



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

A Meeting of the **COUNCIL** will be held Virtually on
THURSDAY 21 JANUARY 2021 AT 7.00 PM

Susan Parsonage
Chief Executive
Published on 13 January 2021

Note: The Council has made arrangements under the Coronavirus Act 2020 to hold this meeting virtually via Microsoft Teams. The meeting can be watched live using the following link: <https://youtu.be/Bzrch6lePSs>

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

Please note that other people may film, record, tweet or blog from this meeting. The use of these images or recordings is not under the Council's control.



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Our Vision

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

Enriching Lives

- Champion outstanding education and enable our children and young people to achieve their full potential, regardless of their background.
- Support our residents to lead happy, healthy lives and provide access to good leisure facilities to complement an active lifestyle.
- Engage and involve our communities through arts and culture and create a sense of identity which people feel part of.
- Support growth in our local economy and help to build business.

Safe, Strong, Communities

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

A Clean and Green Borough

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

Right Homes, Right Places

- Offer quality, affordable, sustainable homes fit for the future.
- Build our fair share of housing with the right infrastructure to support and enable our borough to grow.
- Protect our unique places and preserve our natural environment.
- Help with your housing needs and support people to live independently in their own homes.

Keeping the Borough Moving

- Maintain and improve our roads, footpaths and cycleways.
- Tackle traffic congestion, minimise delays and disruptions.
- Enable safe and sustainable travel around the borough with good transport infrastructure.
- Promote healthy alternative travel options and support our partners to offer affordable, accessible public transport with good network links.

Changing the Way We Work for You

- Be relentlessly customer focussed.
- Work with our partners to provide efficient, effective, joined up services which are focussed around you.
- Communicate better with you, owning issues, updating on progress and responding appropriately as well as promoting what is happening in our Borough.
- Drive innovative digital ways of working that will connect our communities, businesses and customers to our services in a way that suits their needs.

To: The Members of Wokingham Borough Council

ITEM NO.	WARD	SUBJECT	PAGE NO.
73.		APOLOGIES To receive any apologies for absence	
74.		MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING To confirm the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 19 November 2020.	19 - 42
75.		DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST To receive any declarations of interest	
76.		MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS To receive any announcements by the Mayor	
77.		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	
77.1	None Specific	Anne Chadwick has asked the Executive Member for Children's Services the following question: Question Could you give an update about the Edge of Care services please?	
77.2	None Specific	Jackie Rance has asked the Executive Member for Children's Services the following question: Question Would the Executive Member for Children's Services give an update on Wokingham Borough Council's use of the Winter Fund to help local families in these difficult times? I'm aware as I have been supporting parents in Shinfield South and know what a difference	

it has made to individuals. Please give an update on the delivery of the Winter Fund.

- 77.3 None Specific Philip Cunnington has asked the Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Services the following question:

Question

I am very aware of the effect on the mental health and wellbeing of friends and neighbours in Norreys and across the Borough as a result of restrictions enforced during the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, the effect on mental health due to traumatic experiences of those who have suffered illness, bereavement, loss of employment or financial hardship as a direct result of the pandemic. Can you advise me of any plans you have made to deal with this?

- 77.4 Bulmershe and Whitegates John Booth has asked the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement the following question:

Question

In the Topic Paper 'Local Green Space January 2020', which accompanied the Draft Local Plan Update consultation, the site LGS09, Site name, Land between Thames Valley Business Park and Napier Road, known locally as Kennet Mouth is appraised but is recommended not to be designated as Local Green Space. In the justification for this the following statement is made:

"The majority of the site is also surrounded by commercial and employment development (notably Sutton Business Park and Thames Valley Park) which are dominant in the landscape."

But neither of these is apparent or impinges in any way upon the enjoyment of the site, let alone being 'dominant in the landscape'. This is because the Suttons Business Park is hidden by the embankment of the 1840 Great Western Railway and Thames Valley Business Park is hidden by the raised area of chalk outcrop to the east of the site known as Broken Brow.

Photographs from the site looking south and east have been sent separately to the Executive Member. Do you agree that the description of the site in the Topic Paper is misleading and factually incorrect and should be removed from the document?

77.5 Bulmershe and Whitegates

Helen Palmer has asked the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement the following question:

Question

The Topic Paper Local Green Space, accompanying the Draft Local Plan Update, referring to the site, "Land between Thames Valley Business Park and Napier Road" states:

"The site holds no formal recreational or historical value."

The route, being free from motorised traffic, and running between green space and the river, is heavily used by walkers, runners and cyclists, including many locals who have health issues restricting the distance they can walk.

Others come from further afield to follow the Thames Path or National Cycle Route 4.

The Thames Path is a lovely route, nationally and internationally renowned. Walking it myself, I met several groups of people who had come from overseas specifically to walk this path. It would be a local disgrace to allow "our" section of this famous path to be spoilt, for example by a main road bringing air and noise pollution.

During lockdown, heavy use led to creation of a second path alongside the Thames Path, allowing for social distancing. This land should not be narrowed by infrastructure.

Will councillors ask the officers to strike out this statement in the Topic Paper and substitute a statement that reflects the recreational importance of this site?

77.6 None Specific

Andrew Mennie has asked the Executive Member for Children's Services the following question:

Question

With the increase in number of families from outside of the UK into our Borough, and their introduction to the UK schooling system as a basis for this question, may I ask if consideration could be given to providing a more human-centric method of integrating new arrivals, such as my family, into the system?

Having recently gone through this process, I can say that being directed to websites as one's only resource

is not always a helpful or stress-free solution. Many of us originate from countries where governments and government processes are not instinctively considered as being helpful to individuals, but rather as mechanisms of persecution.

To that end, having a person with whom one can engage, rather than just the web-based tools would be of significant value and much appreciated. There are many ways in which this might be implemented and beneficial for all stakeholders.

Could I request that WBC investigate ways of improving communications on matters, such as the education system, for families arriving from countries where situations may be very different, including provision for tailored telephone support with a named caseworker where appropriate or proactive engagement opportunities and information output in partnership with typical immigration conduits?

77.7 Loddon

Carol Jewell has asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Question

I share the concern of residents over the dangerous crossing point along Bader Way, Woodley – where it is intersected by the path from Kingsford Close (off Colemansmoor Road) to Mortimer's Meadows and Dinton Pastures. I am aware that a change in the speed limit is being discussed at Borough level, but more immediate action needs to be taken.

What is the Council doing to address this dangerous crossing point that is a) between two bends on a fast road, b) needs much better signage and c) should be clearly marked?

77.8 Maiden Erlegh

Mike Smith has asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Question

At the 16th June 2020 full Council meeting, I asked what was being done about the poor (and in my opinion, dangerous) state of the footbridge across the railway and motorway at Earley Station. The reply I received was that the condition of the bridge was being monitored and that funding had been allocated and design for replacement was “work in progress”. I asked a supplementary as to whether the design and replacement could incorporate disabled access for the London bound platform and could it be

programmed to coincide with the new Northern Distributor bridge installation to minimise disruption and costs. The reply I got to that was that disabled access at Winnersh Triangle was being looked at and with regard to Earley, the answer was; "I will get someone to look at it to see if it is financially viable".

So nine months on, I would like to know the status of the funded and planned replacement of the footbridge at Earley Station, assuming careful consideration has been given to provision of access (i.e. lifts, stair lifts or ramps) as required by relevant legislation (e.g. Disability Discrimination Act 1995).

78.

PETITIONS

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

79.

None Specific

REVIEW OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES BY THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL (IRP)

To receive a report from the Independent Remuneration Panel on their review of Members Allowances.

43 - 58

RECOMMENDATION that Council agree that:

- (1) No changes are made to the basic allowance for the financial years consisting of 2020/21 and 2021/22;
- (2) The £500 component of the Basic Allowance for the provision of IT should only be claimed by those Members who provide facilities which allow constituents and Officers to communicate with them by e-mail, in addition to having adequate equipment and connections to allow for effective participation in virtual meetings, and the self-certification process related to this component of the basic allowance be continued;
- (3) No changes are made to any of the existing rates for Special Responsibility Allowances;
- (4) No changes are made to the Travel and Subsistence Allowances;
- (5) No changes are made to the Mayoral and Deputy Mayoral Allowances;
- (6) The Dependent and Carers allowance be restructured to the following, from April 2021:

i) A maximum claimable rate of £10 per hour be instated, to rise with the national living wage rate as and when this overtakes the stated figure. This rate is claimable by Members with direct caring responsibilities, and should primarily be used for non-specialist childcare (e.g. babysitting);

ii) A maximum claimable rate of £20 per hour be instated, to rise by the same monetary increase as granted to part i of the Dependent and Carers allowance. This rate is claimable by Members with direct caring responsibilities, and should be used for specialist care (e.g. medically trained staff care including mental health, care for a number of young children for which a babysitter would not be appropriate, care which includes lifting or moving an adolescent or adult). An invoice, of any description, is required to claim for this rate.

Both of the above are claimable up to a combined maximum of 35 hours total per month, and the carer must not be a member of the Councillor's family that lives at the same address. In exceptional circumstances, claims above the 35 hour monthly limit can be agreed with the Lead Specialist for Democratic and Electoral Services, subject to provision of suitable evidence.

- (7) During the next municipal year, when a review of Members' Allowances is not required, the IRP are given permission to publish a press release in local news and via WBC media sources, with administrative support from Democratic Services Officers. The content of this piece will focus on the views of Panel members, both before and after appointment to the Panel, on Members' Allowances and the work of a Councillor.

80. None Specific

CARE AND SUPPORT PROCUREMENT

To receive a report from the Executive requesting agreement to proceed with the Support and Care Procurement.

59 - 80

RECOMMENDATION that as recommended by the Executive, Council gives approval for:

- 1) Officers to proceed with the Support and Care procurement, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report;
- 2) Officers to create a compliant framework, from which to call off support and care packages;
- 3) The Director of Adult Social Services to have delegated authority to approve business cases to enter into call off agreements with successful organisations for individual or block contracts where price and quality benefits are achieved

81. None Specific **COUNCIL TAX BASE 21/22** **81 - 86**
To set the Council Tax Base for 2021/22 in respect of the whole Borough and all constituent parts so that each precepting parish can subsequently set their Council Tax budgets for the year.

RECOMMENDATION: That Council agree the proposed Council Tax Base, for the whole area and by Parish, as set out in the report.

82. None Specific **COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2021/22** **87 - 98**
To adopt a Localised Council Tax Reduction Scheme which will ensure that all working age Borough residents who may experience financial difficulties in paying their council tax liabilities have access to a scheme of assistance, designed locally, offering financial help to them.

RECOMMENDATION: That Council agree the proposed Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2021/22:

- 1) a local CTR scheme for 2021/22 is adopted on the same basis as the 2020/21 scheme with the addition of disregarding Carers Allowance in the award calculation
- 2) that the full disregard currently allowed for War Widows and War Disability Pensions is continued from 1st April 2021 in respect of the Prescribed and Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Housing Benefit schemes
- 3) that funds be made available to the hardship fund, known as Section 13a (S13a) scheme,

for those who cannot pay their council tax liabilities.

- 4) Members to note the linkages to the broader Anti-Poverty Strategy of both the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and the S13a scheme.

83.	None Specific	TIMETABLE OF MEETINGS To consider the proposed Timetable of Meetings for the 2021/22 Municipal Year. RECOMMENDATION: That Council approve the Timetable of Meetings for the 2021/22 Municipal Year.	99 - 100
84.		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	
84.1	None Specific	Sarah Kerr has asked the Executive Member for Resident Services, Communications and Emissions the following question: Question What action has been taken so far with regards to implementing PM 2.5 monitoring across the Borough following the air pollution motion that this Council passed earlier this year?	
84.2	None Specific	Pauline Helliard-Symons has asked the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure the following question: Question We have heard a lot on social media and in the newspapers about your proposed Waterproof Green Recycling Bags to keep our paper/card dry. Please can you explain in plain English how and when you propose to deliver these bags to the residents so that they can start using the bags to help to increase our recycling rates?	
84.3	None Specific	Graham Howe has asked the Executive Member for Resident Services, Communications and Emissions the following question:	

Question

Reading have a Community Energy Fund, allowing charities and others to apply for grant funding to pay for solar panel installation and other green energy initiatives. This money is raised from local investors. Are Wokingham Borough Council planning to launch a similar scheme?

84.4 None Specific Laura Blumenthal has asked the Executive Member for Children's Services the following question:

Question

What is Wokingham Borough Council doing to support schools at this difficult time?

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

Question

What is the result of the new traffic modelling on the Winnersh Relief Road roundabout since there is now nearly triple the amount of traffic on Woodward Close not including the SEND school, since all the design and modelling was based on only the existing houses?

84.6 Emmbrook Imogen Shepherd-DuBey has asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Question

I am still being questioned by residents in my ward about the accessibility to the buses on Broad Street in Wokingham. For many, even during Covid, using the buses is their only choice and their main form of transport. However, Broad Street is one of the few areas in Wokingham Borough where there are no raised kerbs, despite being one of the busiest places for bus use, which means that some people can no longer access the town independently. You would think, with all the work going on in Wokingham that there would be some funding to make it more accessible to all. So, my question is, when are we going to see a commitment to supporting people with different abilities get the raised kerbs that we desperately need?

84.7 None Specific Caroline Smith has asked the Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Services the following question:

Question

During the first lockdown the residents of Wokingham volunteered to help provide food and services to the vulnerable across the whole of Wokingham Borough, and I would like to add my thanks to the volunteers for all their help – so what did Wokingham Borough Council do when the first lockdown finished in June 2020 to continue to encourage, support and possibly increase the numbers of registered volunteers so that when another long lockdown occurred as now, they were ready to go into immediate action to once again help the vulnerable in Wokingham?

84.8 None Specific

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

Question

Exempting care leavers from council tax up to the age of 25 was raised at a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board as far back as October 2019. Why hasn't this exemption been introduced yet?

84.9 None Specific

Andy Croy has asked the Executive Member for Children's Services the following question:

Question

Families with children in receipt of free school meals, where the children are now learning from home, deserve continued support.

It is evident in some parts of the country that the food parcels being provided in lieu of free school meals are totally inadequate.

For the second full week of term, can you list the items of food typically provided per child, along with their notional supermarket cost, in a typical free school meal parcel provided by the Council's contracted supplier?

85.

MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND WARD MATTERS

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

86.

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

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

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

87.

MOTIONS

To consider any motions

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

87.1 None Specific

Motion 450 submitted by Andy Croy

Council believes the Executive should commission a Citizens' Assembly on the Climate Emergency.

A Citizens' Assembly on the Wokingham Borough response to the Climate Emergency is required to address the hard choices which need to be made if the Borough is to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030.

To be effective and credible, the Citizens' Assembly must be independent of the Executive and political parties. The Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) approved by Council on 23rd July 2020 has a significant gap between the carbon savings required and the carbon savings which are identified in the CEAP.

Council also notes the serious criticisms of the CEAP contained in the Overview and Scrutiny Management Task and Finish Group full report on the CEAP presented to the Executive on 29th October 2020.

Council also supports the following statements on the Local Government Association and UK Parliament websites.

The Local Government Association website states: "A citizens' assembly is a collection of individuals selected to be representative of the wider population".

The UK Parliament website identifies several key features of a Citizens Assembly including "assembly members are representative of the wider population" and "independent facilitation: the assembly is not

facilitated by the organisation that commissioned the assembly.”

Links to these sources and other resources can be found here:

<https://www.wokinghamlabourparty.org/green-vision/why-we-need-a-citizens-assembly-on-the-climate-emergency/>

87.2 None Specific

Motion 451 submitted by Gregor Murray

Building on our commitment to planting 250,000 new trees, this Council commits to achieving Tree Cities of the World status for our Borough as part of the creation of a Borough wide Tree Strategy.

This will be done by

- 1) Maintaining clear responsibility within the Council for the care of trees across our Borough.
- 2) Agreeing a policy for the care and management of our forests and trees across the Borough. This must include standards for tree care, where and when they apply and penalties for noncompliance.
- 3) Work with external partners to create and maintain an inventory of the local tree resource so that effective long-term planning for planting, care and removal can be established.
- 4) Setting aside an annual budget for the implementation of the tree management strategy and management plan.
- 5) Hold an annual celebration of our Borough's trees and acknowledge the residents' schools, charities and council staff that contribute to our city tree programme.
- 6) Create a 'Garden Forest' program to allow residents the opportunity to plant some of our 250,000 new tree commitment in their own gardens.
- 7) Develop a continuous education process aimed at informing residents of the importance of trees, tree planting and tree protection and how best to care for the trees in their own gardens and communities.

8) Committing to planting a Covid-19 memorial wood within the Borough, of native trees, as a long-lasting memorial to those who have lost their lives during the 2020-21 Pandemic.

Once the above conditions are met an application for Tree Cities of the World status should be made as soon as possible.

Further information on the Tree Cities of the World status and benefits can be found at www.treecitiesoftheworld.org

87.3 None Specific

Motion 452 submitted by Prue Bray

This Council recognises that the economic impact of the continuing pandemic is likely to lead to further increases in child poverty and notes the very welcome commitment from Councils of different political persuasions in to guarantee free school meal provision for school holidays until at least Easter 2021,

It also welcomes the change of heart by the Government, who have now pledged to widen provision of Free School Meals to include those with no recourse to public funds, to provide additional funding for Councils to help with the provision of meals during school holidays in 2021, and to increase the value of Healthy Start vouchers to £4.25 in April 2021.

This Council resolves

- a) to write to the Secretary of State for Education and the Chancellor to ask that the temporary additional funding and expansion of the Free School Meals scheme to cover those with no recourse to public funds be made permanent;
- b) to cover the cost of Free School Meals for those entitled to them during all school holidays in 2021, utilising the additional grant from the Government of £208,000 as a contribution towards that cost;
- c) to work with local businesses, charities other organisations, and individuals to ensure no child in the Borough goes hungry because their family cannot afford to feed them, whether they meet the eligibility for Free School Meals or not.

87.4 None Specific

Motion 453 submitted by Clive Jones

There needs to be a fundamental change in how we generate and consume energy in all aspects of our lives. Both electricity generation and distribution are undergoing rapid evolution, in both shape and scale. The distribution grid, must now cope with power flows in both directions. In scale, electrification of heat and transport will require a quadrupling of electricity capacity. Local, community-based energy schemes can make a significant contribution to addressing both issues and encourage a sense of local empowerment to tackle climate change.

Community schemes encourage local generation and storage to match local demand thus relieving pressure on the grid. Local schemes would be given new impetus and be able to contribute more renewable energy if local people could buy their electricity directly from local suppliers. But the disproportionate cost of meeting regulatory approvals makes it impossible to be a local energy supplier at a local scale and so, under the current system, this local energy gets sold back to the central grid.

The Local Electricity Bill is a private members' bill with cross-party support that was introduced unopposed in June 2020. If this Bill was passed in Parliament it would give the energy regulator, OFGEM, a duty to create a Right to Local Supply. This would enable local community energy groups to achieve their vision of supplying generated energy back to the local area, help us as a Council to meet our carbon reduction aspirations for the Borough, and also bring multiple benefits to the local community. It is supported by many stakeholders, local authorities, and town councils and currently has the backing of 208 MPs.

Council Agrees to:

- Resolve to support the Bill.
- Authorise the Leader to contact our MPs to discuss their support for the Bill and how they can enable its passage into law.
- Authorise the Chief Executive to write to the Minister of State for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy, supporting the aims of the Bill and asking for these aims to be taken into account in the forthcoming Energy White Paper.

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