



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

The Annual Meeting of the **COUNCIL** will be held in the Council Chamber - Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham RG40 1BN on **WEDNESDAY 22 MAY 2019 AT 7.30 PM**

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

Susan Parsonage
Chief Executive
Published on 14 May 2019

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

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WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Our Vision

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

Our Priorities

Improve educational attainment and focus on every child achieving their potential

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

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

Tackle traffic congestion in specific areas of the Borough

Improve the customer experience when accessing Council services

The Underpinning Principles

Offer excellent value for your Council Tax

Provide affordable homes

Look after the vulnerable

Improve health, wellbeing and quality of life

Maintain and improve the waste collection, recycling and fuel efficiency

Deliver quality in all that we do

To: The Members of Wokingham Borough Council

ITEM NO.	WARD	SUBJECT	PAGE NO.
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1.

ELECTION OF MAYOR FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2019/20

To elect a Mayor for the 2019/20 Municipal Year.

The outgoing Mayor will address the Council for up to 5 minutes to include any presentations that the Mayor may wish to make.

The outgoing Mayor will then call for nominations for the Office of Mayor for 2019/20.

The outgoing Mayor will ask the Council to vote on the nomination(s).

At this point in the proceedings the outgoing Mayor and the incoming Mayor will adjourn to the Mayor's Parlour to place the Cloak and Chain of Office on the incoming Mayor.

The incoming Mayor will take the chair and make the Declaration of Acceptance of Office as required by Section 83(3) of the Local Government Act 1972.

The Mayor to address the Council for up to 5 minutes.

The Mayor to present the Past Mayor's Badge to the outgoing Mayor.

2.

APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY MAYOR FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2019/20

To appoint a Deputy Mayor for the 2019/20 Municipal Year.

The Mayor will call for nominations for the Office of Deputy Mayor for 2019/20.

The Mayor will ask the Council to vote on the nomination(s).

The Deputy Mayor will make the Declaration of Acceptance of Office as required by Section 83(3) of the Local Government Act, 1972.

The Mayor will present the Deputy Mayor's badge of Office to the Deputy Mayor and the Deputy Mayor to address the Council for up to 3 minutes.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING
To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 March 2019.

4. APOLOGIES
To receive any apologies for absence

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
To receive any declarations of interest

6. 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

6.1 Wescott Martin Branch has asked the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement the following question:

Question

As 18m has been described as a reasonable distance between an over-looking window and my property, what distance would be considered as unreasonable below 18m?

6.2 Arborfield; Barkham Gill Purchase has asked the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement the following question:

Question

How much did Crest Nicholson contribute via the section 106 agreement for the provision of a Swimming Pool within the Arborfield Strategic Development Location?

6.3 Norreys Tom Mayers has asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Question

On the 18th March I reported a pothole on Binfield Road near junction to Barrett Crescent which has not

yet been repaired. I got an email from the Council on 1st April saying that they aim to repair the pothole within 28 days which has now been been and gone. I got a further update email on 11th April saying that they have investigated the pothole and confirmed that it needed fixing at the time. As of 13th May it's still not been repaired and is getting worse and will only get worse. I would like to ask the Council when do they think they will get this repaired?

7.

PETITIONS

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

8.

None Specific

REPORT OF THE RETURNING OFFICER - BOROUGH AND TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS

45 - 48

The Council's Assistant Director, Governance, as Returning Officer, to report on the Borough and Town/Parish elections held on 2 May 2019.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Council notes the report of the Returning Officer.

9.

MAYOR'S OR HEAD OF PAID SERVICE'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

To receive any announcements from the Mayor or Head of Paid Service.

10.

ELECTION OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

In accordance with the governance arrangements which were adopted by Council at its meeting on 18 November 2010, the Mayor will call for nominations for the Office of Leader of the Council for a four year term (or until the Leader's Term of Office as a Councillor expires).

The Mayor will then ask the Council to vote on the nomination(s).

The Leader of Council will notify Council of the name of his/her Deputy and the remainder of the Members appointed to the Executive, outlining the scope of their respective portfolios, the terms of delegation to them and Officers if applicable (**To be tabled**).

The Leader of Council/Executive Members will be allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes in total. The Leader of the Opposition will be allowed to speak for up to 5 minutes.

11.

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.

11.1 None Specific

Rachel Burgess has asked the Executive Member for Finance the following question:

Question

The local welfare provision scheme exists to provide emergency crisis support for those who find themselves in urgent financial difficulty, and to prevent serious risk to the health, well-being or safety of some of our most vulnerable residents.

Wokingham's funding in 2014/15 for such provision was £77k in the form of payments and loans, provided by the DWP. Fast forward to 2018-19 and the funding allocation for welfare assistance payments, now provided by WBC, was £23k – and actual spend last year just £6k.

It is extremely concerning that, in a time where our residents are turning to food banks or other forms of charity, the funds available to Wokingham's residents in a time of crisis have dropped by 70% in just four years.

Does the executive member agree with me that this funding is wholly inadequate to serve the needs of the most vulnerable in our borough?

11.2 None Specific

Lindsay Ferris has asked the Deputy Leader the following question:

Question

As a result of the recent local elections a number of now former Councillors were Non Executive Directors of the 100% WBC owned subsidiary companies including WHL &, Optalis. Can we understand when they will relinquish these posts and be advised that this has happened?

11.3 Hawkedon;
Hillside; Maiden
Erlegh

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

Question

On the 22nd March I presented a petition signed by over 1000 Earley residents, calling for a full-time civil enforcement officer permanently and exclusively for Earley. What is the current status of this request?

11.4 None Specific

Rachelle Shepherd-Dubey has asked the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement the following question:

Question

When will the Borough Design Guide be updated, it is not part of the local plan update because it is a companion guide, especially since the parking standards are out of date and WBC is one of the largest car owning vehicle boroughs in England?

11.5 None Specific

Sarah Kerr has asked the Executive Member for Environment, Leisure and Libraries the following question:

Question

In January of this year, I was in attendance at a workshop held for members of local arts and cultural groups in the Borough, here at the Council offices. This was the kick off meeting to look at arts and culture across the Borough, considering what Wokingham Borough already does well, what it can do better, and suggestions for developing its culture. In particular, it was to consider the possibility of a year of culture 2022 once the regeneration work was complete. This initiative was being spearheaded by Philip Mirfin. The question was raised by an attendee whether this had the full backing of Wokingham Borough Council, and would it continue, even if there were changes within the Executive. At the time we were assured this would be the case, but the following meeting scheduled was subsequently cancelled and no new date has been circulated. My question is, with the change of Executive, will this initiative continue?

11.6 Maiden Erlegh

Tahir Maher has asked the Executive Member for Children's Services the following question:

Question

Following the results of the recent local elections can I ask the Executive Member if they can confirm that the unnecessary expansion of Aldryngton Primary School will now definitely not go ahead?

11.7	None Specific	<p>Imogen Shepherd-Dubey has asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:</p> <p>Question Last year, we were told that there would be a cross party Highways working group to tackle issues surrounding our road infrastructure. Can I please ask when that is likely to be established?</p>	
11.8	Hillside	<p>Caroline Smith has asked the Executive Member for Housing the following question:</p> <p>Question Can the Executive Member for Housing confirm when the 'planning for real' exercise will take place for the woodland next to Chalfont Park known as Area DD?</p>	
12.	None Specific	<p>POLITICAL BALANCE OF THE COUNCIL AND ALLOCATION AND APPOINTMENT TO SEATS ON COMMITTEES AND BOARDS</p> <p>To receive a report on the political balance of the Council and to appoint to Council Committees/Panels/Boards in accordance with the Groups' wishes as set out in Appendix 1.</p> <p>Further information relating to nominations will be circulated before or at the meeting.</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION That Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) having reviewed the representation of the political groups on the Council, confirms that it has 31 Conservative Group Members, 16 Liberal Democrat Group Members, 4 Labour Group Members and 3 Independent Group Members (as set out in Para 1.1); 2) approves the appointment and composition of Committees and Boards as set out in Para 2.1; 3) approves the allocation of seats on Committees and Boards on the basis that, of the 92 seats (as set out in Para 3.6), 53 be allocated to the Conservative Group 27 be allocated to the Liberal Democrat Group, 7 be allocated to the Labour Group and 5 be allocated to the Independent Group; 4) approves the proposals submitted by the respective Group Leaders and that those Members be appointed to the Committees and Boards as set out in Appendix 1; 5) agree that the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of those Council Committees etc, set out in 	49 - 60

Appendix 1 be appointed at the first meeting of each of the Committees etc and therefore Rule 4.2.1.1u) of the Constitution be deleted;

- 6) agrees that the principles of proportionality be applied when Members are appointed to Sub Committees, Panels or Working Groups;
- 7) notes the appointment of the Independent Persons to assist the work of the Standards Committee and the co-opted Parish/Town Council Representatives as set out in Appendix 1;
- 8) notes the elected Member representatives on the Wokingham Borough Wellbeing Board, as set out in Appendix 1, as nominated by the Leader of Council in accordance with Section 194 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

13. None Specific APPOINTMENT TO PANELS/WORKING GROUPS ETC 61 - 64

To consider and approve the appointment of Members to serve on Joint Committees, Various Bodies and Panels/Working Groups in accordance with the Groups' wishes as set out in Appendix 2.

Further information relating to nominations will be circulated before or at the meeting.

14. None Specific APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES 65 - 70

To consider and approve the appointment of Members to serve on Outside Bodies in accordance with the Groups' wishes as set out in Appendix 3.

Further information relating to nominations will be circulated before or at the meeting.

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

HELD ON 21 MARCH 2019 FROM 7.30 PM TO 10.25 PM

Members Present

Councillors: John Kaiser (Mayor), Bill Soane (Deputy Mayor), Alistair Auty, Keith Baker, Parry Batth, Laura Blumenthal, Chris Bowring, Prue Bray, Rachel Burgess, Jenny Cheng, David Chopping, UllaKarin Clark, Gary Cowan, Andy Croy, Richard Dolinski, Carl Doran, Lindsay Ferris, Guy Grandison, Kate Haines, Mike Haines, Charlotte Haitham Taylor, John Halsall, Pauline Helliar-Symons, Emma Hobbs, Tim Holton, Philip Houldsworth, Graham Howe, John Jarvis, Clive Jones, Norman Jorgensen, Pauline Jorgensen, Sarah Kerr, Abdul Loyes, Charles Margetts, Julian McGhee-Sumner, Ken Miall, Philip Mirfin, Stuart Munro, Ian Pittock, Anthony Pollock, Malcolm Richards, Angus Ross, Daniel Sargeant, Imogen Shepherd-DuBey, Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey, David Sleight, Chris Smith, Wayne Smith, Simon Weeks and Shahid Younis

99. MINUTE'S SILENCE

A minute's silence was held to remember the victims of the New Zealand shootings.

100. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors David Hare, Dianne King, Barrie Patman and Oliver Whittle.

101. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 21 February 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

102. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

103. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor presented three recipients with the Mayor's Roll of Honour.

The first two recipients were, Charlotte Smith and Rachel Smith who were young carers for a number of family members. Both were very involved in the Young Carers' Forum which Rachel was Vice Chairman of and for which Charlotte had designed the logo. On the Young Carers' Awareness Day, Charlotte and Rachel had visited the Council Offices after school to hand out flyers and talk to Council staff.

The third recipient was Ryan Osborn who was also a young carer and had shown character in the face of adversity. Ryan had been bullied at school which had had an impact on his attendance due to his anxiety. However, he had worked with professionals and this had improved. Ryan had completed a triathlon and shaved his head for charity and went above and beyond to support other students.

The Mayor thanked Members for supporting the Mayor's Gala Dinner on 9 March which had raised £13,000 for the Me2 Club.

104. STATEMENT FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL REGARDING DAWNUS

Although we briefed the leaders of the two Opposition parties I thought it would be useful if I outlined for Members today some facts concerning Dawnus.

Much has been said over the last few weeks over the demise of Dawnus, our construction partner, building amongst other things the new Peach Place Regeneration. I wanted to correct a number of comments that have been published recently so that Members and residents can be reassured that the regeneration will continue as planned.

Dawnus won the regeneration tender in November 2016 following a vigorous tender process. At that time we carried out due diligence and credit checks which showed Dawnus either to have an A- or a B+ credit rating. Couple this with our history of working with Dawnus on other projects in the past where they delivered a quality product at a reasonable price, we felt we had the ideal partner. However, when Corillian went into administration in January this year, the Board overseeing the regeneration met the following day. At the time we wanted to prepare for the worst but in the expectation that Dawnus was still rated B+ by the two credit reference agencies that we checked on that day. When we met to review the contract every two weeks thereafter we also found that we had regular reviews with our advisers Wilson Bowden, who advised us from day one. It was only in later February that we were alerted by Dawnus themselves that they had incurred problems with an overseas contract and that a customer had gone into administration, which had seen them face liquidity problems. At all times they were upfront with us and brought it back on a weekly basis. After discussion with our advisers Wilson Bowden, and only being a matter of weeks away from completion of the site, we prepared for the worst but still hoped that the refinancing they were undertaking would be agreed.

Ten days ago, being alerted that the company was likely to go into administration the following day our AD Bernie Pich put in place our contingency plans which served notice on Dawnus to cancel the contract and to take back the site. This was completed within a few hours which I am told is a record in the world of construction as it usually takes several days. The team here at WBC have retained a temporary contractor onsite who has the responsibility for security whilst we undertake an independent inspection to ascertain what has and what has not been completed. It is entirely likely that this will take several weeks but as most of the contractors on site are sub-contractors we hope to be able to retain the majority. The key sub-contractors were back on site within 48 hours. The priority now is to get the commercial units completed as soon as possible so that new retailers can open and serve our residents. Whilst there will be an inevitable delay we sincerely hope that this will be kept to a minimum.

105. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

105.1 David Bragg asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question. Due to his inability to attend a written answer was provided:

The latest Labour Newsletter distributed in my ward clearly states, "The service was axed by the Tories in 2017". My understanding was that the provider, Reading Buses which is owned by Labour controlled Reading Borough Council, asked for a 100% increase in the subsidy paid by Wokingham Borough from the existing six-figure sum already paid to them. WBC then offered them a 50% increase on that six-figure sum and Reading Buses still went ahead and changed the route. To most residents interpreting this huge increase in the subsidy as axing the service would be considered to be extremely misleading.

Can you confirm my understanding is correct and agree with me that residents deserve better from our politicians?

Answer:

The service, when originally established in 2011, required subsidy to run the day time services and was considered to be commercial during the morning and evening peaks. This Council subsidised the service by £77,500. The contract for the provision of the subsidised elements of the 19a&c bus services in Woodley and Earley came to a natural end in May 2017. At this time Reading Buses reviewed the operation of all elements of the service and concluded the services as a whole did not generate enough revenue for them to be commercially viable routes and they were making an overall loss.

The Council, mindful of the value of these services to Woodley residents, agreed to increase the level of subsidy by 28% to try to ensure a service could still be provided. However this was not entirely sufficient to cover the costs of the services and Reading Buses modified the services in order to meet their commercial needs; this included a reduction in both the subsidised and commercial elements of the route.

The Council recognised the difficulties the reduced service had for residents and undertook an extensive consultation to inform a retender of the services. Following this consultation, an EU tender process was undertaken to secure the services we have today. This was a fair and open process that resulted in a further increase in the level of subsidy being paid to maintain and provide an enhanced service to our residents. The subsidy now paid is £146,000, almost double the original subsidy, though more than £50,000 lower than the total originally requested by Reading Buses. The services being provided today include additional afternoon journeys, a separate school service, and buses that follow the same route all day; as requested by our residents.

Finally, the statement in this newsletter you have highlighted is somewhat misleading and I do agree with you that politicians should not put out misleading statements.

105.2 Philip Meadowcroft asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

At the last meeting on February 21, Councillor McGhee-Sumner, said he could not deal with my question because the transcript had not been published of WBC's Application to the Court of Appeal for Leave to Appeal the decision at Reading Crown Court in respect of WBC's criminal prosecution of numerous defendants associated with Hare Hatch Sheeplands.

The transcript has now been published and there has been a reasonable amount of time for it to be properly digested and evaluated and I now request an answer to the question I originally raised.

To remind you of my question: will you please give urgent consideration to suspending from office all those Members and Officials named and shamed by the Court of Appeal for a series of actions and events of unacceptable culture and practice - such suspensions could only be lifted after the completion of an internal inquiry whose unredacted report is openly published and fully debated by a Full Council Meeting with contributions from WBC council taxpayers? It is a simple choice and crucial to your standing as a respected and credible Leader of WBC.

Answer

As you have requested I have given this serious consideration and I have consulted with our lawyers both internally and externally to Wokingham Borough Council. I can find no evidence to justify suspending Members, or Officials from office. We are conducting an

internal review of the matters connected with the Court of Appeal decision; however a summary of the report only will be released.

We cannot conduct a proper review without the full and frank disclosure from those we interview, and to ensure that is achieved, we will not be releasing the review document itself. The Information Commissioner's Office recognises that there is a high expectation of privacy for matters affecting individuals, even senior members of staff, and given that much of the report will be personal data, we are under a legal duty not to release the report itself.

105.3 Paul Fishwick asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Lamp column number 55 Bearwood Road Sindlesham was knocked down in a vehicle accident on Monday 14 January 2019. The same evening street lights numbers 56, 57 and 58 had also stopped working, which placed a large section of Bearwood Road in darkness. Since then nothing has been done by Wokingham Borough Council.

The residents and travelling public have now endured 9 weeks of complete darkness. How much longer must they wait until the street lighting will be operational again?

Answer

As you say lamp column no. 55 (opposite "Baytree Cottage") was knocked down on the 14 January 2019. The Council's contractor has been due to replace the column on 18 March but the electricity supply to the column which is the responsibility of Scottish & Southern Energy will not take place until late April.

The Scottish & Southern Energy power supply to lamp columns no. 56, 57 & 58 failed on the same day that lamp column no. 55 was knocked down and it seems likely that their cable was damaged during the accident. The loss of power was reported to SSE and they attended on 25 February and believed they had restored the power but the repair did not resolve the issue. The Council has again reported it to them and it has been advised that they have a target of 2 April 2019 to restore the power.

Supplementary Question:

Gigaclear commenced work in Bearwood Road at the junction with Mole Road on Monday 18 February during school half term week and they reached Bearwood School by the end of that week. There had been a period of 4 weeks between the incident on 14 January and the start of the Gigaclear work to install a new lamp column that would have allowed Scottish & Southern to make a new connection. The lamp column was eventually installed on Monday 18 March, this week, during the night time closure of Bearwood Road. Streetlights numbers 57 and 58 have amazingly come to life tonight, but thank you very much for getting it done. However, why wasn't this streetlight, number 55, the column replaced during the 4 week period before 18 February? That would have allowed Scottish & Southern to make a connection as soon as possible.

Supplementary Answer:

I might suggest that if you want detailed information about the repair and replacement of streetlights then you actually send me an email and ask me a question rather than doing it here. I think it is a much more effective way of getting an answer. It actually allows me to do the investigation.

105.4 Robert Tuck asked the Executive Member for Finance, HR and Corporate Resources the following question:

Page 65 of the Medium Term Financial plan approved in February shows new income generation of £150,000 in 2019/20, £850,000 in 2020/21 and £1,350,000 in 2021/22 arising from the purchase of commercial assets. The Council set up a property investment fund of £100 million, and page 80 of the Medium Term Financial Plan shows that it is planned to invest £55 million in such property in 2019/20, which coupled with the money already spent indicates that the whole £100 million is planned to be spent by the end of the next financial year.

When I do the maths, this new income on new spending is a return of 0.2% in the first year, 1.1% in the second year, rising to a maximum of 1.8% in the third year. The current inflation rate is 2.5% so, even at its best, the return is less than inflation, leading to the conclusion that this is a bad investment.

It is possible for ordinary people to get a more-or-less risk-free rate from banks of around 1.5%. However, commercial property investing is not risk free so one would expect a much higher return for the risk of the venture. This evidence, too, points toward this being a bad investment.

How can the Council justify investing in risky commercial property with such a poor return, at a time when all the advice seems to be that the high street retail is very risky?

Answer

You refer to the Medium Term Financial Plan which estimates on a deliberately very cautious set of assumptions around investment income achieved during the plan period. The very nature of the property investment market, being opportunistic and unpredictable, does not lend itself to precise planning of property acquisitions and income profiles. Therefore it is to be expected that any interpretation of these cautious income assumptions would lead the questioner to arrive at a very low rate of return – way below the rate that has actually been achieved on property acquisitions to date and indeed below the rate of return on pure cash investments. The investment principle therefore is to make a net return over and above the cost of capital. This net return or surplus is then available to fund the escalating cost pressures, such as inflation, faced by the Council.

The Council's Investment Policy requires a positive margin of at least 2% over Public Works Loan Board debt cost at the point of allocating funds. This provides a prudent risk and Minimum Revenue Provision margin. So far all our purchases have shown a significantly wider margin; our current running yield on total acquisition costs is just over 6.5%. Plans are in hand to balance this risk profile by allocating a portion of the funds to lower yielding assets, just above the margin threshold to increase diversity and security. The other point I would make is that we are not necessarily investing in high street assets and therefore the issues of risk that you refer to around that are actually not relevant to this portfolio.

Supplementary Question:

Who is advising you on these investments?

Supplementary Answer:

I think the answer to that is a range of professionals. We have an in house professional who is extremely skilled in this sort of investment, having being involved in both the commercial sector and working for Wokingham Borough Council for probably the last 30 to

40 years. He is extremely professional and extremely capable and I have complete confidence that he will not lead us astray.

105.5 Jim Frewin asked the Executive Member for Environment, Leisure and Libraries the following question:

The National guidance for Countryside hedgerows: protection and management clearly states that a hedgerow is deemed to be protected if it meets any of a number of criteria. We understand the field South of Cutbush Lane Shinfield meets the criteria below and therefore should have been seen as protected. This National guidance also states the bird nesting period to be between 1 March and 31 August. As this year has enjoyed a record breaking warm Feb nesting is highly likely to have started much earlier. Can the Council please explain what actions they are undertaking with the landowner who has not only destroyed the protected hedgerows knowingly in the nesting season but has also removed approximately 500 trees, some of which had been there for over 30 years?

From Countryside hedgerows: protection and management

A hedgerow is a boundary line of bushes which can include trees and is protected if it's:

- more than 20m long with gaps of 20m or less in its length
- less than 20m long, but meets another hedge at each end
- any stretch within the above
- A hedgerow is protected if it's on or next to:
- land used for agriculture or forestry

A hedgerow is important (and is protected) if it's at least 30 years old and meets at least one of these criteria:

- is part of a field system or looks to be related to any building or other feature associated with the field system that existed before the Inclosure Acts (that is before 1845)

Answer

Officers have investigated the reported works and it was found that none of these tree or scrub clearance works required consent from the Council. Landscaping generally falls outside the remit of the Town and Country Planning Act unless the site is within a Conservation Area or there are Tree Preservation Orders served on the site. Neither of these designations apply to the land to the south of Cutbush Lane. It should be noted that landscaping work can take place within the nesting season, however the wilful destruction of trees and hedgerows that comprise nests is a criminal offence which would be a matter for the police. The works undertaken by Bellway have been supervised by an Ecologist and the Council's Compliance Officer has visited the site on several occasions to monitor what work has been carried out. It has been determined that these have been outside of the control of the Town and Country Planning Act, therefore the Council has no powers to prevent these.

The Hedgerows Regulations (1997) protect countryside hedgerows based primarily upon their historical and ecological importance. Landowners that wish to remove a countryside hedgerow that meets the key importance criteria are required to apply to the local planning authority for permission. The LPA has 42 days to respond to the application and can then issue either a written notice giving permission to remove it or a hedgerow retention notice if the hedge is protected and must be kept. In this case the Council is not aware of any hedgerows that would meet the key importance criteria that have been removed on this

site.

Supplementary Question:

The National Guidelines for Land Maintenance are clear. The pictures, which I was not allowed to put on the agenda but I will leave some copies here if anyone cares about their wildlife and their habitat, I will leave them here as well. This is not just maintenance of a site. This is not trimming of brambles. It is nothing short of wanton destruction of significant wildlife habitat, knowingly against recognised guidelines. A local farmer said on seeing what had been done, and I quote “no self-respecting farmer would even think of doing this in this way and at this time of year.”

Bellway have kindly sent me a copy of their ecology expert’s report for the site in order to justify their action. It is actually dated after the action. Covering one’s back maybe. As one Shinfield Councillor said, and quite rightly, Bellway the developer are likely to be covered by University insurance so not a lot that the Council can do, and I understand that. This action raises the question of what is right. If you can find time to look at these pictures I will leave them here and I know that some of them have been distributed. This event raises the question of are there different rules for developers and residents? If a resident knocks down a single tree before being awarded planning permission what would the Council say? Would it be that we can do nothing? We know that not to be the case. Can Wokingham Borough Council please assure residents that they have and operate a fair and equitable approach to planning where residents are treated the same as developers, and Shinfield is treated the same as all the other wards?

Supplementary Answer:

That is a huge question. Mr Frewin I am really very pleased to follow up on the evidence that you have and to reply to you outside of the Chamber.

As far as the larger question is concerned, the answer is yes of course.

105.6 Rachel Bishop-Firth asked the Executive Member for Finance, HR and Corporate Resources the following question:

Page 17 of the Medium Term Financial plan (MTFP) states that ‘the annual revenue costs of new borrowing is approximately 7% of the sum borrowed’. Between 2018/19 and 2021/22 the total amount of borrowing is expected to rise by £212 million to £539 million (page 78, MTFP). The revenue cost of the rise in borrowing will therefore be £15 million per year from 2021/22, while the revenue cost of total borrowing from 2022/23 will be £38 million.

Page 17 of the MTFP states that ‘the financing costs of any new borrowing falls directly upon the council tax payer’. Page 33 of the MTFP shows that Council Tax Revenue is approximately £100 million each year. The new borrowing will therefore be equivalent to two years’ council tax receipts and will add somewhere between 15% and 38% per year to the burden of council tax payers.

Average wages in the next five years or so are expected to rise by between 2% and 3% per year. Does the council regard this increased annual burden, adding at best 15% and at worst 38%, to council tax bills by 2021/22 as evidence that its spending plans are ‘affordable, prudent and sustainable’ as required by the MTFP, page 17?

Answer

I suppose the short answer is yes of course but I will give you the longer answer as well. I

do not know if you have got a copy of the Medium Term Financial Plan with you but I will refer to one or two pages.

I am aware that Council finances are complicated. I have been doing it a long time so I know how complicated, so to clarify the sentence on page 17 of the Medium Term Financial Plan, which states that 'the annual revenue costs of new borrowing is approximately 7% of the sum borrowed', this relates only to new borrowing which is not funded by other sources of income such as developer contributions, capital receipts etc. This does not apply to all new borrowing as referred to in your question.

Can I refer you to the capital resource statement on page 87 of the MTFP, the first table on this page breaks down how the future borrowing will be repaid. The line called Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) represents the amount the council tax payer will fund, and that states here £6,2million, £5.8million and £5.9 million. All other borrowing is funded by other means e.g. developer contributions etc.

Over the next three years the annual MRP borrowing will remain at approximately £6m per year, as I have said. The annual revenue costs of this new borrowing will be funded from within existing budgets. Therefore, as there will be no material change to these annual costs there will not be an additional burden on the tax payer.

I can therefore confirm that our financial management continues to be sound, sensible and carefully planned to deliver on the Council's ambition, delivering vital assets for the community, and creating valuable new income sources to fund escalating costs of future council services.

Supplementary Question:

At what point will additional borrowing become unsustainable in your opinion?

Supplementary Answer:

I will not allow it.

105.7 Maria Gee asked the Executive Member for Finance, HR and Corporate Resources the following question:

The maturity structure of external borrowing shown on page 78 of the Medium Term Financial Plan shows that the budgeted maturity of debt 2019/20 is as follows:

- Under 12 months 2%
- 12 months to 2 years 15%
- 2 years to 5 years 15%

Total schedule debt repayments in the next five years is therefore 32% of external borrowings.

On the same page the external borrowings 2019/20 are shown as £295 million. The debt repayment schedule would therefore indicate that some £94 million in debt repayments will need to be found over the next five years.

Can the Council please explain where the money for this repayment of £94 million over the next five years will come from?

Answer

The Capital Programme is ambitious and its financing is complicated including not only borrowings but also developer contributions, sales of assets and repayments from income.

However, you are correct that the £94m of debt is estimated to be repaid within the next five years.

This will be funded in the following ways.

- £20.4m HRA self-financing loans which are funded by the Housing revenue account;
- £35.5m in Developer contributions repaying the forward funding of capital schemes; and
- £38.6m from Wokingham Town Centre regeneration repayments arising from the sale of the residential assets.

Therefore I can confirm that our financial management continues to be sound, responsible and carefully planned in order to deliver on the Council's ambitious capital programme, delivering vital assets for the community and creating valuable new income sources to fund our escalating costs of Council services.

Supplementary Question:

It seems to me that the Council is mortgaging not only current residents but also their children and their grandchildren with its ambitious schedule of borrowings. I am particularly concerned about the £38.6million of repayments that you hope to get from sales of property. Given the current financial climate, how can you be sure that the value of assets that you currently expect will actually be enough to repay the loans that you are expecting them to repay?

Supplementary Answer:

The estimates that we have are conservative. The housing market may be a little depressed but as you have seen it is over the next 5 years, so I am confident that we will raise the sums that we have indicated, maybe even exceed them.

105.8 Beth Rowland asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Will the Executive Member for Highways please tell me what (on earth) persuaded her to agree to a 'pinch point' on Kingfisher Drive in Woodley? Residents have been complaining to me since it was installed and called it 'an act of madness.' Cars are parked for a considerable way along the highway either side of the pinch point meaning that cars travelling towards each other on the remaining carriageway have nowhere to go to allow one car to pass through the narrow gap.

For pupils walking to Highwood Primary school there is added danger as the sightlines are obscured by parked cars described by residents as an accident waiting to happen.

Please will you meet with me at the site to see what can be done to improve matters. At the same time, we may be able to look at some potholes that are on the road damaging residents' cars.

Answer

The pinch point was approved by the Council in 2017 and installed in Kingfisher Drive as part of a larger scheme for improvements for pedestrians along the full length in response

to concerns raised by residents about traffic speeds, which shows you cannot please all the people all the time as now they do not want them. The pinch point was placed in this location to provide a safer access for pedestrians into South Lake, linking pedestrian routes in the area and adding a direct and more appropriate route into South Lake rather than via a vehicle access road.

The principle of a pinch point is to reduce vehicle approach speeds at or near a point where pedestrians may wish to cross the road, such as near to shops or on a route to school. In heavily parked streets they can be used to aid visibility of pedestrians, so that they can see and be seen beyond the parked vehicles. The pinch points improve visibility and safety for school children walking to Highwood Primary School.

However, the pinch point in Kingfisher Drive is currently being monitored by the Council Traffic Management Team, with a view to deterring parking close to the pinch point so that vehicles can safely pass. I would be very happy to meet you and so would the Highways Team on site, to discuss it in more detail. To be honest I share some of your concerns.

If you are concerned about potholes, please report them online or if you want to send me an email that is also fine. Shortly we will have the new pothole reporting system which will allow you to use a GIS map to report them which should make the whole thing a lot faster.

Supplementary Question:

Can I email you to make an appointment to meet there?

Supplementary Answer:

Of course you can.

105.9 Lizzie Bishop asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question which was asked on her behalf by Adrian Mathers:

Does the Council plan to raise car parking charges?

Answer

We have no current plans to raise parking charges.

106. PETITIONS

The following members of the public and Member presented petitions in relation to the matters indicated.

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

Andrew Mickleburgh	Andrew Mickleburgh presented a petition of 1047 signatures regarding civil parking enforcement in Earley. <i>To be forwarded to the Executive Member for Highways and Transport</i>
Gareth Rees	Gareth Rees presented a petition of 75 signatures regarding Speeding/Road Safety on Reading Road, A327 Finchampstead

	<i>To be forwarded to the Executive Member for Highways and Transport.</i>
Councillor Anthony Pollock	<p>Anthony Pollock presented a petition of 59 signatures regarding reduction of speed limit on Hyde End Road, between Basingstoke Road and Dobbies Garden Centre.</p> <p><i>To be forwarded to the Executive Member for Highways and Transport.</i></p>

107. REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES

The Council considered a report regarding the review which had been undertaken of Polling Districts and Polling Places, set out at Agenda pages 33 to 40.

It was proposed by Anthony Pollock and seconded by Gary Cowan that the recommendations within the agenda be approved.

Anthony Pollock highlighted proposed changes to some polling stations across the Borough.

Gary Cowan indicated that he had been part of the cross party working group and attended the meeting when the proposals had been made. He thanked the other members of the Working Group for their contribution and the Officers for their support.

Charlotte Haitham Taylor stated that she was pleased to see changes particularly for Shinfield South, which she had been championing for several years. In the past some residents had had to travel past Three Mile Cross Church in order to reach their polling station in Spencers Wood. They would now be able to vote in Three Mile Cross Church.

Carl Doran indicated that he was also part of the Working Group. He thanked the Officers for their support and the other Members. He emphasised the importance of the convenience for electors with regards to the location of polling stations. Whilst they would like to remove polling stations from schools it was important to ensure that all electors be given 'such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances'. It was particularly difficult to find available polling stations in the event of snap elections and local authority maintained schools were one of the few places that could be secured in this instance. A small number of schools were being used as polling stations and this number would hopefully reduce.

Ian Pittock stated that he also had been part of the Working Group. He believed that schools should not be used as polling stations. Using schools as polling stations disrupted childrens education and could cause hardship for parents who may need to take time off work to care for their children. Although there had been a shift in to using primary instead of secondary schools, primary schools also had exams in May. He was pleased to see that the number of schools used as polling stations had reduced but felt that there were alternatives available that should have been selected.

David Sleight stated that he too had been part of the Working Group. Whilst Councillor Pittock had prepared an alternative proposal for Wokingham Without so that Oaklands

School did not have to be used as a polling station, it was unworkable and would, he felt, have increased congestion and reduced voter turnout.

Lindsay Ferris asked about the moving of a polling station from Maiden Erlegh Library to Aldryngton Primary School. David Chopping indicated that with regards to Maiden Erlegh, the school had taken back control of the library so an alternative polling station had had to be found. Aldryngton Primary School was a convenient location.

Councillor Pittock requested that a separate vote be held on each recommendation.

Upon being put to the vote it was:

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the polling places for the polling districts listed in the attached schedule be retained for elections from May 2020 onwards. This includes the two changes made for May 2019, whereby CAM1 has Charvil Village Hall and EFW and EGW have Aldryngton School designated;
- 2) the change the polling district boundaries, as detailed below, be agreed (see maps for further clarity);
 - a) Shinfield North – Residents from Ducketts Mead to be moved from SAW2 to SAW1, so they can vote at Shinfield Player’s Theatre;
 - b) Shinfield South – residents from Church Lane and the northern end of Basingstoke Road and Hyde End Lane to be moved from SDW to SBW, allowing them to vote at Three Mile Cross Church;
- 3) although no changes are to be made to the schools we currently use as polling places, the Council will continue to seek suitable alternatives as and when they become available.

108. FREQUENCY OF REVIEW OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME

The Council considered a report regarding the frequency of the review of the Members’ Allowances Scheme, set out at Agenda pages 41 to 44.

It was proposed by Julian McGhee-Sumner and seconded by Lindsay Ferris that the report be approved. During Councillor Ferris’ seconder speech he proposed an amendment to the recommendations which was accepted by Councillor McGhee Sumner.

Lindsay Ferris stated that the proposed recommendation of the Independent Remuneration Panel meeting every four years was too far apart and would lend to large scale changes to the scheme. However, meeting annually was too frequent. Having the Independent Remuneration Panel meet every two years was therefore preferred, which was why he was putting forwards the amendment.

Gary Cowan stated that senior officers’ salaries were annually reviewed, and that staff salaries were linked to incremental progression and the pension scheme. He questioned why Members were treated differently. Gary Cowan noted that only two applications had been received for the Independent Remuneration Panel, which he felt was not surprising.

Rachel Burgess emphasised that she believed that Members Allowances should be scrutinised annually, and that allowances were already high during a time of austerity. There would be nothing in place to stop a recommendation for a big increase in allowances following the review after two years.

Andy Croy was also of the opinion that there should be annual scrutiny of the Members' Allowances Scheme. He felt that moving to a review of allowances every two years was not an improvement and was not in favour of increases to Members Allowances.

Prue Bray commented that whilst Members were required to vote on the level of their own allowances it was a difficult matter to discuss and to reach a conclusion on. The rate of Members Allowances should be reasonable.

A number of Members referred to other councils across the country where they believed that the level of Members Allowances was overly high.

Upon the Motion as amended being put to the vote it was:

RESOLVED: That:

- 1) Council move to two yearly reviews of the Members' Allowances Scheme and it be noted that the next review would therefore take place late 2019/early 2020 followed by late 2021/early 2022;
- 2) the Constitution Review Working Group be asked to consider what changes are required to the Constitution to affect this change.

109. ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AND THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES 2018/19

The Council considered the annual report from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Committees, set out at Agenda pages 45 to 66.

It was proposed by Philip Houldsworth and seconded by Malcolm Richards that the report be noted.

Philip Houldsworth thanked the Committee and the Officers who had supported them and residents for their contribution. He also thanked Councillor Bath for chairing the Committee for much of the municipal year. Philip Houldsworth stated that scrutiny was changing and that they were determined to make it more effective. He referred to the grounds maintenance report and the scrutiny of 21st Century Council.

Malcolm Richards referred to the training that Members had had in order to stay updated.

Lindsay Ferris commented that he believed that there had been a major improvement in overview and scrutiny over the last 18 months and was pleased that cross party Chairman's briefings took place. Whilst there was still a long way to go, he felt that scrutiny was now in 'the foothills.' Lindsay Ferris referred to areas for scrutiny over the coming year including the budget. He suggested that there needed to be more effort and training put into scrutiny.

Andy Croy was of the view that overview and scrutiny committees should provide balance or counterweight to the Executive. He felt that it had been difficult to get specific items on

to the agenda or on the agenda in a timely manner. He referred to the scrutiny of the Wokingham Market Place works which he felt had not been carried out in a timely manner. Andy Croy stated that with the collapse of Dawnus he had been pressing for proper scrutiny of Peach Place and other construction contracts that the Council had. He went on to emphasise that it was important that Members asked questions and were properly briefed and engaged.

Gary Cowan stated that it was interesting to see what had not been scrutinised and referred to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and the Members Allowance Scheme. He suggested that more policies should be considered by overview and scrutiny prior to their adoption.

Upon being put to the vote it was:

RESOLVED: That the report from the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee be noted.

110. AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19

The Council considered the annual report from the Chairman of the Audit Committee, set out at Agenda pages 67 to 72.

It was proposed by Chris Smith and seconded by David Chopping that the report be noted.

Chris Smith thanked Members and Officers for their work and support. He referred to work undertaken by the Committee throughout the municipal year, including holding an extraordinary meeting to review the Corporate Risk Register to better understand the risks that the Council faced. Directors had been invited to meetings to highlight the risks in their areas, and would continue to be invited in the next year.

Chris Smith also referred to the Task and Finish Group which had looked at the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

Chris Smith indicated that the Audit Committee was required to approve the Treasury Management Strategy and he wanted Council financial documents to be more accessible for Members and the public.

Upon being put to the vote it was:

RESOLVED: That the report from the Chairman of the Audit Committee be noted.

111. STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19

The Council considered the annual report from the Chairman of the Standards Committee, set out at Agenda pages 73 to 80.

It was proposed by Ken Miall and seconded by Parry Batth that the report be noted.

Ken Miall drew Members' attention to the Committee on Standards in Public Life which covered how standards matters should be investigated. He made reference to the fact that the tone of debate should be civil and constructive.

Lindsay Ferris commented that he had had concerns about the Standards arena for a while. The Liberal Democrat Group would be putting together proposals around Standards

which they would share at the appropriate time. There were issues about the length of time taken to investigate complaints and what could be investigated. He believed that the final committee which investigated complaints should have five members instead of three and that it should be chaired by an independent person.

Upon being put to the vote it was:

RESOLVED: That the report from the Chairman of the Standards Committee be noted.

112. WOKINGHAM BOROUGH WELLBEING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19

The Council considered the annual report from the Chairman of the Wokingham Borough Wellbeing Board, set out at Agenda pages 81 to 94.

It was proposed by Parry Batth and seconded by UllaKarin Clark that the report be noted.

Parry Batth highlighted work undertaken by the Board throughout the municipal year.

Upon being put to the vote it was:

RESOLVED: That the report from the Chairman of the Wokingham Borough Wellbeing Board be noted.

113. REPORTS FROM MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES

The Council considered the reports from Members appointed to Outside Bodies, set out at Agenda pages 95 to 136 and as tabled.

It was proposed by Angus Ross and seconded by Chris Bowring that the reports from Members appointed to Outside Bodies be noted.

Angus Ross commented that it was good that the majority of reports had been submitted and that the reports highlighted the work of some of the 29 partner organisations.

Upon being put to the vote it was:

RESOLVED: That the reports from Members appointed to Outside Bodies be noted.

114. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

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

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

You have allocated money for roadworks only in Barkham, Earley, Twyford and Woodley. Why aren't the rest of WBC also getting these road repairs?

Answer

Firstly sorry to disabuse you but I have not allocated any money anywhere. The money is divvied out on the basis of robust data about the condition of network. There is a longer term programme of planned works to ensure that schemes can be implemented in a coordinated way to minimise the impact on the network and the disruption to road users. This is a requirement of the Department of Transport funding and an alternative approach such as allocating funding such as on a ward basis could exclude Wokingham from

receiving Central Government grants and lead to a shortfall in the current Highways budget levels.

This year we got £1.177 million additional grant from the Government for road repairs and the Council has recently announced where these repairs will take place. The work programme has been developed to focus on those areas where surveys, visual inspections, technical assessments and technical analysis have identified the greatest need. The Council also has to direct this funding to those areas where it considers the schemes can be delivered within the time constraints of the grants, without conflicting with any other planned projects. It is quite tricky. As part of this grant we have also left £113,000 aside for pothole repairs, so I am looking forwards to Beth's list when she comes back. In addition, apart from the £1.177million we spend £1.5 million on highways maintenance anyway and in December I changed the process so that the details of all our potholes and where the money is spent are actually on the website, so I would urge you to read that. In January we spent £221,000 on pothole repairs, of which £43,000 was spent in Barkham, Earley, Twyford and Woodley and the rest was not. In December it was £163,000 spent, of which £28,000 was spent in Barkham, Earley, Twyford and Woodley and the rest was not. To look at just the Government grant money really does not give you the full picture and obviously we are doing it on the basis of what needs doing the most.

Supplementary Question:

I can recommend two roads that really need to be worked on; one is Arbor Lane in Winnersh and the other is Twyford Road in Hurst.

Supplementary Answer:

Thank you, we will take a look at those on the road survey data. I have got nice maps of the whole Borough showing all the roads that need doing. There is an awful lot that needs doing. I would like a lot more money but we will have a look at those as well.

114.2 Lindsay Ferris asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

Having now had the chance to read the Court of Appeal decision between WBC and Hare Hatch Sheeplands representatives. I have very serious concerns about how WBC has approached this case, specifically the reference to "abuse of process" contained in the legal decisions.

It would appear that WBC decided to prosecute the Hare Hatch Sheeplands representatives on 18 May 2015. Can you provide the total WBC costs (including legal costs), plus broken down into WBC staff costs, legal costs and other) of pursuing the case against Hare Hatch Sheeplands since that date?

Answer

Although the court case has now concluded for the Criminal Proceedings, the court has yet to determine the costs for the prosecution and as such this is still subject to litigation. I am unable, therefore, to give you this information at the present time.

The information for internal staff cost is impossible to quantify, since there are no records of the amount of time spent on this matter. The Council also received costs awarded to it by the Court against Mr. Scott in respect of a number of court proceedings so these costs should be offset against the cost of the most recent case.

Supplementary Question:

Since my question was submitted there has been a Planning Inspectorate appeal decision.

Can you advise what the Wokingham Borough Council costs of this appeal and process was please?

Supplementary Answer:

No costs were awarded either way. As in the last case our internal costs do not get quantified per individual case. The lawyers work on individual cases and they work on another case. We cannot stop them. It is not like private practice unfortunately.

114.3 Imogen Shepherd-DuBey asked the Executive Member for Business, Economic Development and Strategic Planning the following question:

We have recently seen the public information stating that WBC is proposing to spend up to £17.2 Million on a warehouse in Peterborough as one of its investment properties. It seems a little odd that this property is so far outside of the Wokingham Borough Council area and is valued at only £15.9 Million. Please can you explain how property investments are selected by the Property Investment Working Group and point in the direction of its terms of reference?

Answer

The Council's Investment Board has approved a proposal to bid to purchase an investment property in Peterborough, you are quite right. The bid process is competitive, commercially sensitive and confidential therefore it would not be appropriate to discuss any of the specifics in a public forum at this stage.

The question is posed on the basis that the property "*is valued at £15.9m*" – which is in fact incorrect. It is likely that the figure of £15.9m has been extracted from the seller's agent's marketing particulars which sets out a Proposal inviting "offers in excess of £15.9m".

Unlike residential property where in most places of the market it might be assumed that an asking price is indeed the price at which a house might transact, the investment market is a little more complicated. It is not normal for a seller to offer a commercial property investment asset for sale at a fixed price.

Instead, it is normal for a seller to invite competitive bidding so they can select their preferred buyer by reference to a wide range of criteria including, but not limited to, price. The seller usually invites bids above a low threshold to ensure the proposal appeals to a wide audience. Bids are then whittled down through a course of often several rounds until the seller selects a preferred buyer.

It is the Council's actual experience that bids can be won primarily on track record, professional credibility and quality of bid without necessarily submitting the highest price, and I think you heard Anthony describe to you earlier that we have a very experienced team in this area. Several of the Council's acquisitions have been won on this basis in the face of higher bids indicating higher market value than the Council has actually paid.

The Council has acted in accordance with independent professional advice in all its investment dealings and in this case our advice confirms that the value of the Peterborough property is comfortably in excess of the level above which the seller has invited bids. This is not surprising and is perfectly normal.

The strategic location of this property, together with all the other key criteria of this property, is crucial to its appeal and value as an institutional calibre investment asset.

All the Council's investment assets are selected in accordance with the Council's Investment Policy approved by Executive on 28 September 2017 (Minutes 49 and 53 refer). You will be aware that much of the detail of this Policy was considered under a Part 2 Report and remains commercially sensitive and confidential (Minute 53).

Supplementary Question:

You still have not pointed me exactly in the direction of where it is other than telling me where it was discussed. I am really not impressed that when we are spending public money the process is not clear. What I would like to know is on what grounds do you invest outside of the Borough?

Supplementary Answer:

That depends on the commercial suitability of the property. There have been some changes also to the Government suggestions on what we should and should not do and we are adhering to those policies. I am happy to give you fuller details.

114.4 Gary Cowan asked the Executive Member for Business, Economic Development and Strategic Planning the following question:

In a report in the Wokingham Paper on 15 December 2016 at Wokingham Town Hall Wokingham's then Conservative Council Leader Councillor Keith Baker along with Councillor Chris Bowring and ex Councillor Mark Ashwell and Senior Council Officers announced that 4 local Councils Wokingham, West Berkshire, Reading and Bracknell are going to work together to deliver 65,165 houses over 20 years. ~~Councillor Baker, amongst other comments, reportedly said that the 4 councils can achieve this huge task ahead.~~

My question is in the light of this Council's decision to move the New Local Plan public inquiry from this year to 2021, a year when there are no local elections, along with the interpretation of the 5 year land supply delivery policy, what are the risks in such planning?

Councillor Baker asked that the last sentence of the first paragraph of the question be removed as this was not the case. This was agreed by Councillor Cowan.

Answer

Since the Berkshire local authorities jointly commissioned and published the Berkshire (including South Bucks) Strategic Housing Market Assessment in 2016, the Government has introduced a new National Planning Policy Framework and a Planning Practice Guidance which changes the way the need for housing is calculated.

At the meeting of Executive in October 2018, an amended programme for the Local Plan was agreed. The programme, which was endorsed by the cross party Planning and Transport Member Steering Group, which I think you are a member of Gary, ensures an opportunity for residents to engage in the process and help us shape how we manage development.

Around 1,500 responses have been received to the recent consultation and I thank all those who took the time to attend the events and respond. Officers are in the process of analysing this important feedback.

Moving forward, the adopted programme is that we consult on a draft Local Plan in autumn 2019. A further consultation on the proposed submission Local Plan would occur in summer 2020 with submission to Government for examination in spring 2021. Whilst this

is our adopted programme we hope to be able to move faster.

I am sure you will agree that the constant changes to Government policy and guidance are not helping anyone in preparing local plans. Notwithstanding the difficulties, we continue to progress our Local Plan work, following the clear process and requirements set out in legislation and Government policy.

So while we are putting together our new Local Plan, it is clear that our existing planning strategy set out in the Core Strategy is working. Looking at the number of homes built, under construction and permitted, more than sufficient homes are capable of being delivered to meet past and current Government expectations. We have in excess of a five year housing land supply and comfortably passed the Government's new Housing Delivery Test which looks at the sufficiency of delivery over the previous three years.

Supplementary Question:

I have studied the Local Plan of our local neighbouring authorities which are all very well advanced having been subject to examinations and made public. Bracknell Forest proposes cooperation with the Royal Borough on unmet housing need and they have Greenbelt issues. Reading have formally requested that Wokingham accommodate their unmet need to 2036 with the numbers to be agreed at another time along with nomination rights and affordable housing, discussions about developer contributions and CIL, which Mark Ashwell was positive about, but which West Berkshire said no way. The most damning comments came from the Royal Borough's Inspector who challenged the Green belt along with council use of separate, and this is a key point, separate east and western HMAs rather than a single HMA, which could better address the issue of unmet need in the county. She added that no house could go in the plan without a SANG, and on the Green belt she raised the point of whether neighbouring authorities could help the Royal Borough out. The only comment from Wokingham to any of these public inquiries was 'no action needed.'

My question therefore is, is 'no action needed' a right and proper way to comment on a neighbour's plans as they will have serious implications on our new Local Plan update, now delayed to 2021?

Supplementary Answer:

Reading might have asked that we take some of their houses but we certainly have not said yes as far as I am concerned and nor will we. I am happy to talk to you more about this offline because I do not think I totally understood what you were trying to ask.

114.5 Sarah Kerr asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

On 28th September 2018, WBC received a joint letter from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government and the Department for Transport, written in response to the Department for Transport's publication of the *Inclusive Transport Strategy*. This publication asks local authorities to pause the development of shared space schemes whilst it updates its guidance to ensure that road schemes like this meet the statutory requirements under the Equalities Act 2010. The Department for Transport did this due to long standing concerns raised by vulnerable road users, and is the consequence of the recommendations of a Parliamentary Select Committee published on 25th April 2017 that recommended a halt to shared space schemes that remove kerbs and signal-controlled crossings as well as a review by the Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation *Review of Shared Spaces* published in April 2018.

With this in mind, I have concerns about the redevelopment of California Cross given that the design that went to public consultation at the end of last year has several shared space characteristics. To add to these concerns, the parking bays of the design are at an angle to the carriageway which is a major route, and means that vehicles leaving the parking bays would need to reverse onto the carriageway. At the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, earlier this year, where the new marketplace was under review, one of the senior highways engineers stated that parking bays like this were too dangerous to implement where a vehicle reverses at an angle onto a busy carriageway. As the California Cross parking bay proposals appear to be similar, and given the request from the government to pause the development of shared space schemes, what is happening with regard to your plans for California Cross?

Answer

The California Cross proposals were progressed, as you said, and broadly approved as part of a planning permission obtained by the developers associated with the Arborfield SDL development. A decision was made by Council Members to take the scheme inhouse and widen its scope rather than let the developers deliver the scheme included within its application.

The Council is fully aware of the publications from the DfT with regard to shared space schemes. However as the DfT publications came at a point after the project had reached an advanced stage of design, and given that the scheme is not a fully shared space scheme, for example there are kerb upstands, which I now know is the way the kerb sticks up, a decision to progress with the project up to a concept design stage was made including public consultation on the proposals. The progression to this stage allows us to gather valuable site data that can be used for whichever scheme design is progressed, to comply with the planning consent requirements, and to take on board consultation results. In addition, there is further time to consider the scheme, due to recently identified utilities works within the vicinity of California Cross, which has resulted in a construction embargo in this area until July 2020. Should further advice be provided by the DfT during this time, this will, where appropriate be incorporated into the scheme.

WBC have followed the principles of the Equality Assessment guidance and during the consultation period including additional consultation with vulnerable groups and disabled users. The findings from these have been fed into the concept design and discussed in the public consultation.

With regards to the parking arrangements we are considering amending the design from the current proposal to stop vehicles using the parking bays reversing onto the main carriageway. We still have work to do on this to check the flows and turning circles which we will do when the project reaches the detailed design stage. You are not alone with this. I have also had feedback from Councillor Weeks whose ward this is in, saying very similar things to what you have said.

Supplementary Question:

Really pleased to hear that this has been taken on board. Just finally, obviously the local authority's statutory requirement is to ensure that we evidence that equalities have been taken into consideration. The best way of doing this is an Equality Impact Assessment. Is there going to be one of these out there or is there another way of evidencing this? Is it going to be an Equalities Impact Assessment?

Supplementary Answer:

I can assure you that whichever way we do this scheme it is in full compliance with all the guidelines around Equality, and if you want to talk about it a bit further, I would be happy to talk to you.

114.6 Prue Bray asked the Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing and Adult Social Care the following question:

The Director of Adult Social Services is a statutory post and appointments must be agreed by Full Council. In July last year, Council voted to have a joint Director of Adult Social Services with the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead for a 9 month trial, with effect from 1 August. That 9 month period expires at the end of April. What are the proposed arrangements for the post of Director of Adult Social Services after the end of April?

Answer

With regard to the arrangements for the post of Director of Adult Services, which is commonly known as DASS, after the end of April, following a review of the trial period and recommendations of the current Shared DASS it has been decided to appoint a permanent full time Director for WBC. This decision was taken by the Interim Chief Executive and the Leader in consultation with Executive Members and Directors, as per the Constitution. It was considered that whilst the trial had been successful the arrangements did not provide the Council with the capacity at director level that is required.

In terms of the appointment, the Constitution was changed at Full Council on 21 February and Personnel Board now has the authority to appoint both the Directors of Children's Services and of Adult Services. The position has been advertised and Personnel Board is convening to interview the shortlisted candidates on 26 March.

Supplementary Question:

I am glad you have got something in hand. However it was the Full Council that agreed a trial joint arrangement. Should there not have been some sort of report back and an opportunity to comment from Councillors before other people made the decision which I have not seen documented or reported back to us anywhere?

Supplementary Answer:

The decision was made by the appropriate Officers and I am happy to look into what you have suggested Prue and to come back to you.

114.7 Ian Pittock asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Will the Executive Member for Highways please update me on progress with implementing a system for recording Highways owned land across the Borough, which that can then be used to identify householder's encroachments onto Highways land?

Answer

The Council already has available a data layer on its GIS system that shows the extent of the highway boundary. This information is actively used by the Highways Teams to check encroachment issues as and when queries are made. Moving forward this data layer will be incorporated into the new Highway Information Management System (HIMS) being implemented as part of the new Highways and Transport contract and will be available on 1 April. I would like, and I have asked, to see if we could actually make it available for the

public to view so that everybody has got a view of the boundaries and can make their own decisions about encroachment.

Supplementary Question:

I think you have partly answered it, just a bit of clarification here then. We were promised 2 years ago a specific piece of software that would actually do this. If that is what you are describing, that is good. What I am looking for is, and I will phrase it slightly differently, when will you start to actively use that information to reverse these encroachments so that we gain back physical control of what was and remains highways land so that infrastructure projects that have been stopped or are long delayed by household encroachments, can proceed?

Supplementary Answer:

I cannot speak for what was said years ago but we are already using that data. I have certainly used it in the last few weeks with a query about encroachment on highways land, and I am sure people will be happy to share with you the outputs of that system so you can see for yourself.

114.8 Clive Jones asked the Executive Member for Regeneration the following question:

What are the implications for the Council since Dawnus went into administration, including but not limited to costs, time scales, quality of work and warranties.

Answer

Most of this was covered in a briefing meeting that we had with your Leader and also Imogen attended, earlier this week. However, I will go into the answer as fully as I can at this time.

First of all, we should recognise the very good work over the years that Dawnus have carried out for WBC – the most recent being the excellent delivery of the Bohunt School in Arborfield. They had a local Office in Thatcham and employed staff and tradespeople from within our Borough, who have now been made redundant. They also worked with many small and medium enterprises, several of whom operated from within and around our Borough.

It is also to be recognised that the construction industry generally has suffered from a lack of availability of credit and finance following the demise of Carillion last year, which has and continues to constrain the cashflow and liquidity of many companies both large and small across the country.

Since being advised of Dawnus entering Administration, this Council acted very swiftly by instigating our Contingency Plan for this very event. Indeed, within 2 hours the Dawnus contract had been terminated, which then allowed us to take back control of the site and ensure it was secured that very night. This put us on the front foot and allowed us to continue with the works. Indeed by the following morning another Contractor had been employed on the site and this allowed works to continue on that morning on the Friday of last, including the tenant fit-outs and the gas main installation in Rose Street.

We have identified the works required to open the most immediate retail units and those works continue and will allow three of them to open generally in line with last week's plans – the first indeed being Beyond The Download in Rose Street this coming weekend.

We are in discussion with all tenants and specifically those in the next tranche who are planning to open in April. It is the case that maybe two of them may be delayed but we are currently working through the outstanding works necessary to see them open successfully. We will understand more in terms of impact on programme in the coming weeks.

We also continue discussion with several operators who are ready to sign, again understanding the specific works required for each to enable us to provide access, and then them being able to trade successfully.

It is inevitable that the cost of the scheme will increase, though it must be recognised that some of this may be able to be set-off against Dawnus (there will be discussions with the Administrator in this respect). We hold contingencies for the project specifically and for the wider programme of works which we believe at this stage will be adequate to cover the increased cost. Therefore, at this time, we do not foresee that an increase in the budget will be required to complete the works.

It is certainly our intent to maintain all warranties where we can. We have already discussed this issue with the design consultants in an effort to secure these warranties. There were also warranties in place with key sub-contractors and we are in discussion with them to understand if we can secure warranties from them for their design and installation of the works.

Supplementary Question:

What about the two non Peach Place contracts that Dawnus had; that is Matthews Green and Arborfield Green Primary School? Can you tell us what is going to happen about those?

Supplementary Answer (which was answered by the Leader of the Council):

As with the previous statement they are currently under review. Dawnus has gone into administration so clearly they will not be proceeding with those so we need to adopt the same processes that we have done on Peach Place for those contracts; review them and if necessary, retender.

115. MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND WARD MATTERS

115.1 Andy Croy asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

I was wondering whether Pauline or preferably an Officer would meet with me and residents to look at the state of the crash barriers on the London Road, and talk to residents about how safety could be improved?

Answer:

I would be delighted to.

115.2 Ian Pittock asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

In the period 2015 to early 2017 this Conservative led Council promised residents of Finchampstead, especially those looking to send their children to the new Bohunt School, that a cycle path would be built down the Nine Mile Ride. In 2017 this promise was reneged upon and instead a country based Greenway route was built via California Country Park, which many parents felt was too isolated. Last Friday I visited the school on a drive on a reasonably warm day. Whilst I recognise that the school is only half full at

present, nevertheless, I was not actually surprised to see that the sheds for about 150 bikes, contained only about 4 bikes. As a replacement for a reneged upon Nine Mile Green way is not your Greenway a failure as a cycle route to the school at this time?

Answer:

It would be good to have a longer conversation about this. I understand that it is due to the lack of space, but I would be happy to have a conversation.

115.3 Emma Hobbs asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Charvil Council Tax is approximately £3.1million to this Council and I am asking highways regarding a pedestrian crossing for The Piggott School. What is the latest situation, as I am only looking roughly for 4.75% of £3.1million?

Answer:

I believe Officers sent some information about the cost of a survey and some suggested dates to you, and we would be happy to survey and see. That was what I was told. Happy to provide it anyway, if you have a look through your emails you might find one.

115.4 Carl Doran asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

The East Reading Mass Rapid Transit was turned down and subsequently lost its LEP funding. It seems to me the rationale for the building of the Thames Valley Park and Ride at Broken Bow is gone. When all other options are considered, especially the second level at Winnersh Park and Ride, which I understand is a proposal that is coming forwards, combine that with the difficult and resource intensive design for this difficult site, why are we spending an awful lot of money just to provide 250 spaces?

Answer:

I will find out and get back to you if that is ok Carl.

115.5 Tim Holton asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

A couple of vulnerable residents have approached me concerned that the Post Office in Asda precinct is closing after receiving a leaflet through their letterbox. Please can you confirm if this is true?

Answer:

I think the reason Tim is asking me this is I have been on Planning and Earley Town for rather a long time and remember when the original planning application for Asda was approved.

There was a requirement on the original planning application that the smaller units were maintained and were not encroached by Asda. It was one of the agreements when the roof was put on. I saw some noise on Facebook from residents about the potential for closure of the Post Office, round about the middle of January, so I went on to Planning Enforcement to find out what was going on. Planning very helpfully spoke to the store manager and pointed out that there was a planning restriction on Asda moving floorspace. He said Asda have no intention of moving into the floorspace occupied by the smaller units. He said that the lease on some of the smaller units came up for renewal last July and Asda have decided not to renew some of the leases because they believe they will be able to attract other concessions, which will be more complimentary to the supermarket.

In other words they are other concessions that will not compete with products sold by Asda and which will increase visitors and footfall to the store. Therefore there are no breaches to planning permission.

Separately I know that several Councillors have emailed the Asda CEO directly to ask where the Post Office is going and we look forward to a reply to that.

115.6 Sarah Kerr asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

I am really pleased to see the route beyond the Greenways being consulted on at the moment covers the west side of my ward. The east side of my ward which is the area west of Finchampsted Road, Evendons Lane and the surrounding roads there are provisional plans for a Greenways route called Route D. We are desperately in need of some infrastructure in this area which encourages active travel and takes cars off the network. However, the route suggested does not appear to take into consideration the key destination of potential users, particularly cyclists, for example there is no direct route planned to Wokingham train station or business areas like Molly Miller's Lane. To unlock this demand and to make this more successful the route needs to help residents get where they want to go in the shortest, safest, most convenient route. Therefore will various stakeholder groups be consulted on Route D at a much earlier stage in the process than Route B to ensure that the most appropriate route is identified to ensure that these Greenways reach their full potential, particularly for cycling groups?

Answer:

Yes.

115.7 Laura Blumenthal asked the Executive Member for Environment, Leisure and Libraries the following question:

In my ward of South Lake we have got a big problem with fly tipping. It is particularly bad in the car park off Kingfisher Drive near the parade of shops. Can you explain what this Council is doing to address the issue?

Answer:

Fly tipping is an issue across the Borough with 10% reports of incidents happening in Woodley. We have a very robust approach towards fly tipping, ensuring that it is removed as soon as practical and following up on those where we find evidence there is a fixed £400 penalty notice issued where appropriate. However, the issues encountered at South Lake Parade are not as straightforward as normal fly tipping due to it being the custom location for the flats above the shops, to place their weekly waste for collection. These flats were built with no interior storage and no secure outside facilities to place it ahead for collection. To make matters worse the flats have a high turnover with regular deposits of larger household items having to be cleared, and sometimes attracting rubbish from other sources. Officers have tried to engage with occupants with little success, so are now looking for a more formal enforcing approach with the residents of the flats, landlords, managing agents of the flats and any other residents in the locality who place their waste at the location; if we can track them down. Officers would be happy to meet with you and other Ward Members to go through the issues and what we think the best options for success would be and I would be very pleased to partake in that as well.

115.8 Rachel Burgess asked the Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing and Adult Social Care the following question:

In the Brambles Centre in my ward of Norreys a weekly breast feeding clinic is run by trained volunteers from the Breast Feeding Network providing an extremely valuable service for new breast feeding mothers in the area. I have met with the users of this service and I also have personal experience. I know how vital these support networks can be to encourage and support breast feeding, which we all know has lifetime benefits for babies and mothers. My residents, however, are concerned that the funding that the Council provides for this service is to be cut from April onwards, which would cause this weekly clinic to close completely later this year as there will no funding to supervise and train the volunteers. It would be an absolute tragedy if this support is no longer available for our new mums and babies. Whilst the service has already been cut back massively in recent years, the funding needed to enable the clinic to continue sustainably is just £6,500 a year. Does the Executive Member agree with me that this clinic provides a vital service in my ward and will he intervene to ensure that this funding is retained?

Answer:

I will look into this. I do support what you say and I will discuss with you personally.

115.9 Prue Bray asked the Executive Member for Environment, Leisure and Libraries the following question:

It is about the allotments in Winnersh which are having to be moved to make way for the roundabout at the end of the North Wokingham Distributor Road. The sites for the new allotments are being prepared but is several months behind what was originally planned, has missed the last deadline of 4 March for handover, and is now not to be handed over until 7 April. The slippage which is entirely the fault of this Council means that allotment holders have lost the planting seasons. They have been offered a few weeks into the beginning of May to move their plants and trees and sheds, but this ignores the fact that it is now too late to move plants and trees because we are already in the growing season. This Council is still making unilateral changes to the facilities that will be provided on the new site. The £100 compensation limit previously agreed is now woefully inadequate. Please will the Executive Member meet with the Ward Members and representatives of the Parish Council to try and sort this out?

Answer:

I would be very pleased to.

115.10 Philip Mirfin asked the Leader of the Council the following question which was answered by the Chairman for Wokingham Housing Limited:

Julian, like you I felt that I have always listened to my residents and in this case it is of course Emmbrook. I wrote to you a couple of weeks back following a residents' meeting with residents of Park Road, Park Avenue and Wellington Road in Wokingham, where UllaKarin Clark and Councillor Campbell-White from the Town Council also joined me to discuss their opposition to the WHL plans for the site at the corner of Station Road and Wellington Road. The Borough own this gateway site to our town and after several iterations of the design, WHL have put forward a planning application to develop a flat roofed 18 flat apartment block over two commercial units. The many residents that attended the meeting expressed a range of concerns that I feel merit review by WHL. So can you please confirm that this application will be held back to allow WHL the opportunity of review and to meet those residents' concerns prior to resubmitting in the coming months? I would emphasise that the residents are not against this site being developed. They just expect a design that is more amenable.

Answer:

It is a bit of a difficult one. The crux of the statement being made is about design and of course design is subjective. What I would say is, going back to October last year we have met residents and Ward Members to discuss this much needed site creating affordable homes. In the consultations that we have had we have made changes to the design already, so will continue to listen and work with the parties that are interested, and as the Council's wholly owned affordable housing company I would like to think we listen and consult more than perhaps a private developer would. But as I say this design does have the full support of the professional planning officer team at WBC, so I am not sure that we are going to be able to rework the design entirely but we will continue to do all that we can, with the aim ultimately of bringing forward the scheme that will help those that need housing.

115.11 Clive Jones asked the Executive Member for Environment, Leisure and Libraries the following question:

Residents of Hornbeam Drive believe that their gutters are not being cleaned according to the published schedule and that drains appear to be clogged with mud and debris, with the latter adding to a real risk of flooding. Could these related issues be investigated and if found to have substance, an action plan be implemented that I can communicate with residents?

Answer:

The answer is yes I would be very pleased to.

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

I have had several residents approach me about the parking problems here at Shute End. The meter for the car park does not accept money. It only does RingGo and a lot of people have complained that they cannot seem to use this. I quite often come across older people trying to get services from the Council, when I visit during the day, and they do not have phones and cannot use RingGo. The machine has been down for some time. Can you advise when this is going to get fixed?

Answer:

I am afraid I do not have a plan for when each individual machine is going to be sorted out. We have approved the expenditure on the new machines. The issue we have had with the old machines is firstly that they are very old and they are very difficult to get spares for, and also they have been subject to some vandalism, certainly at Cockpit Path which did not help. We have started off with the machines with the one at Cockpit Path which is being done shortly and might even be underway. I would need to check on that exactly. I will find out for you where these are on the schedule. I have asked for a plan anyway.

115.13 Rachelle Sheperd DuBey asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

While the residents of Winnersh are very happy that Winnersh Relief Road Part 2 is going forward, when will you remove the unsightly stumps and also plant some new trees somewhere else in Winnersh for the ones you have taken down?

Answer:

I did not realise my remit extended to unsightly stumps, but I will find out and get back to you.

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

Julian McGhee Sumner, Leader of the Council:

I would like to start by saying I am pleased to confirm our new CEO Susan Parsonage joins us on Monday and I look forward to welcoming her to WBC, and I am sure we will all make her feel welcome as she gets to grips with what is a very challenging role. I would also like to pay special thanks to our interim CEO, Heather Thwaites, who has done a magnificent job in re-establishing our Corporate Leadership Team and winning back the trust of our staff following a number of turbulent months. Heather has shown herself to be a great leader, very approachable, results focused, and someone who takes her team with her, and we will be very sad to see her go but at least she will not be going until the end of April. I do not normally get a clap after my speech so I am quite pleased with that.

Over the last few months feedback from residents over future development has been deafening, with petitions, motions and response to the Local Plan update and sessions around the Borough. It is clear that residents are saying enough is enough and a view that we totally agree with and have been putting forward to Government for many years but they are simply not listening. So let us put some facts on the table. We have approved applications for 8,187 houses with another 2,013 in the pipeline for the South Wokingham Strategic Development Location. Without the 2,013 that is the equivalent of a 11.2 year land supply based on the Government requirement rate for the build of 854 houses per year. That is over twice the required rate of a five year land supply. We have clearly demonstrated time and time again that this Council is not going to be obstructive, that it is going to do its bit, and it is going to provide housing, especially affordable housing that the Government insists we have to. But despite this the Government continues to pile on the additional numbers on us, numbers which are higher than our neighbours and it is almost like being rewarded for not doing the right thing and penalised for doing the right thing.

So what have we been doing over the last few years to discuss and negotiate with Government and agencies to address its respective over development. The previous three Leaders have all had face to face meetings with the Prime Minister. Other Executive Members have met with the relevant Ministers, they have even met with the Chief Planning Inspector, all to no avail. No change in numbers. We are told you have to take them. We have now reached a crossroads where enough is enough. We have to find a different way to convince the Government to be more reasonable. Today I am announcing what I plan to do and I am looking for support from all residents and Councillors regardless of their party allegiance, for my proposals. My team and Officers have looked at many options over recent weeks and we wanted to go for a referendum where we would ask residents for their views on our housing numbers, but regrettably we have been advised that after taking legal advice, this would be illegal, which is unfortunate to say the least. So instead we are having to fall back on a special consultation. I know many residents will comment that they have subscribed to consultations in the past but this is very different. Each resident will get a letter which poses a very simple question 'do you support the Government afflicted housing numbers?' in a simple yes or no manner. We want as many residents to respond as possible so that we can go back to the Government to say 'look, all these residents cannot be wrong. You have to do something about these overly high housing numbers.' The more responses we get to our argument, the better. When I took over as Leader I said I would do things differently. I would listen to our residents and act in their best interests and I hope everyone will agree that this move is a bold, strong move to put our residents centre stage in this battle to get the Government to be more reasonable in their demands on us to build more and more houses. If we can come together,

residents and all Councillors, with a single aim to get this Government to listen we might just get some movement. If we do not work together it is highly unlikely we will get anywhere. I cannot guarantee that we will be successful but I made a pledge when I took over as Leader to try and find solutions to problems, to work for the common good, and hope everyone will get behind this campaign so we can move forward together.

117. STATEMENT BY COUNCILLOR LINDSAY FERRIS

Thank you Julian for that. It is encouraging that you have come up with that idea. We have got a Government petition out at the moment which is covering that very issue that we think that Wokingham had already taken 13,500 houses in the current Local Plan and that the number of 854, or whatever it is, foisted on us. It is totally unacceptable and will ruin and destroy our area. We are more than happy from our side to join in and help you with this because I think it is something we have to because if we do not do it now, our area will be ruined and it will be built on and concreted over. Some of the comments to the questions which came about the mass destruction of trees and hedgerows we had down in Cutbush is absolutely disgraceful. The way the developers are getting away with things may be legal but it is absolutely unacceptable and I will pledge from our side that we will work with you and help you on that issue and if you need information to go out around all parts of the Borough where we have representation, we will support you.

118. STATEMENT BY THE LEADER

In response to a query from Councillor Croy about how much the consultation would cost Councillor McGhee Sumner stated the following:

In terms of the cost to write to every resident it would cost probably one fifth of what it costs to do a Planning Appeal. To give you a number, probably somewhere in the region of between £20,000 to £30,000, which is a significant amount of money. We looked to do a referendum, which we wanted to do on the same day as the election and we were told we could not do that. We looked to do a referendum on a Saturday so actually more people would actually take part in it. The main thing is yes, it is an expense and we recognise that is a cost to the council tax payer but every time we fight these appeals it is £100,000 or more each go. This is the one chance we have to say to our residents we have heard what you are saying, we are listening, we are doing something, get behind us. That then gives us the remit to go back to Government to say we are one, we can get behind this.

119. STATEMENTS BY EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

John Halsall, Executive Member for Environment, Leisure and Libraries:

Three months ago my colleague and friend, the Leader, did me the honour of inviting me to join his Executive with a portfolio of Environment, Libraries and Leisure; a portfolio which spans the whole Council and with few exceptions is resident and customer interfacing roles. I am delighted that I have a dream team of Officers committed to continuous improvement and to delivering the best resident services which our sparse resources can afford. I would like to share with you a few highlights.

The Leader's policy is that the environment is key to all our futures. We are committed to do the simple things first to improve air quality in Wokingham Town and Twyford. Simple campaigns to turn the engine off, smart traffic lights and bus emissions, will make a significant difference. A campaign to lessen single use plastic is being planned. Controlling noise and public realm cleanliness are key to wellbeing. Our response to failure modes is crucial. 21st Century has transformed the way that we deliver customer services. The frontline is the customer interface team, Localities and Customer Service,

which is charged with fixing queries at the first point where possible and actively promoting those service options, but committed to make the customer experience the best it can be, allowing specialists to do their jobs better, freed from more easily fixable issues.

Seven years ago we abrogated our Licensing, Trading Standards and Environmental Health Services to West Berks. This really did not work for us as it was non-sensitive to, or responsive to, WBC residents or Ward Members' concerns. To rectify this the service has recently become part of a jointly managed service for Bracknell, West Berks and Wokingham. This change together with a localities initiative allows for service to be integrated and as responsive as any service that the Council offers. I propose a cross party working group will review all WBC PPP policies and services, or the Licensing and Appeals Committee. There will be a consultation with Members for issues relating to their wards and a right to review or recall will be given to the Licensing and Trading Standards Committee, Ward Members and appropriate Officers.

We are introducing the food waste collection from 1 April, together with a renewal of the contract with Veolia which brings a new fleet of vehicles.

Grass cutting, last year was an issue. The contractor has brought new kit and increased its trade and workforce and is subject to a high degree of Council contract supervision. The work has started a lot earlier than in previous years. I am preparing an Executive paper for submission early in the new municipal year for the building of the Twyford Hub, working in collaboration with the local community organisation, and I will be seeking Council's support for this project.

Wokingham Borough Council is starting Phase 2 of the Greenways project connecting Arborfield Green and Shinfield Parish to Wokingham Town and the new developments in north and south Wokingham. I urge all Members to contact me with issues for their wards. We must collectively aim to create Wokingham Borough as the best place to live for all our residents.

Philip Mirfin, Executive Member for Regeneration:

Despite the sad news about the demise of Dawnus, that I feel has been adequately covered in the Leader's speech and in my response to Councillor Jones, we have good news.

The first of our new Rose Street businesses to open will be Beyond the Dowload as I mentioned earlier and hopefully by this weekend subject to paving completion. Despite rumours to the contrary refitting out has not been held up at all and we will be announcing other opening dates shortly. Interest has also been maintained by further tenants and we hope to announce further names shortly.

Elms has moved at a pace this week with the opening of Biscoe Way at Shute End to link to Earle Crescent and the Elms multi storey car park. This was opened yesterday and at the same time we permanently closed the bottom of Elms Road to start ripping that up to extend the new town park. Agreement has been made with the Town Council to hand over the new park by the end of June with an extended lease. This means that the new enlarged children's play area will be operating in time for the school holidays. Aldi, the food supermarket, have been recruiting and are currently fitting out to open in late June with Premier Inn on for an autumn opening. A new Everyman's Cinema is looking to open early in the new year. So good news for new jobs, for new retailers and for our young families.

Parry Batth, Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing, Adult Social Care:

I would like to emphasise the excellent work of the Wokingham Wellbeing Board. Over the next three years the Board will focus on three key areas; that is the joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The Board has created a revised, more punchy, meaningful strategy focusing on identifying key health and wellbeing indicators. We are now working on three priorities: creating physically active communities; reducing social isolation and loneliness; and narrowing the health inequalities gap. We now have an action plan which has been named 'Strategy into Action' to be coordinated and reported by the Spring of this year.

The next one is Wokingham Borough Council Emotional Health and Wellbeing Strategy. This strategy was developed in order to promote an integrated and holistic approach to children and young people's emotional wellbeing. It also looks to develop stronger links between the local authority, voluntary sector and health with regards to delivering on the health and wellbeing agenda for children and young people.

The next one is Wokingham's Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment. Every three years the Board is under statutory requirement to produce our Borough's Pharmaceutical Needs. The Assessment highlighted that Wokingham Borough has a good provision of essential and advanced pharmaceutical services, which are well distributed around the Borough.

Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Local Transformation Plan. In 2015 the Government issued a report about why changes in mental health services for children and young people are needed. From this a Local Transformation Plan (LTP) was created by Berkshire West CCG. NHS England have approved the Future in Mind LTP in 2018. The LTP is about integrating and building resources within the local communities so that emotional health and wellbeing support is offered at the earliest opportunity.

The last one is Berkshire West Integrated Care System Operating Plan and this is more commonly known as ICS. The ICS Plan is a partnership between Berkshire West CCG, the acute Royal Berkshire Hospital and Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust and providers of GP services. Our ICS was recognised by NHS England as an exemplar area in June 2017.

Norman Jorgensen, Executive Member for Housing:

I would like to update you on couple of issues briefly. Firstly on the Council's Self Build Project W heatsheaf Close. The Council has received £208,000 in funding from Homes England through the Community Led Housing Fund. This will be used to help take the project forward and will be used for example for design and survey fees, helping fund the Project Manager who will work with the community and those interested in taking part and helping the project move forward to outline planning permission. Council is currently in the process of recruiting the Project Manager and the current proposal is for the site to have 21 plots.

The second thing I would like to update you on is Gorse Ride Estate regeneration. Phase One, which covers Arnett Avenue and the Cockayne Court site, as you are aware planning consent was achieved last October and the site has been cleared. The tenders for the building contractor are being evaluated and the project is on track for the commencement of the development in June this year with completion in late 2020. In Phase Two the public consultation on the application planning drawings took place at the Project Steering Group on 8 February and there were also planned exhibitions and public drop in sessions on 9 and 15 February. Attendees were able to complete feedback forms or send them

back later. All the events were well attended with lots of positive feedback. The Design Team is putting together the planning application which will go out to public consultation in May this year ahead of its formal submission

120. STATEMENTS FROM COUNCIL OWNED COMPANIES

Alistair Auty, Non Executive Director Wokingham Housing Limited:

WHL have now delivered 141 affordable homes since the Company's inception. Another 70 homes have planning permission and are either onsite or moving towards being onsite over the next few months. We have around 350 further units that we are working on achieving planning permission on, and beyond this we hope to be able to add further units to the pipeline by working closely with the Council on other council owned land or through joint ventures with other parties.

WHL was profitable last year for the first time and is predicting profits over the next five years of £1.2million. Loddon Homes is the Council's for profit registered provider, is working well and the recent update to the Five Year Business Plan showed the company is profitable from next year onwards based on a conservative approach on what schemes are to be completed and purchased by Loddon Homes during this period. Due mainly to shared ownership sales the company is expecting to generate cash revenues over the five year period and expect to be able to pay WBC Holdings Limited dividend payments during this time.

Loddon Homes welcomed a new Chair this year after Gary Cowan stepped down, thank you Gary, with Councillor Kaiser and then Councillor Clark taking up this role. Councillor Lindsay Ferris was also appointed to the Board as a Non Executive Director, providing cross party representation, which is something that will be welcomed across the Chamber. He joins the existing independent NEDs who already sit on the Board.

It was recently decided that the Boards of Berry Brooks Homes and WHL would be combined and deal with both companies business at a single meeting split in two as the companies will continue to trade as separate entities. It is proposed that the two Berry Brook Homes independent NED Board members join WHL and Loddon Homes, one going to each sister company Board. This will effectively fill an existing vacancy on the WHL Board and replace one of the Loddon Home NEDs who is stepping down this summer. I would also like to thank Councillor David Chopping for all the hard work that he has put in over the eight years that the local housing companies have been in existence, so thank you David. The streamlining of these two Boards will also provide cost savings to WBC.

Anthony Pollock, Non Executive Director Optalis:

Optalis continues to perform well in the challenging environment of adult social care. Financially, the company have again reported a surplus and remain bullish in terms of forecasted outturns. Optalis are currently running twelve projects across the business, ranging from enhanced GDPR and Quality Frameworks, in phase information platform and the roll out of successful technology based auditor tool for services. Of these, ten projects are rated as 'green', highlighting good progress across the organisation. In respect of the auditor tool it is something I will talk a little bit about later. In order to ensure that when CQC arrive that they do not seem to find a bit of a black hole the auditor tool is used to assess the services beforehand almost on an ongoing basis and this has made an extremely important contribution to the improvement that I am going to talk about now. The team has delivered a 'Good' CQC rating following an inspection of our Home Care Service, a further underpinning of the focus on quality. Workshops are now being planned to look at achieving 'Outstanding' ratings rather than just 'Good'. We have over the last 12

months moved to a position of 60% of services being in the 'Requires Improvement' category, to 90% in the 'Good' category. This is an excellent result and indicative of a quality driven organisation.

The HR team have been engaged with teams to coproduce the delivery plan arising from the staff survey. Additionally Optalis are starting to benefit from the Apprenticeship Levy and developing a Behaviour's Framework as a cornerstone of the values based approach. Staff retention rates are tracking below 13%, which compares with an industry average of 29, and even a couple of years ago when I was Chairman of the Operating Company we were in the 20s, so the current team have done exceptionally well. Growth perspective, proactive PR and market positioning has resulted in enquires from five local authorities who have heard and seen the success of the Optalis model. As a result of these successes in quality delivery, Optalis have one local authority who has asked them to carry out a quality audit on their behalf of their providers who have fallen short on CQC inspections.

Core website traffic has improved by 42% in the last 3 months and Optalis have appeared in national and local press every day in January helping recruitment and profile raising activities. Customer forums to support co-production have taken place and Optalis have introduced the person centred hour to staff training, which highlights from a customer's own perspective the little details that can help ensure that care provided is personalised and meets the person's needs.

Councillors Auty and Kate Haines indicated that it was their last Council meeting and thanked Members and Officers for their support whilst they had been councillors. Councillor Kaiser also thanked those Members who would not be there in the new municipal year for their hard work.

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Agenda Item 8.

TITLE	Report of the Returning Officer – Borough and Parish Elections - 2 May 2019
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Council on 22 May 2019
WARD	None Specific
LEAD OFFICER	Andrew Moulton, Assistant Director Governance

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

To inform Council of the process and the results of the recent Borough Council elections.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council notes the report of the Returning Officer.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

On 2 May 2019 elections were held in eighteen wards of the Borough Council, the three town councils of Earley, Wokingham, and Woodley, and the north ward of Twyford Parish Council.

Feedback has been received at most stages of the elections process which will be reviewed and, where appropriate, built into the planning for future elections.

The results from the Borough elections can be found at Appendix A.

Background

1. Introduction

- 1.1 On 2 May 2019, multiple elections were held for the Borough Council, Earley Town Council, Wokingham Town Council, Woodley Town Council and the north ward of Twyford Parish Council.
- 1.2 The total number of electors for Borough wards was 102,816
- 1.3 58 candidates contested the 18 available seats on the Borough Council across 18 wards. Of those, the representation of the various parties was as follows:
 - 18 Conservative
 - 5 Green Party
 - 17 Liberal Democrat
 - 18 Labour
 - 1 Women's Equality
 - 2 Independent
- 1.4 Elections were also held in the three town Councils of Earley, Wokingham and Woodley, and the parish of Twyford.

2. The Election Process

- 2.1 Planning for elections takes place many months in advance of election day.
- 2.2 The nomination arrangements for candidates were complex. However, the procedure ran smoothly overall with positive feedback from some quarters.
- 2.3 On the day of the poll 58 polling stations were in use during the polling hours of 7am to 10pm. Visiting/inspecting officers attended all polling stations to ensure that all statutory procedures were adhered to under the Representation of the People Acts, and also that access arrangements were adequate for disabled voters and that health and safety aspects were covered. Feedback from this process will be used to help improve further the arrangements for future elections.
- 2.4 The verification and count of all ballot papers for the elections took place at Loddon Valley Leisure Centre overnight on 2nd May and through the early hours of Friday 3rd May with individual results for the Borough wards declared between 2am and 3.35am. Again, all feedback received about the venue and count process is being taken into account to improve future processes.
- 2.5 At the elections in May 2019 over 330 casual election jobs were staffed and I would like to thank all Presiding Officers, Poll Clerks, counting and postal vote opening staff, supervisors and the Democratic and Electoral Services Team who carried out this important task.

3. Election Results

- 3.1 Full details of the Borough election results, including the turnout figures in each ward, are set out in Appendix A.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The elections processes were complex and labour intensive, and, in the main, ran smoothly and in accordance with plans. Where any improvements are identified, these will be built into our processes for future elections.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	There are no financial implications associated with this report		
Next Financial Year (Year 2)			
Following Financial Year (Year 3)			

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

There are no other financial implications associated with this report.

List of Background Papers

None

Contact Andrew Moulton	Service Governance Services
Telephone No 07747 777298	Email andrew.moulton@wokingham.gov.uk
Date 10 May 2019	Version No. 2

ELECTION OF BOROUGH COUNCILLORS

2 MAY 2019

RETURN OF COUNCILLORS ELECTED

Ward	Turnout by Ward	Name	Political Party	Ret't date
Barkham	33%	John Kaiser	Conservative	2023
Bulmershe & Whitegates	42%	Shirley Boyt	Labour	2023
Coronation	42%	Alison Swaddle	Conservative	2023
Emmbrook	44%	Rachel Bishop-Firth	Liberal Democrat	2023
Eventons	37%	Adrian Mather	Liberal Democrat	2023
Hawkedon	36%	Andrew Mickleburgh	Liberal Democrat	2023
Hillside	44%	Caroline Smith	Liberal Democrat	2023
Loddon	33%	Abdul Loyes	Conservative	2023
Maiden Erlegh	46%	Tahir Maher	Liberal Democrat	2023
Norreys	37%	Gregor Murray	Conservative	2023
Shinfield North	30%	Parry Batth	Conservative	2023
Shinfield South	34%	Jim Frewin	Independent	2023
Sonning	40%	Michael Firmager	Conservative	2023
South Lake	41%	Laura Blumenthal	Conservative	2023
Twyford	48%	Stephen Conway	Liberal Democrat	2023
Wescott	42%	Maria Gee	Liberal Democrat	2023
Winnersh	34%	Paul Fishwick	Liberal Democrat	2023
Wokingham Without	37%	Chris Bowring	Conservative	2023

TITLE Political Balance of the Council and Allocation and Appointment to Seats on Committees and Boards

FOR CONSIDERATION BY Council on 22 May 2019

WARD None Specific;

CHIEF EXECUTIVE Susan Parsonage

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

That the Council decides on the composition of its Committees and makes appointments to them as specified in Rule 4.1.3e) of its Constitution. This will ensure that members of the public are provided with information on which Members are appointed to the Council's various Committees and Boards.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1) having reviewed the representation of the political groups on the Council, confirms that it has 31 Conservative Group Members, 16 Liberal Democrat Group Members, 4 Labour Group Members and 3 Independent Group Members (as set out in Para 1.1);
- 2) approves the appointment and composition of Committees and Boards as set out in Para 2.1;
- 3) approves the allocation of seats on Committees and Boards on the basis that, of the 92 seats (as set out in Para 3.6), 53 be allocated to the Conservative Group 27 be allocated to the Liberal Democrat Group, 7 be allocated to the Labour Group and 5 be allocated to the Independent Group;
- 4) approves the proposals submitted by the respective Group Leaders and that those Members be appointed to the Committees and Boards as set out in Appendix 1;
- 5) agree that the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of those Council Committees etc, set out in Appendix 1 be appointed at the first meeting of each of the Committees etc and therefore Rule 4.2.1.1u) of the Constitution be deleted;
- 6) agrees that the principles of proportionality be applied when Members are appointed to Sub Committees, Panels or Working Groups;
- 7) notes the appointment of the Independent Persons to assist the work of the Standards Committee and the co-opted Parish/Town Council Representatives as set out in Appendix 1;
- 8) notes the elected Member representatives on the Wokingham Borough Wellbeing Board, as set out in Appendix 1, as nominated by the Leader of Council in accordance with Section 194 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 contains provisions relating to political balance on Committees and Sub Committees and seats therefore have to be allocated to them in proportion to the representation of political groups on the Council and the wishes of the political groups.

In accordance with Rule 4.1.3e) of the Constitution the Council is required to decide on the composition of Committees and make appointments to them.

Members are therefore asked to note the political balance of the Council and consider the allocation of and appointment to seats on Committees and Boards for the 2019/20 Municipal Year.

Background

1. Political Groups

1.1 In accordance with Regulation 8 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, the under-mentioned Councillors have given notice to the Chief Executive of their wish to be regarded as members of the political groups as set out below:

Conservative Political Group	Liberal Democrat Political Group
Keith Baker	Rachel Bishop-Firth
Parry Batth	Prue Bray
Laura Blumenthal	Stephen Conway
Chris Bowring	Lindsay Ferris
Jenny Cheng	Paul Fishwick
UllaKarin Clark	Maria Gee
Michael Firmager	David Hare
Guy Grandison	Clive Jones
Charlotte Haitham Taylor	Sarah Kerr
John Halsall	Tahir Maher
Pauline Helliard-Symons	Adrian Mather
Emma Hobbs	Andrew Mickleburgh
Graham Howe	Ian Pittock
Pauline Jorgensen	Imogen Shepherd-DuBey
John Kaiser	Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey
Dianne King	Caroline Smith 16/54
Abdul Loyes	
Charles Margetts	
Ken Miall	
Stuart Munro	Labour Political Group
Gregor Murray	Shirley Boyt
Barrie Patman	Rachel Burgess
Angus Ross	Andy Croy
Malcolm Richards	Carl Doran 4/54
Daniel Sargeant	
Chris Smith	
Wayne Smith	
Bill Soane	Independent Group
Alison Swaddle	Gary Cowan
Simon Weeks	Richard Dolinski
Oliver Whittle 31/54	Jim Frewin 3/54

2. Appointment and Composition of Committees

2.1 In accordance with Rule 4.1.3e) of the Constitution the Council is required to decide on the composition of Committees and make appointments to them. In order to comply with the requirement in para 3.2b) below it has been necessary to increase the number of seats on many of the Committees etc. It is therefore proposed that Council appoint the following Committees and Boards and agree their composition:

Committees/Boards	Number of Seats
Audit Committee	7
Licensing and Appeals Committee	15
Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee	13
Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee	8
Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee	8
Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee	10
Personnel Board	7
Planning Committee	11
Special Council Executive Committee	6
Standards Committee	7
Total number of seats where Political Balance applies	92
Wokingham Borough Wellbeing Board	4

2.2 The total number of seats on Committees and Boards is therefore 92 given that the Wokingham Borough Wellbeing Board falls outside the provisions of Section 15(5) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. Please note that elected Member representatives on the Board are nominated by the Leader of Council in accordance with Section 194 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

3. Allocation of Seats

3.1 As set out in Para 1.1 the political balance of the Council currently stands as follows:

	Number of Members	Political Composition %
Conservative Group	31	57%
Liberal Democrat Group	16	30%
Labour Group	4	7%
Independent Members	3	6%
	54	100%

3.2 In allocating seats on Committees, the Council must give effect, so far as reasonably practical, to the principles contained in Section 15(5) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 which is summarised below:

- a) Not all seats on any Committee are to be allocated to the same political group;
- b) The majority of seats on any Committee must be allocated to the majority Group;
- c) Subject to a) and b) above, the number of seats on ordinary Committees must be allocated to each political Group in the same proportion as their representation on the Council;
- d) Subject to a) and c) above, the number of seats on any Committee must be the same proportion as the political Groups representation on full Council.

3.3 On accordance with 3.2d) above the number of seats on ordinary Committees will be allocated in the same proportion as the political Groups' representation on full Council as set out in Para 3.1 above.

3.4 Therefore In accordance with Section 15(5) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, and taking account of the fact that not all seats on any Committee can be allocated to the same political group, it is intended that the 92 seats set out in Para 2.1 be allocated to each Group as follows:

Committee/Panels/ Board	No of Seats	Conservative Group	Liberal Democrat Group	Labour Group	Independent Group
Audit Committee	7	4	2	1	0
Licensing and Appeals Committee	15	8	5	1	1
Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee	13	7	4	1	1
Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee	8	5	2	1	0
Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee	8	5	2	1	0
Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee	10	6	3	0	1
Personnel Board	7	4	2	1	0
Planning Committee	11	6	3	1	1
Special Council Executive Committee	6	4	2	0	0
Standards Committee	7	4	2	0	1
Total	92	53	27	7	5

4. Appointment to Committees

4.1 Attached at Appendix 1 is a list of Committees and Boards to which Members will be appointed for the 2019/20 Municipal Year. Further information relating to nominations by the respective Group Leaders will be circulated before or at the meeting.

4.2 Rule 4.2.1.1u) of the Constitution states that the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of those Committees, as set out in Appendix 1, shall be appointed at Annual Council. The Constitution Review Working Group considered this matter at its meeting held on 2 April 2019 and felt that it would be a fairer process if the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of each Committee etc were appointed by the relevant committee and not at Annual Council. Council is asked to support the deletion of Rule 4.2.1.1u) and agree that Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of those Committees etc be appointed at the first meeting of each Committee.

4.3 The principles of proportionality should also be applied when Members are appointed to Sub Committees, Panels or Working Groups.

Analysis of Issues

There are no other issues associated with this decision.

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

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision
There are no other financial implications associated with this report

Cross-Council Implications
None

List of Background Papers
The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 The Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 The Health and Social Care Act 2012 The Council's Constitution

Contact Anne Hunter	Service Governance
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APPOINTMENT TO COMMITTEES AND BOARDS 2019/20

Audit Committee – 7 Seats			
<i>Members of the Executive or Overview and Scrutiny Committees cannot sit on the Audit Committee</i>			
Conservative Group (4)	Liberal Democrat Group (2)	Labour Group (1)	Independent Group (0)
1	1	1	
2	2		
3			
4			

Wokingham Borough Wellbeing Board – 4 Seats	
<i>(Political balance rules are not applicable)</i>	
<i>(Only requires noting as elected Member Representatives are nominated by the Leader of Council)</i>	
Conservative Group	Opposition Member
1 Leader of Council	1
2 Executive Member for Children's Services	
3 Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing	

Licensing and Appeals Committee – 15 Seats			
Conservative Group (8)	Liberal Democrat Group (5)	Labour Group (1)	Independent Group (1)
1	1	1	1
2	2		
3	3		
4	4		
5	5		
6			
7			
8			

School Transport Appeals Panel – 6 Members	
<i>(must be members of the Licensing and Appeals Committee)</i>	
Conservative Group (4)	Liberal Democrat Group (2)
1	1
2	
3	
4	

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee – 13 Seats			
1) <i>Members of the O&S Management Committee cannot sit on the Audit Committee.</i>			
2) <i>The O&S Management Committee must include the Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of the three O&S Committees</i>			
Conservative Group (7)	Liberal Democrat Group (4)	Labour Group (1)	Independent Group (1)
1	1	1	1
2	2		
3	3		
4	4		
5			
6			
7			

Substitute Members			
Conservative Group (2)	Liberal Democrat Group (2)	Labour Group (2)	Independent Group (2)
1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2

Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 8 Seats

- 1) *Members of this Committee cannot sit on the Audit Committee.*
- 2) *The Chairmen and Vice Chairmen must be members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee*

Conservative Group (5)	Liberal Democrat Group (2)	Labour Group (1)	Independent Group (0)
1	1	1	
2	2		
3			
4			
5			

Substitute Members

Conservative Group (2)	Liberal Democrat Group (2)	Labour Group (2)	Independent Group (0)
1	1	1	
2	2	2	

Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 8 Seats

- 1) *Members of this Committee cannot sit on the Audit Committee.*
- 2) *The Chairmen and Vice Chairmen must be members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee*

Conservative Group (5)	Liberal Democrat Group (2)	Labour Group (1)	Independent Group (0)
1	1	1	
2	2		
3			
4			
5			

Substitute Members

Conservative Group (2)	Liberal Democrat Group (2)	Labour Group (2)	Independent Group (0)
1	1	1	
2	2	2	

**Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee
– 10 Seats**

- 1) *Members of this Committee cannot sit on the Audit Committee.*
- 2) *The Chairmen and Vice Chairmen must be members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee*

Conservative Group (6)	Liberal Democrat Group (3)	Labour Group (0)	Independent Group (1)
1	1		1
2	2		
3	3		
4			
5			
6			

Substitute Members

Conservative Group (2)	Liberal Democrat Group (2)	Labour Group	Independent Group
1	1		1
2	2		2

Personnel Board - 7 Seats

Conservative Group (4)	Liberal Democrat Group (1)	Labour Group (1)	Independent Group (0)
1	1	1	
2	2		
3			
4			

Substitute Members

(to substitute for members of the Personnel Board in relation to the appointment or dismissal of or disciplinary action in respect of 1st and 2nd tier Officers)

Conservative Group (8)	Liberal Democrat Group (8)	Labour Group (3)	Independent Group (0)
1	1	1	
2	2	2	
3	3	3	
4	4		
5	5		
6	6		
7	7		
8	8		

Planning Committee – 11 Seats

All members of the Planning Committee will be members of the Commons Registration Committee.

Conservative Group (6)	Liberal Democrat Group (3)	Labour Group (1)	Independent Group (1)
1	1	1	1
2	2		
3	3		
4			
5			
6			

Special Council Executive Committee – 6 Seats

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor of the Council will automatically be members of this committee. There will therefore need to be four other Members appointed and the Mayor and Deputy Mayor will count against their political party's allocation.

Conservative Group (4)	Liberal Democrat Group (2)	Labour Group (0)	Independent Group (0)
1	1		
2	2		
3			
4			

Substitute Members

Conservative Group (1)	Liberal Democrat Group (1)	Labour Group (0)	Independent Group (0)
1	1		

Standards Committee – 7 Seats			
Conservative Group (4)	Liberal Democrat Group (2)	Labour Group (0)	Independent Group (1)
1	1		1
2	2		
3			
4			

Parish/Town Council Representatives <i>Non-voting, Co-opted Members</i>	
1	Sally Gurney
2	Roy Mantel
3	

Independent Persons	
1	David Comben
2	Paddy Haycocks
3	Nicholas Oxborough

APPOINTMENT TO PANELS / WORKING GROUPS / JOINT COMMITTEES AND VARIOUS BODIES 2019/20

Adoption Panel – 1 Member			
Conservative Group	Liberal Democrat Group	Labour Group	Independent Group
1	1	1	1

Adopt Thames Valley Regional Adoption Agency Governance Board – 1 Member	
<i>Must be Executive Member with responsibility for Children’s Services</i>	
Conservative Group	
1	Executive Member for Children’s Services

Berkshire Local Transport Body – 1 Member plus substitute	
<i>Must be Executive Member with responsibility for Transport</i>	
Conservative Group	
1	Executive Member with responsibility for Transport
Substitute	
To be agreed by Executive Member	

Borough / Parish Liaison Forum – 5 Members			
Conservative Group (3)	Liberal Democrat Group (2)	Labour Group (0)	Independent Group (0)
1	1		
2	2		
3			

Substitutes – 3 Members			
Conservative Group (2)	Liberal Democrat Group (1)	Labour Group (0)	Independent Group (0)
1	1		
2			

Building Control Board – 2 Members	
<i>1 Member must be Executive Member with responsibility for Building Control</i>	
Conservative Group (2)	
1	Executive Member with responsibility for Building Control
2	

Constitution Review Working Group – 4 Members	
Conservative Group (3)	Liberal Democrat Group (1)
1	1
2	
3	

Corporate Parenting Board – 10 Members			
Conservative Group (6)	Liberal Democrat Group (3)	Labour Group (1)	Independent Group (0)
1	1	1	
2	2		
3	3		
4			
5			
6			

Fostering Panel – 1 Member			
Conservative Group	Liberal Democrat Group	Labour Group	Independent Group
1	1	1	1

Highwood Management Conference – 2 Members	
<i>1 Member from Conservative Group and 1 Member from Liberal Democrat Group</i>	
Conservative Group (1)	Liberal Democrat Group (1)
1	1

Joint Public Protection Committee – 2 Members	
<i>Must be Executive Member with responsibility for Public Protection and his/her deputy</i>	
Conservative Group	
1	Executive Member with responsibility for Public Protection
2	Deputy Executive Member with responsibility for Public Protection
Substitute	
To be agreed by Executive Member	

Joint Waste Disposal Board – 2 Members

*Must be Executive Members
Appointment is for four years to 30 June 2022*

Conservative Group

1

2

School Admissions Forum – 2 Members

1 Member from Conservative Group and 1 Member from Liberal Democrat Group

Conservative Group (1)

Liberal Democrat Group (1)

1

1

Schools Forum – 1 Member

*1 representative of the Local Education Authority. Under Regulations the Executive Member with responsibility for Education and the Mayor **are not** eligible for appointment to the forum. (Note: They may attend as non-voting observers)*

Conservative Group

Liberal Democrat Group

Labour Group

Independent Group

1

1

1

1

Secure Accommodation Panel – 1 Member and Substitutes

Conservative Group

Liberal Democrat Group

Labour Group

Independent Group

1

1

1

1

Substitutes

Any Member of the Corporate Parenting Board

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education – 2 Members

1 Member from Conservative Group and 1 Member from Liberal Democrat Group

Conservative Group (1)

Liberal Democrat Group (1)

1

1

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Community Safety Partnership – 2 Members	
<i>1 Member from Conservative Group and 1 Member from Liberal Democrat Group 1 Member must be the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel Representative</i>	
Conservative Group (1)	Liberal Democrat Group (1)
1	1

Place and Community Partnership – 1 Member			
Conservative Group	Liberal Democrat Group	Labour Group	Independent Group
1	1	1	1

Tenant and Landlord Improvement Panel – 2 Members	
<i>1 Member from Conservative Group and 1 Member from Liberal Democrat Group</i>	
Conservative Group (1)	Liberal Democrat Group (1)
1	1

Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel – 1 Member			
Conservative Group	Liberal Democrat Group	Labour Group	Independent Group
1	1	1	1

Wokingham Learning Disability Partnership Board – 1 Member			
Conservative Group	Liberal Democrat Group	Labour Group	Independent Group
1	1	1	1

REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES 2019/20

1 Member to be appointed on an annual basis unless otherwise stated

Organisation	Conservative Nomination	Liberal Democrat Nomination	Labour Member Nomination	Ind Member Nomination
Age UK Berkshire				
Age Concern Twyford and District				
Atomic Weapons Research Establishment - Local Liaison Committee				
Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust				
Berkshire Maestros				
Berkshire Museum of Aviation				
Berkshire Pension Fund Advisory Panel				
Citizens Advice Wokingham				
Finchampstead Baptist Church Advisory Board <i>(Member should be a ward member from either Finchampstead North or Finchampstead South)</i>				

Organisation	Conservative Nomination	Liberal Democrat Nomination	Labour Member Nomination	Ind Member Nomination
Keep Mobile				
Local Government Association (LGA) General Assembly (3 Members)	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.	
Mid & West Berks Local Countryside Access Forum <i>(Note: appointment is for 3 years)</i>	For Information only: Angus Ross appointed until May 2020			
Readibus Management Committee				
Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service <i>(4 Members)</i> <i>(Note appointments must be in accordance with the Council's political balance)</i>	1. 2. 3.	1.		
Royal Berkshire Hospital Foundation Trust - Board of Governors				
Sonning & District Welfare and Educational Trust				
South East Employers (SEE) Full Committee (2 Members)	1. 2.	1. 2.	1. 2.	
<i>Substitutes</i>	1. 2.	1. 2.	1. 2.	

Organisation	Conservative Nomination	Liberal Democrat Nomination	Labour Member Nomination	Ind Member Nomination
South East Reserve Forces and Cadets Association (<i>and Armed Forces Champion</i>)				
Standing Conference on Archives				
Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group of the Local Government Association (SASIG)				
Thames Basin Heaths Joint Strategic Partnership (1 Member, 1 Substitute)				
<i>Substitute</i>				
Thames Valley Berkshire City Deal Joint Committee and Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership Ltd	For information only: The Leader of Council, in consultation with the Chief Executive, will agree the representation at meetings of these bodies			
The Piggott Trust				
The Polehampton Charity				
The Poors Land Charity (<i>Note: appointment is for 4 years until May 2023</i>)				

Organisation	Conservative Nomination	Liberal Democrat Nomination	Labour Member Nomination	Ind Member Nomination
White Waltham Airfield Consultative Committee				
Wokingham and District Association for the Elderly <i>(observer only)</i>				
Wokingham Borough Sports Council				
Wokingham Borough Sports Sponsorship Fund				
Wokingham Job Support Centre Management Committee				
Wokingham Volunteer Centre				
Wokingham Waterside Centre				
Wokingham Youth Counselling & Information Service (ARC)				
Woodley Town Centre Management Initiative <i>(2 Members, 1 Substitute)</i>	1. 2.	1. 2.	1. 2.	
<i>Substitute</i>				
Woodley Volunteer Centre				