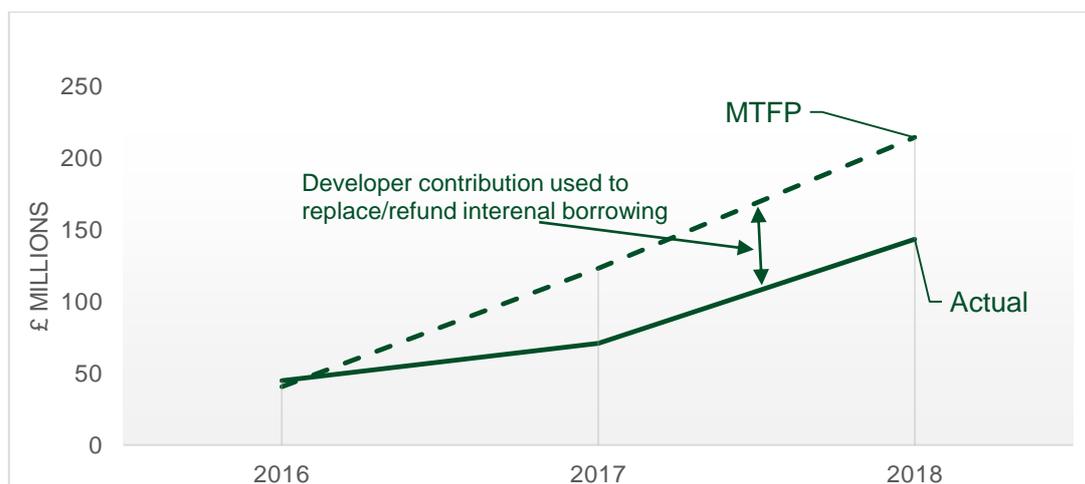
Closing Balance	249,467
------------------------	----------------

Movement	66,568
-----------------	---------------

The in-year increase in the borrowing requirement is due to a large increase in the capital programme for schemes such as the town centre regeneration and forward funding infrastructure spend; this will reduce again when capital receipts from these projects are recovered. It has also increased as a result of the forward funded infrastructure schemes.

The graph 1 below shows the developer contributions being used to refund/replace borrowing.

Graph 1: Actual borrowing compared to MTFP Budget



Part of the Council's treasury activities is to address the funding requirements for this borrowing need. Depending on the capital expenditure programme, the treasury service organises the Council's cash position to ensure that sufficient cash is available to meet the capital plans and cash flow requirements. The Council does not borrow all of this money externally but uses some of its internal cash reserves to fund this expenditure. This is referred to as "internal borrowing". This means that the Council's capital financing requirement is higher than its external borrowing figures. External borrowing may be sourced from bodies such as the Public Works Loan Board [PWLB] or the money markets.

4. External borrowing and compliance with treasury limits and prudential indicators

The council external borrowing is broken as below:

Table 7: External borrowing	2018/2019 Budget £'000	2018/2019 Outturn £'000
Market	24.0	24.0
PWLB/Other Local Authorities	181.7	177.5
Local Enterprise Partnership	1.0	1.0
Total borrowing	206.7	202.5

During 2018/2019, the Council operated within the treasury limits as set out its borrowing treasury management strategy. The position for the prudential indicators is shown in table 8, which is found below. These show that all prudential indicators have been complied with. Further detail on each of these indicators is included in Appendix B.

	Year-end position 2018/2019	
	Does gross borrowing exceed CFR?	Has the limit/boundary been broken
Gross external borrowing	NO	
Authorised limit		NO
Operational boundary for external debt		NO
HRA debt limit		NO
Maturity structure of borrowing		NO
Upper limits on interest rate exposure		NO
The percentage of financing costs set aside to service debt financing costs		NO

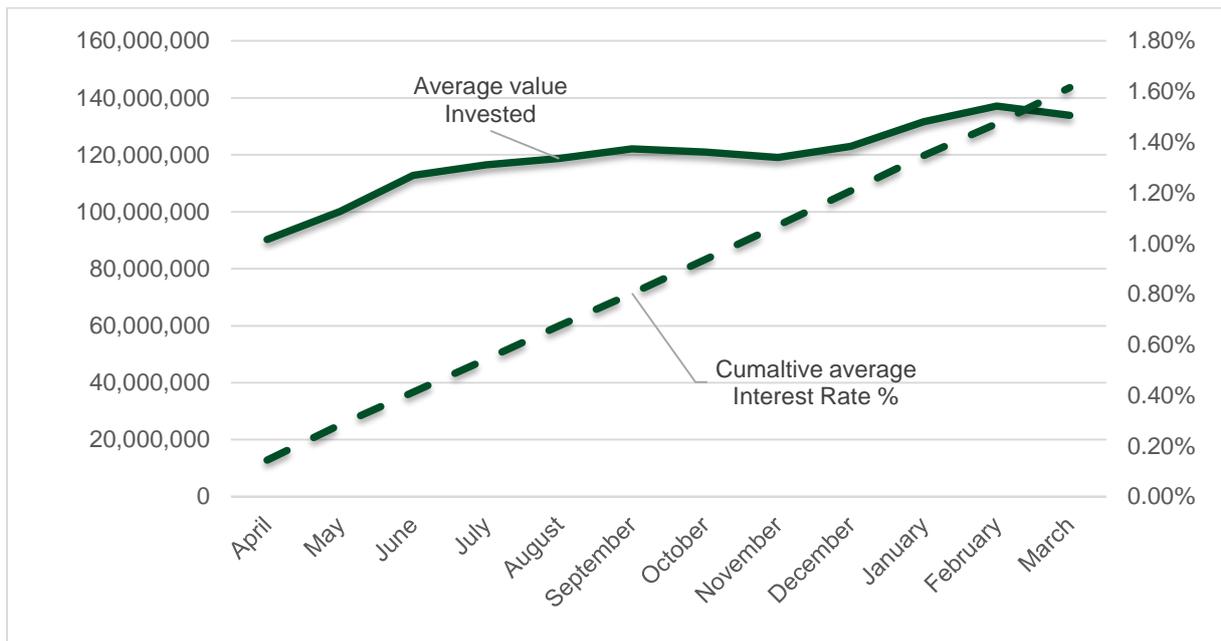
In order to ensure that borrowing levels are prudent over the medium term and only for a capital purpose, the Council should ensure that its gross external borrowing does not, except in the short term, exceed the total of the capital financing requirement in the preceding year (plus the estimates of any additional capital financing requirement for the current and next two financial years). This essentially means that the Council is not borrowing to support revenue expenditure. This indicator allows the Council some flexibility to borrow in advance of its immediate capital needs.

5. Compliance with treasury limits and prudential indicators for investments

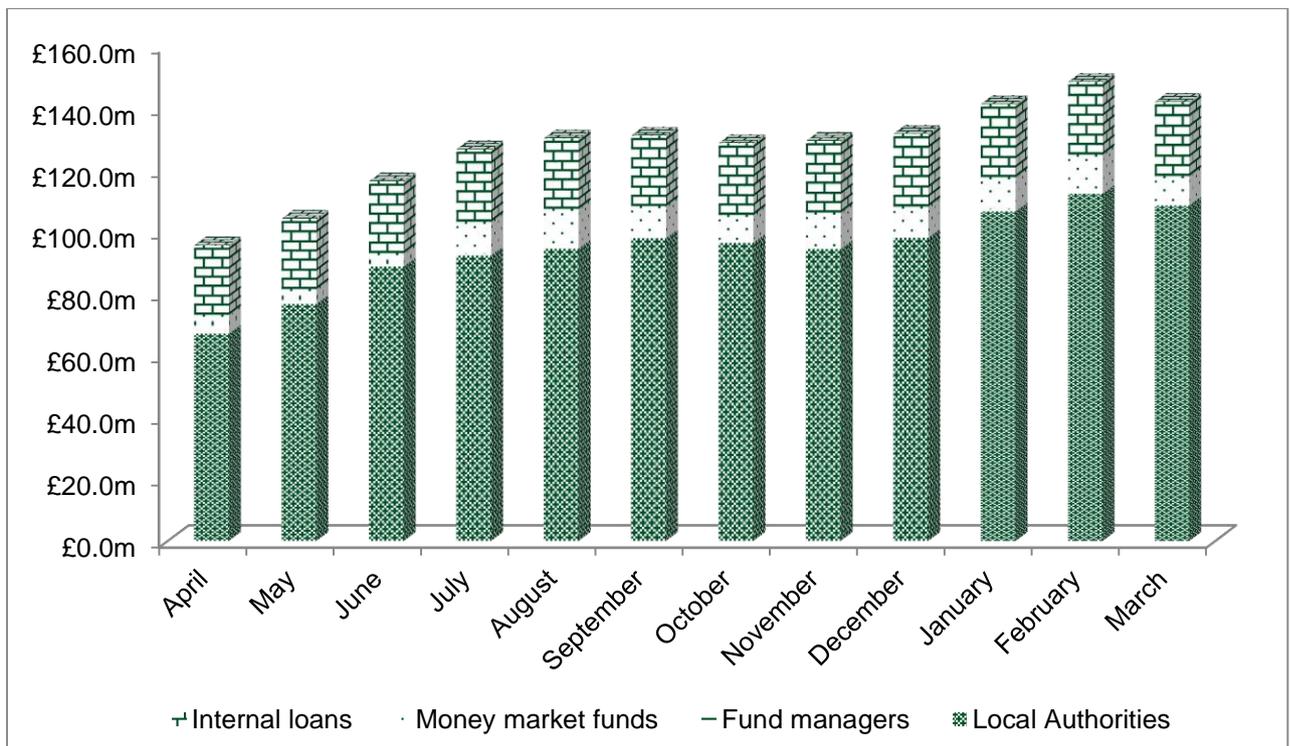
The treasury management team ensure the cash flow is adequately planned, with surplus monies being invested in low risk counterparties, providing security and liquidity initially before considering maximising investment return. The return on investments contributes to the Council's budget for both the general fund and housing revenue account.

The Council will continue to monitor the economic outlook and money markets to ensure it is able to achieve a yield in line with market expectations whilst ensuring security and liquidity of capital are maintained.

Graph 2: Value of investment and cumulative and rate of return 2018/2019.



Graph 3: Breakdown of value invested by month and type of investment



During 2018/2019 year the Council operated within the treasury limits as set out in investment strategy. The position for the investment prudential indicators is shown in table 10 and full details are available in appendix B.

The Council also loans money to its portfolio of companies which are classed as internal loans. For the financial year 2018/2019 the average rate of return was as follows:

- Local authorities 0.68%
- Fund managers / Money markets 0.77%
- Internal Loans 5.29%
- Total average rate of return 1.61%

The average rate excluding internal loans was 0.69% which is very positive when compared to the 7 Average LIBID rate of 0.51% as at the 31st of March 2019

6. Conclusion

The Director of Corporate Services confirms that the approved limits and prudential indicators incorporated within the Annual Investment Strategy were not breached during 2018/2019 with the prudential indicators. The Council is operating in a stringent financial climate, but is still managing to deliver within budgeted interest levels.

This page is intentionally left blank

Prudential and treasury indicators as at 31st March 2019

General fund

Table 1: Prudential indicators capital	2018/19 Budget £'M	2018/19 Year end Actual £'M
Capital expenditure	146.5	124.4
Capital financing requirement (CFR)	275.4	249.5
Annual change in CFR	76.5	66.6
In year borrowing requirement	(91.2)	(73.8)

Table 2: Prudential indicators borrowing	2018/19 Budget £'M	2018/19 Year end Actual £'M
Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream	4.40%	2.48%

The percentage of the revenue budget set aside each year to service debt financing costs is shown above. The outturn figure is below budget as a result of favourable returns compared to budget.

This is calculated as follows: financing cost divide by net revenue stream.

As per 2018/19: £2,890 / £116,347 = 2.48%

HRA

Table 3: Prudential Indicators HRA	2018/19 Budget £'M	2018/19 Year end Actual £'M
Capital expenditure	10.1	7.6
Capital financing requirement (CFR)	87.8	86.3
Annual change in CFR	(2.6)	(2.3)
In year borrowing requirement	0.0	0.0

Table 4: Prudential indicators borrowing	2018/19 Budget £'M	2018/19 Year end Actual £'M
Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream	18.92%	18.26%

The percentage of the revenue budget set aside each year to service debt financing costs. This is calculated as follows: financing cost divide by total income received

As per budget 2018/19: £2,752 / £15,068 = 18.26%

General Fund & HRA

Table 5:	2018/19	2018/19
Prudential indicators –	Budget	Year end
capital expenditure & CFR	£'M	Actual
		£'M
Capital expenditure	156.6	132.0
Capital financing requirement (CFR)	359.7	335.7
Annual change in CFR	73.1	64.3
In year borrowing requirement	(91.2)	(73.8)

Table 6:	2018/19	2018/19
Internal borrowing	Budget	Year end
	£'M	Actual
		£'M
CFR (yearend position)	359.7	335.7
Less external borrowing	206.7	202.5
Less other long term liabilities	8.6	8.2
Internal borrowing *	144.4	125.1
Movement	12.0	19.3
% of internal borrowing to CFR	41.13%	37.25%

Note:* This will be reviewed on a regular basis to make sure we are getting best value for money. The Council is currently using its own cash flow (as rates of return are low), if rates start to increase a new external loan may need to be taken out.

Table 7:	2018/19	2018/19
Upper limit - investments only	Budget	Year end
	£'M	Actual
		£'M
On fixed rate exposures	(100.0)	(99.0)
On variable rate exposures	(40.0)	(0.6)

Table 8:	2018/19	2018/19
Upper limit - debt only	Budget	Year end
	£'M	Actual
		£'M
On fixed rate exposures	210.0	205.3
On variable rate exposures	40.0	0.0

Table 9:
Investment :
Local authorities, Money markets, Fund
managers & Internal Loans

2018/19
Year end
Actual

£'M

Average value invested	86,452.5
Interest received	1,920.0
Average rate of return	1.6%

Table 10:
Investment :
Local authorities, Money markets & Fund
managers

2018/19
Year end
Actual

£'M

Average value invested	95,190.7
Interest received	657.4
Average rate of return	0.7%

This page is intentionally left blank

General Fund Loan portfolio @ 31st March 2019

Type of Loan	Loan no	Principal	Interest Rate	Maturity Date
General Fund		£'000	%	
Local Enterprise Board		250	0	16-May-19
Local Enterprise Board		750	0	16-May-19
London Borough of Bromley	L1046	10,000	1.45	18-Dec-20
London Borough of Barking and Dagenham	L1047	10,000	1.55	30-Jul-21
London Borough of Wandsworth	L1048	10,000	1.45	11-Mar-21
Police and Crime Commissioner for West Midlands, Birmingham	L1053	5,000	1.45	25-Mar-22
Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council	L1049	5,000	1.45	18-Mar-22
North Yorkshire County Council	L1052	5,000	1.45	26-Feb-21
Lincolnshire County Council	L1055	5,000	1.42	26-Mar-21
Islington Council	L1054	10,000	1.4	29-Mar-21
PWLB - GF	485805	976	4.88	01-Aug-22
PWLB - GF	488876	2,343	4.95	01-Feb-34
PWLB - GF	505948	6,000	2.3	31-Mar-34
PWLB - GF	505949	8,000	2.34	31-Mar-35
PWLB - GF	505950	4,000	2.37	31-Mar-36
PWLB - GF	491456	1,431	4.35	30-Sep-46
PWLB - GF	491320	2,929	3.85	01-Aug-51
PWLB - GF	491474	5,587	4.4	01-Aug-52
PWLB - GF	493309	9,764	4.6	31-Mar-54
Just Retirement	1c	4,882	4.88	06-Feb-66
Market - GF	4	1,953	3.68	16-Feb-66
Market - GF	5	4,882	3.73	19-Oct-76
Market - GF	6	1,953	3.77	19-Oct-76
Market - GF	2c	4,882	4.6	11-Jan-77
Market - GF	3b	4,882	4.35	24-Feb-77
Total		65,464		

Type of Loan	Loan no	Principal	Interest Rate	Maturity Date
General Fund		£'000	%	
London Borough of Bromley	L1046	10,000	1.45%	18-Dec-20
London Borough of Barking and Dagenham	L1047	10,000	1.55%	30-Jul-21
London Borough of Wandsworth	L1048	10,000	1.45%	11-Mar-21
Police and Crime Commissioner for West Midlands, Birmingham	L1053	5,000	1.45%	25-Mar-22
Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council	L1049	5,000	1.45%	18-Mar-22
North Yorkshire County Council	L1052	5,000	1.45%	26-Feb-21
Lincolnshire County Council	L1055	5,000	1.42%	26-Mar-21
Islington Council	L1054	10,000	1.40%	29-Mar-21
Total		60,000		

Housing Revenue Fund Loan portfolio @ 31st March 2019

Type of Loan	Loan no	Principal	Interest Rate %	Maturity Date
Housing Revenue Account		£'000	%	
HRA Self Financing	501036	1,988	1.99	28-Mar-20
HRA Self Financing	501034	3,482	2.21	28-Mar-21
HRA Self Financing	501038	4,199	2.4	28-Mar-22
PWLB - HRA	485805	24	4.88	01-Aug-22
HRA Self Financing	501050	3,484	2.56	28-Mar-23
HRA Self Financing	501049	4,116	2.7	28-Mar-24
HRA Self Financing	501045	3,744	2.82	28-Mar-25
HRA Self Financing	501048	3,971	2.92	28-Mar-26
HRA Self Financing	501040	5,415	3.01	28-Mar-27
HRA Self Financing	501046	5,981	3.08	28-Mar-28
HRA Self Financing	501039	6,378	3.15	28-Mar-29
HRA Self Financing	501047	6,789	3.21	28-Mar-30
HRA Self Financing	501037	7,231	3.26	28-Mar-31
HRA Self Financing	501035	8,516	3.3	28-Mar-32
HRA Self Financing	501043	9,276	3.34	28-Mar-33
PWLB - HRA	488876	57	4.95	01-Feb-34
HRA Self Financing	501044	1,000	3.37	28-Mar-34
PWLB - HRA	491456	35	4.35	30-Sep-46
PWLB - HRA	491320	71	3.85	01-Aug-51
PWLB - HRA	491474	135	4.4	01-Aug-52
PWLB - HRA	493309	236	4.6	31-Mar-54
Just Retirement	1c	118	4.88	08-Feb-66
Market - HRA	4	47	3.68	16-Feb-66
Market - HRA	5	118	3.73	19-Oct-76
Market - HRA	6	47	3.77	19-Oct-76
Market - HRA	2c	118	4.6	11-Jan-77
Market - HRA	3b	118	4.35	24-Feb-77
	External	76,694		
WBC General Fund *		8,874	4.5	
	Total	85,568		

* Note this is an internal loan from the general fund to the HRA and is not included in the total external loans.

Total borrowing loans @ 31st March 2019

WBC External Borrowing	Opening Balance @ 01-04-2018	Current Year movement	Closing Balance @ 31-03-2019
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Market Loans	24,000	0	24,000
PWLB Loans	120,256	-2,763	117,493
Local Authority Loans	0	60,000	60,000
Local Enterprise Partnership loans	1,000	0	1,000
Total borrowing	145,256	57,237	202,493

Total borrowing	Opening Balance @ 01-04-2018	Current Year movement	Closing Balance @ 31-03-2019
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Internal borrowing	117,778	6,233	124,011
External borrowing	145,256	57,237	202,493
Total	263,034	63,470	326,504

Maturity structure @ 31st March 2019

Long Term Borrowing	31st March 2018 £,000	31st March 2019 £,000
Between 1 and 2 years	2,738	70,419
Between 2 and 5 years	12,232	8,600
Between 6 and 10 years	23,233	25,489
Between 11 and 15 years	40,634	41,212
Between 16 and 20 years	19,000	12,000
Between 21 and 25 years	0	0
Between 26 and 30 years	1,567	1,431
More than 30 years	42,843	42,757
Total Long Term	142,246	201,908
Short Term Borrowing		
less than 1 year	3,348	250
In House STB		
Total Borrowing	145,594	202,158

This page is intentionally left blank

Investment portfolio @ 31st March 2019

Institution	Loan Number	Amount	Rate	Date Deal made	Maturity Date	Broker
Current lending						
Corby Borough Council	S1108	3,000	0.75%	04/04/2018	04/04/2019	Prebon
Salford CC	S1107	2,000	0.70%	04/04/2018	04/04/2019	Prebon
Merthyr Tydfil County BC	S1124	5,000	0.75%	10/01/2019	10/04/2019	Tradition
Suffolk County Council	S1111	5,000	0.70%	08/05/2018	07/05/2019	Tradition
Darlington Borough Council	S1115	5,000	0.70%	07/08/2018	16/05/2019	Tradition
Leeds CC	S1113	5,000	0.70%	25/07/2018	16/05/2019	Tradition
Surrey County Council	S1116	5,000	0.65%	00/01/1900	28/05/2019	Prebon
Telford and Wrekin BC	S1119	5,000	0.90%	09/11/2018	31/05/2019	Prebon
Aberdeenshire Council	S1112	5,000	0.70%	07/06/2018	06/06/2019	Tradition
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	S1118	3,000	0.90%	09/11/2018	08/07/2019	Tradition
West Dunbartonshire Council	S1134	5,000	0.90%	27/03/2019	01/10/2019	Tradition
Monmouthshire Council	S1120	5,000	1.00%	13/11/2018	03/10/2019	Prebon
Birmingham CC	S1130	3,000	0.88%	23/01/2019	28/10/2019	Prebon
London Borough of Southwark	S1125	5,000	1.00%	11/01/2019	10/01/2020	Tradition
Lancashire CC	S1126	5,000	1.00%	15/01/2019	14/01/2020	Tradition
Southampton City Council	S1127	5,000	1.00%	16/01/2019	15/01/2020	Tradition
Slough Borough Council	S1129	5,000	1.00%	17/01/2019	31/01/2020	Tradition
Fife Council	S1128	5,000	1.00%	17/01/2019	04/02/2020	Tradition
Aberdeen City Council	S1132	5,000	1.00%	13/02/2019	27/02/2020	Tradition
London Borough of Croydon	S1135	5,000	0.98%	28/03/2019	26/03/2020	Tradition
Total		91,000				
Current lending						
Invesco	S1001	5,000	Variable			
Goldman sachs Govt	S1004	3,000	Variable			
Total		8,000				
Investments by Broker/money market		Amount	No deals			
Invesco		5,000				
Goldman sachs Govt		3,000				
Tradition		68,000	14			
DMO		0	0			
Prebon		23,000	6			
Total		99,000	20			
Investments with Subsidiaries						
		23,849				
Total		23,849				
Investments with fund managers						
Aberdeen Asset Manager	S1133	643				
Total		643				
Total investments		123,492				

This page is intentionally left blank

Interest Rate Forecast

PWLB (Includes Certainty Rate)					Forward Rates			
1y	5y	10y	25y	50y	3M/3M FWD	3M/6M FWD	3M/9M FWD	6M/12M FWD
1.44	1.5	1.8	2.36	2.2	0.80	0.78	0.79	0.88
Interest Rate Forecasts								
Bank Rate	Mar-19	Jun-19	Sep-19	Dec-19	Mar-20	Jun-20	Sep-20	Dec-20
Link	0.75%	0.75%	1.00%	1.00%	1.00%	1.25%	1.25%	1.25%
Cap Econ	0.75%	0.75%	0.75%	1.00%	1.25%	1.50%	1.50%	1.50%
5Y PWLB RATE								
Link	1.80%	1.90%	2.00%	2.10%	2.20%	2.30%	2.30%	2.40%
Cap Econ	1.70%	1.80%	1.80%	1.90%	2.20%	2.30%	2.30%	2.40%
10Y PWLB RATE								
Link	2.20%	2.30%	2.40%	2.50%	2.60%	2.60%	2.70%	2.80%
Cap Econ	2.10%	2.20%	2.20%	2.30%	2.60%	2.60%	2.60%	2.60%
25Y PWLB RATE								
Link	2.70%	2.80%	2.90%	3.00%	3.10%	3.20%	3.20%	3.30%
Cap Econ	2.70%	2.70%	2.80%	2.90%	3.10%	3.00%	3.00%	2.90%
50Y PWLB RATE								
Link	2.50%	2.60%	2.70%	2.80%	2.90%	3.00%	3.00%	3.10%
Cap Econ	2.50%	2.50%	2.60%	2.70%	2.90%	2.90%	2.90%	2.90%

This page is intentionally left blank

Glossary of terms

Authorised limit – represents the limit beyond which borrowing is prohibited, and needs to be set and revised by Members. It reflects the level of borrowing which, while not desirable, could be afforded in the short term, but is not sustainable in the longer term.

Boundary limit – is an estimate of the authorised limit but reflects an estimate of the most likely, prudent, but not worst case scenario, without the additional headroom included within the authorised limit to allow for example for unusual cash movements.

Capital financing requirement (CFR) - reflects the Council's underlying need to borrow for a capital purpose. It shows the total estimated capital expenditure that has not been resourced from capital or revenue sources. This requirement will eventually be met by revenue resources through the Minimum Revenue Provision mechanism.

CIPFA prudential code - is a professional code of practice to support local authorities in taking capital investment decisions. Local authorities determine their own programmes for capital investment in fixed assets that are central to the delivery of quality local public services in accordance with the prudential code.

Consumer price index (CPI) - measures changes in the price level of a market basket of consumer goods and services purchased by households.

Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) - is a ministerial department, supported by 12 agencies and public bodies. They are working to create great places to live and work, and to give more power to local people to shape what happens in their area.

European central bank (ECB) - the central bank for the euro and administers monetary policy of the eurozone, which consists of 19 EU member states and is one of the largest currency areas in the world.

Fair value - is defined as the amount for which an asset could be exchanged or a liability settled, assuming that the transaction was negotiated between parties knowledgeable about the market in which they are dealing and willing to buy/sell at an appropriate price, with no other motive in their negotiations other than to secure a fair price

Fed - the Federal Reserve system (also known as the Federal Reserve, and informally as the Fed) is the central banking system of the United States.

Financing cost to net revenue stream - the percentage of the revenue budget set aside each year to service debt financing costs.

Funding for lending scheme (FLS) – was launched by the Bank and HM Treasury on 13 July 2012. The FLS is designed to incentivise banks and building societies to boost their lending to the UK real economy.

Gilt - is a UK Government liability in sterling, issued by HM Treasury and listed on the London Stock exchange.

Gross domestic product (GDP) - is the market value of all officially recognized final goods and services produced within a country in a given period of time (usually the fiscal year).

Local authority lender option borrower option (LOBO) - the underlying loan facility is typically very long-term - for example 40 to 60 years - and the interest rate is fixed. However, in the LOBO facility the lender has the option to call on the facilities at pre-determined future dates, such as every 5 years.

Local enterprise partnerships - are partnerships between local authorities and businesses. They decide what the priorities should be for investment in roads, buildings and facilities in the area.

London interbank bid rate - the rate at which banks will bid to take deposits in Eurocurrency from each other. The deposits are for terms from overnight up to five years.

Monetary policy committee (MPC) - interest rates are set by the bank's monetary policy committee. The MPC sets an interest rate it judges will enable the inflation target to be achieved.

Minimum revenue provision (MRP) - is a provision the council has set-aside from revenue to repay loans arising from capital expenditure financed by Borrowing.

Private finance initiative (PFI) - this is funding public infrastructure projects with private capital.

Public works loan board (PWLB) - is a statutory body operating within the Debt Management Office, an executive agency of HM Treasury.

PWLB certainty rate - a reduced interest rate from PWLB to principal local authorities, which provided required information to government on their plans for long-term borrowing and associated capital spending.

Quantitative easing (QE) - a government monetary policy occasionally used to increase the money supply by buying government securities or other securities from the market. Quantitative easing increases the money supply by flooding financial institutions with capital, in an effort to promote increased lending and liquidity.

Voluntary revenue provision (VRP) – this a discretionary provision to reduce the unfinanced capital expenditure (borrowing) by additional loan repayments.

Agenda Item 37.

TITLE	Changes to the Constitution
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Council on 19 September 2019
WARD	None Specific
LEAD OFFICER	Andrew Moulton, Assistant Director, Governance

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

Reviewing the Council's Constitution on a regular basis ensures that it is relevant and fit for purpose.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council agree the following changes to the Constitution, as recommended by the Constitution Review Working Group:

- 1) that Sections 4.4.23 and 4.4.43 [Wokingham Borough Wellbeing Board] be amended as set out in paragraph 1 of the report;
- 2) that Section 5.5.7 Arrangements for the Meeting [Individual Executive Member Decision] be amended as set out in paragraph 2 of the report;
- 3) that additions be made to Section 13.2.1 Application and Scope, as set out in paragraph 3 to the report.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

Chapter 1.1.4 of the Council's Constitution states that the Monitoring Officer will monitor and review the operation of the Constitution to ensure that its aims and principles are given full effect.

The report contains revisions to a number of areas in the Constitution which were agreed by the Constitution Review Working Group (CRWG) at their meeting on 12 August 2019.

Background

SECTION 4 - THE COUNCIL MEETING

1. At its meeting on 8 August 2019, the Wokingham Borough Wellbeing Board agreed to disband one of its sub groups, the Place and Community Partnership and that the Board's terms of reference be amended to reflect this. The following amendments are therefore proposed:

4.4.22 Wokingham Borough Wellbeing Board Terms of Reference

4.4.23 Membership

The membership of the Wokingham Borough Wellbeing Board will be as follows:

- a) *Leader of the Council*
- b) *Executive Member with responsibility for Children's Services*
- c) *Executive Member with responsibility for Health and Wellbeing*
- d) *Deputy Chief Executive*
- e) *Director with statutory responsibility for Children's Services*
- f) *Director with statutory responsibility for Adult Social Services*
- g) *Director with responsibility for Planning and Localities*
- h) *Director of Public Health*
- i) *Three representatives from the NHS Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Group*
- j) *Representative from local Healthwatch*
- k) *Representative of National Health Service England (for the purpose of participating in the Board's preparation of the Wokingham Needs Assessment and/or Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy or if the Board is considering a matter which relates to the exercise or proposed exercise of the commissioning functions of the NHS England in relation to the local authority area covered by the Board).*
- l) *An elected Member from the Opposition*
- m) *~~Three~~ **Two** representatives from the Strategic Partnerships, representing ~~the Place and Community Partnership~~, the Community Safety Partnership and the Business, Skills and Enterprise Partnership*
- n) *Representative from the Voluntary Sector*
- o) *Representative from Thames Valley Police*

- p) *Representative from Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service*

The Wokingham Borough Wellbeing Board may appoint such additional persons to be members of the Board as it thinks appropriate. The appointment of any additional members to the Wokingham Borough Wellbeing Board will take place at Board meetings.

4.4.43 Wokingham Borough Wellbeing Board Partnership Groups

The work programme of the Wokingham Borough Wellbeing Board will be implemented through the following ~~four~~ five Partnership Groups:

- a) *Children and Young People Strategic Partnership*
- b) *Community Safety Partnership*
- ~~c) *Place and Community Strategic Partnership*~~
- c** d) *Wokingham Integrated Partnership*
- d** e) *Business, Skills and Enterprise Partnership*

The Partnership Groups will have responsibility for the implementation of designated programmes within the Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The Partnership Groups will report periodically to the Wokingham Borough Wellbeing Board on the aspects of their work programme which are within the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, no less than twice a year. The Partnership Groups will agree their programmes of work, monitor progress and review performance in their respective areas.

SECTION 5 - EXECUTIVE

2. For many committee meetings if there is no quorum at the published start time of the meeting, a period of no more than 10 minutes is allowed before the meeting is declared null and void if there remains no quorum at that time.

At its meeting on 12 August 2019 the Constitution Review Working Group considered how much time should be given for an Executive Member to arrive after the published start time of an Individual Executive Member Decision, before the meeting was declared null and void and needed to be rearranged. It is proposed that Section 5.5.7 Arrangements for the Meeting [Individual Executive Member Decision] be amended as follows:

5.5.7 Arrangements for the Meeting [Individual Executive Member Decision]

The Executive Member shall make his/her decision in public unless exempt information is due to be discussed, with the appropriate Director, or nominated Officer. If the meeting is to be held in private then [Rule 5.4.21](#) must be complied with.

An Officer from Democratic Services will also be in attendance in order to provide a record of any decision taken. The date, time and place of the meeting will be agreed in advance between the Executive Member and the appropriate Director, or nominated Officer, and will be communicated to Democratic Services.

If the relevant Executive Member is not present at the meeting 30 minutes after the published start time of the meeting, the meeting will be declared null and void and rearranged for a later date.

SECTION 13 PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACT RULES AND PROCEDURES

3. At its meeting on 12 August 2019, the Working Group considered proposed additions to Section 13 Procurement and Contract Rules and Procedures. These had been proposed for clarification purposes to ensure that officers sought the appropriate procurement advice in extraordinary situations. The following additions are proposed:

13.2.1 Application and Scope

13.2.1.5

The potential solutions to events/changes not in the normal course of business, whether during the procurement process or after the contract is underway, can be complex and will depend on the nature of the contract and the specific changes required. In any instance where action outside of the normal contractual terms and conditions is necessary, contact Procurement for detailed advice.

13.2.1.6

Wherever Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (UK Law) allows for exemptions from the normal processes for above threshold procurements, the analogous exemptions are allowed from the normal PCRPs processes for below threshold procurements. This does not remove the obligation on Officers to demonstrate Value for Money and to meet the fundamental need for transparency. Accordingly, regardless of the process followed, every contract with a total ascertainable value exceeding £5,000 must be recorded in Wokingham Borough Council's contracts register. Contact Procurement for advice about each individual case.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	£0		
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£0		
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£0		

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision
There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Cross-Council Implications
None

List of Background Papers
The Council's Constitution

Contact Madeleine Shopland	Service Governance
Telephone No 0118 974 6319	Email madeleine.shopland@wokingham.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank