



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

A Meeting of the **COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** will be held in David Hicks 1 - Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham RG40 1BN **MONDAY 13 JANUARY 2020 AT 7.00 PM**

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

Susan Parsonage
Chief Executive
Published on 3 January 2020

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

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WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Our Vision

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

Our Priorities

Improve educational attainment and focus on every child achieving their potential

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

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

Tackle traffic congestion in specific areas of the Borough

Improve the customer experience when accessing Council services

The Underpinning Principles

Offer excellent value for your Council Tax

Provide affordable homes

Look after the vulnerable

Improve health, wellbeing and quality of life

Maintain and improve the waste collection, recycling and fuel efficiency

Deliver quality in all that we do

MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Councillors

Guy Grandison (Chairman)
Shirley Boyt
Clive Jones

Ken Miall (Vice-Chairman)
Paul Fishwick
Abdul Loyes

Keith Baker
Graham Howe

Substitutes

Andy Croy
Emma Hobbs

Carl Doran
Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey

Pauline Helliard-Symons
Caroline Smith

ITEM NO.	WARD	SUBJECT	PAGE NO.
45.		<p>APOLOGIES To receive any apologies for absence.</p>	
46.		<p>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2019 and the Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting held on 6 January 2020 (<i>to follow</i>)</p>	5 - 8
47.		<p>DECLARATION OF INTEREST To receive any declarations of interest.</p>	
48.		<p>PUBLIC QUESTION TIME To answer any public questions</p> <p>A period of 30 minutes will be allowed for members of the public to ask questions submitted under notice.</p> <p>The Council welcomes questions from members of the public about the work of this committee.</p> <p>Subject to meeting certain timescales, questions can relate to general issues concerned with the work of the Committee or an item which is on the Agenda for this meeting. For full details of the procedure for submitting questions please contact the Democratic Services Section on the numbers given below or go to www.wokingham.gov.uk/publicquestions</p>	
49.		<p>MEMBER QUESTION TIME To answer any member questions.</p>	
50.	None Specific	<p>MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN - CAPITAL PROGRAMME To consider the proposed capital programme to be submitted as part of the 2020-23 Medium Term Financial Plan</p>	9 - 18

51. None Specific **BOROUGH DESIGN GUIDE UPDATE** **19 - 22**
To consider an update on the development of the Council's updated Borough Design Guide

52. None Specific **BURIAL CAPACITY UPDATE** **23 - 28**
To consider an update on the Council's current and future burial capacity

Any other items which the Chairman decides are urgent

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

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 25 NOVEMBER 2019 FROM 7.00 PM TO 8.16 PM

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Guy Grandison (Chairman), Ken Miall (Vice-Chairman), Shirley Boyt, Graham Howe, Clive Jones, Abdul Loyes, Barrie Patman and Rachelle Shepherd DuBey (Substitute)

Officers Present

Callum Wernham (Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist), Neil Carr (Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist), Graham Ebers (Deputy Chief Executive (Director of Corporate Services)) and Sarah Hollamby (Director of Customer and Localities)

Executive and Deputy Executive Members Present

Michael Firmager (Deputy Executive Member for Environment and Leisure), Pauline Jorgensen (Executive Member for Highways and Transport) and John Kaiser (Executive Member for Finance and Housing)

31. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted from Councillor Paul Fishwick. Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey attended the meeting as a substitute.

32. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 2 September 2019, the Minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the Committee held on 24 September 2019 and the Minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the Committee held on 30 October 2019 were confirmed as a correct records and signed by the Chairman.

33. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

34. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

35. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

36. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2020-23 - REVENUE BUDGET AND SPECIAL ITEMS

The Committee received and reviewed a report, set out in agenda pages 23 to 42, which detailed all revenue growth and savings bids over £50k for Corporate Services and Customer and Localities Services. In addition, special items and bids for all service areas under £50k were also provided.

Michael Firmager (Deputy Executive Member for Environment and Leisure), Sarah Hollamby (Director of Customer and Localities), Pauline Jorgensen (Executive Member for Highways and Transport), Graham Ebers (Deputy Chief Executive – Director of Corporate Services) and John Kaiser (Executive Member for Finance and Housing) attended the meeting to answer Member queries.

Graham Ebers stated that including the papers received for this meeting, the Committee had effectively seen the entire suite of the proposed draft revenue budget to date. Graham added that the capital budget would be provided to the Committee at a future meeting. Graham stated that the main change to items previously seen by the Committee were related to the revenue monitoring of the ongoing financial pressures present within Children's Services.

During the ensuing discussion Members raised the following points and queries:

- Relating to agenda page 28, could more detail be given as to this income (saving)? Officer response – These figures were residual income over and above the income achieved within the 2019/20 budget. A 2 percent return on investment was expected, which was in line with policy. Officers would derive the exact amount of the £100m that had already been invested and feedback to the Committee.
- Relating to agenda page 29, when was this additional £100m scheduled to be approved? Officer response – This would form a part of the proposed Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) to be presented to Council in February 2020.
- In relation to the investment strategy, what contingency was in place to prepare for any potential downturn in the economy? Officer response – In undertaking work on the investment portfolio, both internal and external specialists had devised a scheme that worked within policy (i.e. achieving a 2 percent return) whilst making use of safe investments with contingency plans available. Each investment was evaluated and scrutinised by specialists on an investment by investment basis. The primary focus of each investment was a strong covenant, with proper due diligence carried out for each specific investment.
- Relating to agenda page 29, how would any income derived from investments be used? Officer response – New income streams would be used as a credit towards other Council services.
- Relating to agenda page 31, were there plans for additional funding over and above the proposed £50k to tackle the climate emergency? Officer response – There was currently a 20 strong team of Officers across the Council developing strategies and policy to tackle the climate emergency. This specific bid was for an Officer to coordinate the Council's effort to tackle the climate emergency. There were a host of proposed capital projects to help tackle the climate emergency, and this specific post was designed to mobilise and coordinate the Council's response. The Executive Member for Climate Emergency had been fully briefed and was supportive of this strategy.
- How comfortable were Officers regarding the proposed level of the reserves? Officer response – Officers were as confident as they could be that the Local Government settlement received this financial year would be replicated for the next financial year. Subject to a fair settlement, general reserve levels would sit at approximately £10m after special items had been accounted for. Subject to the above, Officers were comfortable with the expected reserve levels.
- Should Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) not win the argument regarding the negative revenue support grant, what changes would be made to the proposed MTFP? Officer response – Officers were expecting to win this argument with Central

Government, as they did last year. In the event that a negative revenue support grant was imposed, Officers would have to make the budget balanced by means of reducing revenue bids and deleting some special items.

- Relating to agenda page 34, what was the purpose of the additional £111k expenditure regarding WBC's street cleansing contract? Officer response – There was strong feedback that stated that the existing contract was too strongly weighted towards value. This additional cost would weigh the contract further towards the quality of the service provided for an additional expense. This contract was awarded via tender process within an agreed product specification for a six year contract. The Deputy Executive Member for Environment and Leisure added that the increase was all geared towards improving the quality of the service offered.
- Would the increased expenditure relating to the street cleansing contract effectively cope with the increased housing numbers going forwards? Officer response – The contract was geared to accommodate the increase in housing number within the Borough. The Executive Member for Finance and Housing added that the Borough had likely seen the peak of new housing numbers within the Borough, and the SDL programme was back loaded and we had now likely seen the peak on new housing delivery.
- Relating to agenda page 36, were Officers confident that this efficiency saving of £50k could be achieved within Highways and Transport? Officer response – Yes, since publication of the agenda further discussion had been undertaken between the Director and the Assistant Director and the service was now confident that this saving could be achieved.
- Relating to agenda page 37, was the £500k sufficient to enable the deliver the highways capital investment scheme? Officer response – Some further work needed to be done with regards to the phasing of the funding, however this ongoing £500k would cover the revenue cost of the capital expenditure.
- Relating to agenda page 32, could more information be provided regarding the estimated income of £100k from the enhancement of Cantley Park? Executive Member for Finance and Housing response – The income would be created from the existing 3G pitch and the proposed 2nd 3G pitch which was dependant on a Football Foundation Grant. Additional income would be received from the on-site Café.
- Relating to agenda page 30, why were only two years of savings proposed for a four year project of Wokingham Owned Housing delivery? Officer response – This was a very cautious estimate. Various numbers of this housing sat within different areas of the organisation and it related to how those figures were then translated into direct revenue income. The Executive Member for Finance and Housing added that this delivery plan would deliver social housing across the Borough, whilst providing the Council with some money to feed back into its services.
- Had the relevant Lead Member been briefed on all proposals? Executive Member for Finance and Housing response – All proposals had been agreed between the relevant Directors and Executive Members.
- Relating to agenda page 40, how was the launch of Council Tax E-billing developing? Officer response – This was a great system which made it easier for residents and

WBC to manage Council Tax payments. WBC could not force residents to switch to this service, and a big push to publicise this new service was underway.

- Relating to agenda page 39, how was the £4.5m to be spent on the continuous improvement programme? Officer response – Currently, 80% of the programme was dedicated towards Adult Social Care and Children’s Services, with the remaining 20% focussing on Corporate Services and Customer and Localities Services. WBC needed to bring the Children’s Services up to a Good standard, and this money would provide the infrastructure (e.g. digitisation, process engineering and programme management) needed to provide savings within the service.
- Relating to £112k special item relating to SEND Written Statement of Action Implementation, could more information be provided with regards to this? Officer response – This was a one off resource to respond to the recent SEND inspection. The Director of Children’s Services would be asked to provide the Committee with further details on this special item.
- Was the proposed £100k to assist with Planning and Enforcement sufficient? Officer response – This special item would assist in providing a more robust resource to deal with unwanted development within the Borough, and the special item was deemed sufficient to meet this target.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Michael Firmager, Sarah Hollamby, Pauline Jorgensen, Graham Ebers and John Kaiser be thanked for attending the meeting;
- 2) The proposed capital programme be taken to the extraordinary meeting of the Committee on 6 January;
- 3) The Committee be provided with information regarding how much of the initial £100m investment fund that had been invested to date;
- 4) The Committee be provided with additional information regarding the £112k special item relating to SEND Written Statement of Action Implementation.

37. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered a report about its work programme, set out in agenda pages 43 to 50, which outlined the proposed forward programme for the Committee for the remainder of the 2019/20 municipal year.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) The extraordinary meeting of the Committee scheduled for 6 January include items relating to the proposed capital programme, and an update on the Council’s property investment group;
- 2) The meeting of the Committee scheduled for 13 January include items relating to the review of burial grounds, and an update on the upcoming Borough Design Guide.

Agenda Item 50.

TITLE Medium Term Financial Plan 2020-23: Capital Budget

FOR CONSIDERATION BY Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny
Committee on 13th January 2020

WARD None Specific;

LEAD OFFICER Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

Financially sustainable Council and value for money services in accordance with priorities.

RECOMMENDATION

To consider the report and identify areas of productive exploration.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

A summary of the proposed Capital budget position is now provided for consideration, as agreed within the scrutiny process.

Appendix A includes proposals for the 2020-23 Capital Programme by category, including roads and transport, investment and regeneration, climate emergency, environment, children's services and schools, adult social care and internal services.

Background

The Council annually undertakes its budget setting process for all its financial activities including General Fund Revenue Account (funded primarily by Council Tax), Housing Revenue Accounts (funded by tenants), Schools (funded by Government) and Capital (funded by various capital resources).

An overview of these funds is provided in the MTFP, last approved by Full Council in February 2019.

Analysis of Issues

The appended information provides the proposals relating to the Capital budget to be presented as part of the MTFP at February 2020 Budget Council. Capital proposals are funded by various capital resources.

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)	See other financial implications	Y	C
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	See other financial implications	Y	C
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	See other financial implications	Y	C

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

There are no financial implications associated with the scrutiny process, however, the full MTFP, when submitted to Council in February 2020, will have to represent a balanced budget.

Cross-Council Implications

This is in respect of budgets across all Council services.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Equality Impact Assessments have not been undertaken at this stage, however, they shall be required before specific proposals are agreed and implemented. Where appropriate and where required, Equality Impact Assessments shall be undertaken prior to the budget Council in February 2020, with all Equality Impact Assessments being completed prior to implementation.

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2
N/A

List of Background Papers
MTFP 2019-22

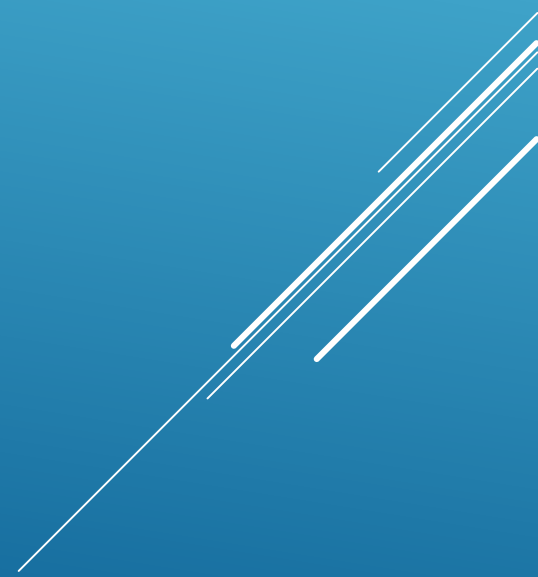
Contact Graham Ebers	Service Business Services
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MTFP UPDATE

13 CAPITAL PROGRAMME

2nd January 2020



2020/2023 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

CAPITAL PROGRAMME

MTFP category	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000	2022/23 £'000	Total £'000
Roads & Transport Continuous investment in highways infrastructure to meet the needs of current and future users of the network	46,426	71,460	69,592	187,478
Investment and regeneration Delivering sustainability, a strong, robust and successful economy that stimulates opportunities for all who work and live in	65,908	67,847	66,457	200,212
Climate Emergency Commitment to reduce carbon emissions and working towards becoming a carbon neutral Council	16,060	15,595	18,838	50,492
Environment Investment and enhancement of facilities across the borough benefiting communities and residents wellbeing	7,425	12,135	5,155	24,715
Children Services and Schools Dedicated in providing services and schools which ensure all children have the opportunity to achieve their goals potential	8,865	7,725	11,098	27,689
Adult Social Care An effective, high-quality care and support service to providing a quality of life which residents deserve	7,978	7,206	2,937	18,120
Internal Services Investment in Council assets and technology to continue to support all Council services and priorities	4,845	2,976	2,958	10,779
Total	157,507	184,944	177,035	519,486

2020/2023 CAPITAL PROGRAMME BY CATEGORY

MTFP sub category	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000	2022/23 £'000	Total £'000
<u>Roads & Transport</u>				
Improvement to existing facilities	6,350	2,825	2,825	12,000
New roads	29,076	61,064	63,467	153,607
Road improvements	950	2,603	0	3,553
Service improvements	10,050	4,968	3,300	18,318
Total	46,426	71,460	69,592	187,478
<u>Investment and regeneration</u>				
Housing delivery	23,572	26,197	30,443	80,212
Income generation	27,500	28,300	26,600	82,400
New facilities	225	3,300	2,700	6,225
Regeneration of towns	14,611	10,050	6,714	31,376
Total	65,908	67,847	66,457	200,212
<u>Climate Emergency</u>				
Alternative transport	7,676	2,211	3,979	13,865
Clean energy generation	3,500	6,500	8,000	18,000
CO ₂ reduction	4,884	6,884	6,859	18,627
Total	16,060	15,595	18,838	50,492
<u>Environment</u>				
Improvement to existing facilities	2,035	385	75	2,495
New facilities	5,390	11,750	5,080	22,220
Total	7,425	12,135	5,155	24,715
<u>Children Services and Schools</u>				
Improvement to existing facilities	2,001	1,141	1,141	4,283
New facilities	6,390	6,446	9,819	22,656
Service improvement	474	138	138	750
Total	8,865	7,725	11,098	27,689
<u>Adult Social Care</u>				
Improvement to existing facilities	50	50	50	150
New facilities	4,500	3,500	0	8,000
Service improvements	3,428	3,656	2,887	9,970
Total	7,978	7,206	2,937	18,120
<u>Internal Services</u>				
Improvement to existing facilities	1,000	650	650	2,300
Service improvements	3,845	2,326	2,308	8,479
Total	4,845	2,976	2,958	10,779
Wokingham Borough Council capital programme	157,507	184,944	177,035	519,486

2020/2023 CAPITAL PROGRAMME

NEW FACILITIES

New facilities			
Project Name	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000	2022/23 £'000
<u>Children Services and Schools</u>			
Basic Needs Primary Programme	600	1,500	1,500
Basic Needs Secondary - Additional Places	0	0	968
Primary strategy - Spencer's Wood Primary School	0	0	4,112
Primary strategy - Arborfield / Barkham Primary school	2,225	75	50
Primary strategy - Matthews Green	2,112	37	25
SEND Investment Programme 2017 to 2020	307	0	0
New Children's Home - 2020	150	1,250	0
New Build: Care Leaver accommodation	100	0	1,200
Furniture, fittings & Equipment for Additional places	396	84	64
Sixth Form Expansion	500	3,500	1,900
Total	6,390	6,446	9,819
<u>Environment</u>			
New Bulmershe swimming pool / leisure centre	1,000	0	0
New pool in the Arborfield area - a multi year scheme to start in 2020/21	0	0	1000
Sports Provision Across the Borough	750	1,750	4080
Carnival Pool Leisure Facilities Redevelopment	0	10,000	0
Shinfield SDL Community Centre	1,000	0	0
Dinton Activity Centre Project	1,750	0	0
Polehampton Community Library	640	0	0
Montague Park Community Facility	250	0	0
Total	5,390	11,750	5,080
<u>Adult Social Care</u>			
Older People's Dementia Home	4,500	3,500	0
Total	4,500	3,500	0
<u>Investment and regeneration</u>			
Feasibility Case for Developing New Crematorium	225	3,300	2700
Total	225	3,300	2,700
Total	22,894	31,442	27,418

2020/2023 CAPITAL PROGRAMME

NEW ROADS

New roads			
Project Name	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000	2022/23 £'000
Completed Road Schemes Retention	200	213	62
Shinfield Eastern Relief Road	3,986	3,491	2,751
Nine Mile Ride Extension	6,419	6,419	2,160
Land Acquisition for Major Road Schemes	4,677	0	0
California Crossroads	1,230	4,447	0
SCAPE - Road infrastructure			
• Arborfield Cross Relief Road			
• Barkham Bridge			
• Lower Earley Way Dualling			
• Winnersh Relief Road			
• South Wokingham Distributor Eastern Gateway			
• South Wokingham Distributor Western Gateway			
• North Wokingham Distributor Road			
	12,565	46,494	58,494
Roads & Transport	29,076	61,064	63,467

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TITLE	Borough Design Guide - Update
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 13 January 2020
WARD	None specific;
LEAD OFFICER	Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

The overall aim of the Borough Design Guide is to enhance the quality of development and promote good design through the development process.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee note the contents of the report and request that they be involved in the consultation on any proposed revision to the Design Guide.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The following is an overview of the status and aims of the current Borough Design Guide and sets out a potential timetable for its review.

The Design Guide is a Supplementary Planning Document that elaborates on policies in the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy and Managing Development Delivery local plans which were adopted in 2010 and 2014.

The overall aim of the Design Guide is to enhance the quality of development and make sure proposals are of the highest quality of design. That means inclusive, safe, harmonious, welcoming, sustainable places that are well-related to the surroundings.

The key objectives of the current Design Guide are:

- To promote good design through the development process;
- To create attractive, harmonious and well used places;
- To ensure that all developments improve the character and quality of the area;
- To encourage vibrant communities where people feel safe;
- To create places that provide ease of movement and are accessible to all;
- To respect and be sympathetic to the character of the area in which the development is situated;
- To minimise overlooking, loss of privacy, loss of amenity or over-dominance;
- To take full account of the mass and height of development in relation to adjacent development and surrounding spaces; and
- To ensure that new development meets the needs of its users.

The current Design Guide is still valid and is used by designers and applicants when formulating development proposals and by the Local Authority when assessing planning applications

At its meeting on January 15th 2019 Executive will consider a consultation draft of a new Local Plan for Wokingham. If approved the draft will go out for public consultation over the following couple of months with any subsequent amendments then being made

before a submission draft of the Plan is brought back to full Council in the summer of 2020.

Once that draft has been approved and submitted for examination it is envisaged that work will start to review the various supplementary planning guidance documents. That review will consider which documents are still current and valid and which need updating. The Design Guide will be part of that review with discussions and consultation on any potential update likely to start towards the end of 2020.

BACKGROUND

Wokingham Borough Council's Borough Design Guide is a Supplementary Planning Document with the current version being published in June 2012. It elaborates on policies in the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy and Managing Development Delivery local plans that were adopted in 2010 and 2014.

The current Design Guide is still valid and used by designers and applicants when formulating development proposals and by the Local Authority when assessing planning applications.

The Design Guide is split into a number of sections:

Section 1 – Highlights the importance of good design and the Council's overall vision

Section 2 - Covers general principles such as context, character, accessibility and environmental sustainability

Section 3 – Provides guidance and advice on the design process as well as looking at local character

Section 4 – Focuses on residential development

Section 5 – Focuses on streets and spaces

Section 6 – Focuses on parking

Section 7 – Focuses on non-residential

Section 8 – Focuses on rural and settlement edge

Its overall aim is to enhance the quality of development and make sure proposals are of the highest quality of design. That means inclusive, safe, harmonious, welcoming, sustainable places that are well-related to the surroundings.

The key objectives of the current Design Guide are:

- To promote good design through the development process;
- To create attractive, harmonious and well used places;
- To ensure that all developments improve the character and quality of the area;
- To encourage vibrant communities where people feel safe;
- To create places that provide ease of movement and are accessible to all;
- To respect and be sympathetic to the character of the area in which the development is situated;
- To minimise overlooking, loss of privacy, loss of amenity or over-dominance;
- To take full account of the mass and height of development in relation to adjacent development and surrounding spaces; and
- To ensure that new development meets the needs of its users.

Although Supplementary Planning Documents can be reviewed and amended at any time, our current approach is to review documents such as the Design Guide once full Council has approved the submission draft of a new Local Plan.

The new Local Plan is a key document through which the Council sets out a vision and framework for how future development in the area will be managed. In doing so, it sets out how much development is required and if what type, where it should go, and where it should not go. The new Local Plan will contain policies for how development across Wokingham Borough will be managed in the period to 2036 and, once adopted, will be the main consideration in deciding planning applications.

The new Local Plan will highlight the importance of good design but rather than go into any significant detail it will refer to the relevant Supplementary Planning Document – in this case the Design Guide and other relevant documents such as village design statements and neighbourhood plans.

At its meeting on January 15th 2019 Executive will consider a consultation draft of that new Local Plan. If approved the draft will go out for public consultation over the following couple of months with any subsequent amendments then being made before a submission draft of the Plan is brought back to full Council in the summer of 2020.

Once that draft has been approved and submitted for examination, it is envisaged that work will start to review the various supplementary planning guidance documents. That review will consider which documents are still current and valid and which need updating. The Design Guide will be part of that review with discussions and consultation on any potential update likely to start towards the end of 2020.

It is suggested that once a timetable has been agreed for the review of the Design Guide then a more detailed report is brought back to this Overview and Scrutiny Committee for discussion and consultation.

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)	£0	Yes	N/A
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£0	Yes	N/A
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£0	Yes	N/A

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision
None relevant to this report

Cross-Council Implications
N/A

Public Sector Equality Duty
The Council's duties shall be considered upon the formation of the updated Borough Design Guide

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2
N/A

List of Background Papers
Current Borough Design Guide

Contact Nigel Bailey	Service Place Commissioning
Telephone No 0118 974 6779	Email nigel.bailey@wokingham.gov.uk

TITLE	Burial Capacity - Update
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 13 January 2020
WARD	None specific;
LEAD OFFICER	Director of Locality and Customer Services - Sarah Hollamby

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

To ensure there are sufficient burial plots available at WBC owned cemeteries to meet the current and projected demand.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee note the report and offer comment.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The Council does not have a statutory duty to provide cemeteries but it does have a duty to maintain any sites under its control in a fit and proper state. However the Local Authority is responsible for the burial or cremation of any person who dies within its boundaries and for whom no other funeral arrangements are being made.

Current Position & Trends

The Council currently operates two cemeteries – Shinfield and St Sebastians which between them have just over 1,800 plots.

The intention is for WBC to continue as a Burial Authority with the grounds maintained to the current high standard within the existing ground maintenance contract.

In addition to the two Council sites there are around 20 further burial sites spread across the Borough. Most of these are operated by the Diocese of Oxford with other individual sites owned and/or operated by town or parish councils (eg Mays Lane Burial Ground which is owned by Early Town Council).

At present we do not have information on overall capacity across all burial sites but do recognise that much will depend on demand. Whilst cremations currently account for around 80% nationally trend predictions suggest an environmental backlash against 'standard' cremations. There is also a growing demand for other options such as 'green' or 'woodland' burials, memorial tree planting and benches and 'strewing areas' (such as the recently completed strewing area in Shinfield Cemetery).

In Wokingham the level of new housing development in the Borough's SDLs (Strategic Development Locations) suggest that overall demand will increase – using the Local Plan provision requirement of 14.4 plots per 1,000 population. However statistics show that many residents are choosing alternative provision out of the Borough.

Potential Additional Provision

Currently we have between 8-12 new burials per year in the 2 WBC owned cemeteries (9 in 2018/19) and, following a recent review of capacity, have identified 165 new potential plots between those cemeteries. However these are subject to ground conditions with particular concern around ground water levels in certain areas.

In addition the Council has been in discussions for a number of years with the Diocese of Oxford about purchasing an area of land in Ruscombe with the potential to provide a further 172 burial plots. Further investigative work is planned in 2020 to address concerns raised about water table levels before any final planning application is made prior to completing any purchase.

Finally the Council is considering options for building its own eco-friendly crematorium facility within the Borough. Not only would this serve the existing and future needs and requirements of the Borough's residents it would also allow us to offer a range of eco-friendly cremation and burial options to a wider population. Depending on final plans there may be opportunities to include some burial plots if required as well as woodland burials and strewing areas.

Provided a significant proportion of the above can be delivered it should be sufficient to meet local demand and so no further burial capacity would be required in the medium term.

Background

The Council does not have a statutory duty to provide cemeteries but it does have a duty to maintain any sites under its control in a fit and proper state. However the Local Authority is responsible for the burial or cremation of any person who dies within its boundaries and for whom no other funeral arrangements are being made. The Council intends to continue as a Burial Authority, operating and maintaining its own cemeteries.

Trends

Whilst cremations currently account for around 80% nationally trend predictions suggest an environmental backlash against 'standard' cremations. As highlighted elsewhere in this report this does open up a potential market for more eco-friendly cremations such as that proposed for a potential new facility in Wokingham Borough.

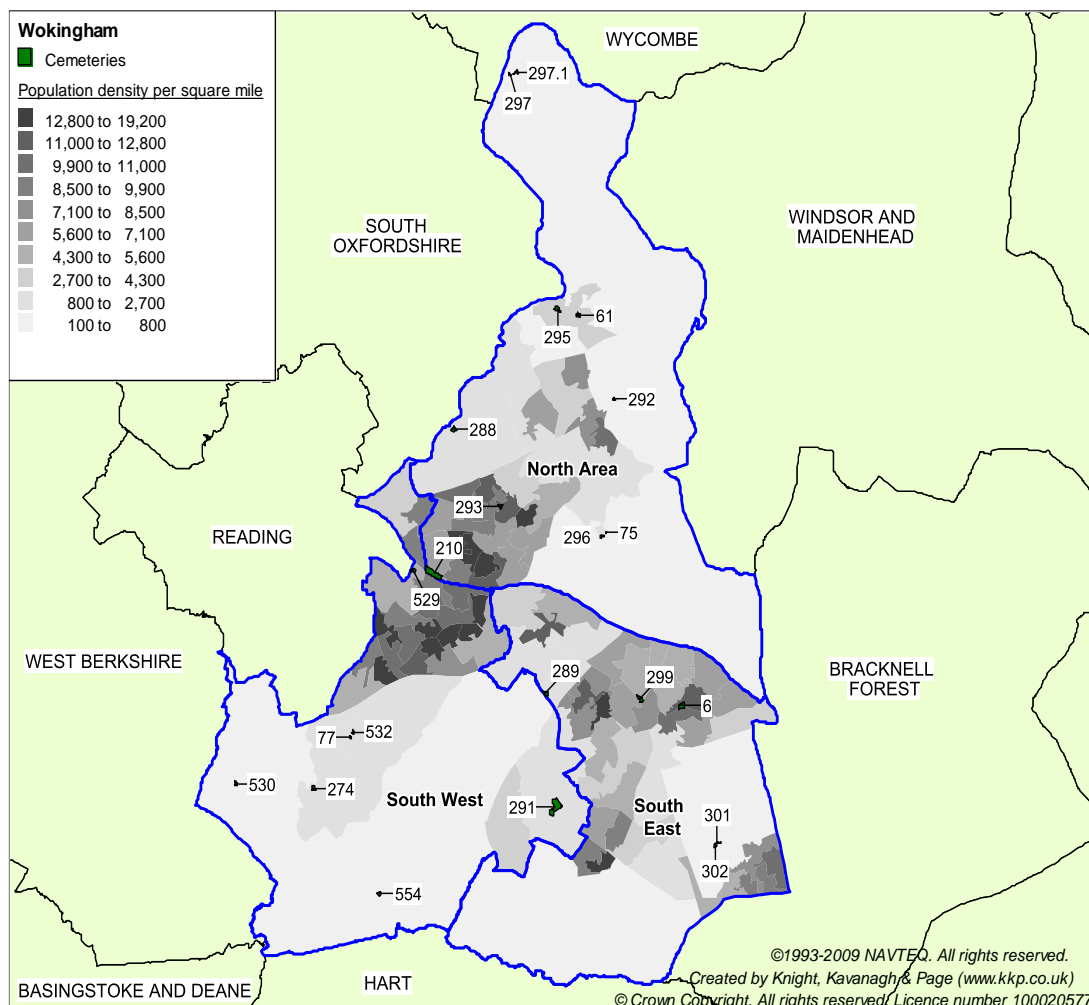
There is also a growing demand for other options such as 'green' or natural burial sites, including 'woodland' burials, memorial tree planting and benches and 'strewing areas' for cremated ashes.

Current Provision

There are over 20 burial sites spread across the Borough with 2 operated by the Council. Most of the others are operated by the Diocese of Oxford with other individual sites owned and/or operated by town or parish councils. (eg Mays Lane Burial Ground which is owned by Early Town Council).

The table below shows current provision and ownership with the map over the page showing the distribution.

KKP ref	Site	Ownership
6	All Saints Church, Wokingham	Diocese of Oxford
61	Cemetery off Baybrooke Road, Wargrave	Other
75	Church Hill, Hurst	Diocese of Oxford
77	Church Lane Cemetery, Shinfield	Diocese of Oxford
210	Mays Lane Burial Ground, Earley	Earley Town Council
274	Shinfield Cemetery, Spencers Wood	WBC
288	St Andrews Church and Graveyard, Sonning	Diocese of Oxford
289	St Catherine's Parish Church Bearwood	Diocese of Oxford
291	St James' Church Barkham	Diocese of Oxford
292	St James the Great, Ruscombe	Diocese of Oxford
293	St John the Evangelist, Woodley	Diocese of Oxford
295	St Mary's Church, Wargrave	Diocese of Oxford
296	St Nicholas Church, Hurst	Diocese of Oxford
297	St Nicholas Parish Church, Remenham	Diocese of Oxford
297.1	St Nicholas Parish Churchyard, Remenham	Diocese of Oxford
299	St Pauls Church, Wokingham	Diocese of Oxford
301	St Sebastian's Cemetery, Wokingham Without	WBC
302	St Sebastian's Church, Wokingham Without	Diocese of Oxford
529	St Peter's Church, Earley	Diocese of Oxford
530	Holy Trinity Church, Grazeley	Diocese of Oxford
532	St Mary's Church, Shinfield	Diocese of Oxford
554	Nutbean Cemetery, Shinfield	Swallowfield PC



Unfortunately we have no up to date information on overall capacity across the non-WBC owned sites.

Current WBC Provision & Future Capacity

The Council currently operates two cemeteries – Shinfield and St Sebastians. Shinfield Cemetery is located in Spencers Wood and has 1,167 current plots including an area dedicated for Muslim burials. St Sebastians Cemetery is in Wokingham Without and has 644 current plots.

Both cemeteries are well maintained and recent improvements to Shinfield Cemetery have included the creation of a dedicated 'strewing' area for cremated ashes which is already proving popular.

Currently we have between 8-12 new burials per year across the 2 WBC owned cemeteries (9 in 2018/19) and, following a recent review of capacity, have identified 165 new potential plots between those cemeteries (148 additional lots in Shinfield and 17 in St Sebastians). However these are subject to ground conditions with particular concern around ground water levels in certain areas.

In addition the Council has been in discussions for a number of years with the Diocese of Oxford about purchasing an area of land in Ruscombe with the potential to provide a further 172 burial plots. Further investigative work is planned in 2020 to address concerns raised about water table levels before any final planning application is made prior to completing any purchase.

Finally the Council is considering options for building its own eco-friendly crematorium facility within the Borough. Not only would this serve the existing and future needs and requirements of the Borough's residents it would also allow us to offer a range of eco-friendly cremation and burial options to a wider population. Depending on final plans there may be opportunities to include some burial plots if required as well as woodland burials and strewing areas.

Conclusion

Provided a significant proportion of the above can be delivered it should be sufficient to meet local demand and so no further burial capacity would be required in the medium term.

However if the new Ruscombe provision and the proposed new crematorium are not progressed for whatever reason then further work would be needed to assess overall future burial demand and options for additional new provision to meet it.

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)	£0	Yes	N/A
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£0	Yes	N/A
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£0	Yes	N/A

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision
None relevant

Cross-Council Implications
N/A

Public Sector Equality Duty
Should any decision regarding an increase in burial plot provision or the creation of a new eco-friendly crematorium be made, the Council's duties shall be considered as appropriate.

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2
Not applicable

List of Background Papers
None

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