



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)

43 - 58

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

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 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.	81 - 86
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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 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.	87 - 98
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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 Helliar-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:

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.

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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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF
THE COUNCIL
HELD ON 19 NOVEMBER 2020 FROM 7.00 PM TO 10.39 PM**

Members Present

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

69. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Sarah Kerr.

70. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 17 September 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and will be signed by the Mayor at a future date.

71. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Jim Frewin declared a Personal Interest in Item 67, Presentation by the Chief Constable and the Police and Crime Commissioner, on the grounds that he volunteered as a Police Cadet leader.

72. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor informed Members of recent activities including the opening of the Arborfield Cross Relief Road, the opening of the new extension to Addington School and a number of charity and association virtual AGMs.

73. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

73.1 Daniel Hinton asked the Executive Member for Children's Services the following question:

We are aware of the continuing improvement programme in relation to children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. How has the production of Education Health and Care Plans improved as part of this programme?

Answer

There has been a marked improvement in completing Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) within the statutory 20 weeks. In Quarter 1 this year, 88% were issued within the timescale compared to 58.7% across England. We could do this because, previously having been under-staffed, we are now fully staffed. It is also important to note that, in addition to significant improvement in timeliness, we have been just as robust in our

understanding of an improvement in quality in respect of the EHCPs.

73.2 Jackie Rance asked the Executive Member for Children's Services the following question:

Can the Lead Member for Children's Services advise us on activities to support schools as they have reopened at the beginning of September?

Answer

The preparation for the reopening of schools commenced back in the summer term. School leaders were supported with round-table sessions to help unpick and understand the requirements of the Department for Education guidance, including the Public Health requirements for safe operation of schools from September onwards.

This work continued over the summer holiday period. We looked at home to school transport arrangements to ensure that pupils could make the safest possible journeys to school. Schools revised operating times and entrance and departure arrangements.

The Assistant Director Learning, Achievement & Partnerships has provided a daily update to all school leaders in the Borough. There is also a weekly news bulletin.

All school leaders are invited to a weekly leadership round-table discussion which focusses on sharing best practice and learning from other areas. School governors have also been supported with additional briefing sessions from Governor Services.

In addition, further specific focussed activity has taken place across a range of service areas within the Council, including activities delivered by the School Improvement Team, Educational Psychology, the ICT in Schools Team, Education Welfare Service and Schools HR Service, amongst others.

73.3 Anne Chadwick asked the Executive Member for Children's Services the following question:

I've been very concerned to read on social media about children going hungry in half-term because their parents struggle to feed them lunch. Would the Executive Member tell me what the Council did during half-term and does the Executive Member share my concern?

Answer

No child or young person should go hungry. The Council is committed to ensuring that support is available for those families who need it at this very difficult time.

We have been working closely with our voluntary sector partners throughout this pandemic to ensure that access to support is available where needed. For example, our Community Engagement teams have been working with the voluntary sector to run holiday schemes such as the "Grub Club" over the summer.

Immediately before October half term, we assessed current support networks, and looked at the feasibility of providing further help, if needed. Support networks were working well, and so we took the decision to concentrate our efforts on planning support over the difficult winter months. We have welcomed the announcement of Winter Grant Scheme funding from the Department of Work and Pensions to support families from December through to March 2021, and we are moving swiftly to put channels in place to deliver support where it

is most needed.

The Government has made substantial funds available. Wokingham Borough Council is receiving in excess of £200k. That money is to be used between 20 December 2020 and 21 March 2021.

The Government has also provided:

- £220m for expansion of the DfE's Holiday Activities and Food programme to build on the existing programme which supported 50,000 children over the summer and will ensure provision for Easter, summer and Christmas 2021;
- £63m, committed in June 2020, to assist those struggling to afford food and other essentials, of which Wokingham Borough Council received £77k. This was used as part funding for the £110k costs of care packages distributed by the voluntary sector hub. I can assure you that all Government money passported to the Council is used to support the vulnerable in our community.

73.4 Philip Cunnington asked the Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Services the following question:

Can you tell me the latest situation with Covid-19 within Wokingham?

Answer

The latest situation is that there was an increase in cases last week, with 266 cases recorded over the week up to 12th November 2020. This gives a weekly rate of 155.4 per 100,000. I should add that Wokingham remains below both the England rate and the South East weekly rate. Our biggest rise in cases was previously amongst the 18 to 30 age group but we now have rising cases in all age groups.

On the 19th November there were 1789 confirmed cases of Covid-19 among Wokingham residents since the beginning of the pandemic. This is a rate of 1045 per 100,000 people considering all cases to date. We remain well below the England average.

In response to this the Council has stood up its full emergency response procedures, led by the Chief Executive. These include:

- Covid Marshalls out and about in the Borough working alongside our Public Protection teams;
- A network of Covid Champions around the Borough;
- A successful local case tracing service which compliments the national service;
- We have written to and called all of the vulnerable people in the Borough to check they have all they need;
- We have dedicated Care Home and Education task forces;
- We have a Data Team led by our Public Health Consultant to continually monitor the current situation;
- We continue to work with the voluntary sector, as before, through the 'One Front Door'.

I would like to personally thank all the officers from across the Council, the voluntary sector and the community at large for their efforts here to protect us from this virus. We are in this together and to keep infection rates down it is vital that we keep to the rules and minimise social contact. Remember that support is available from WBC and partners via the One

Front Door and, where possible, WBC services are still open for business.

Supplementary Question

We are all aware that there was an outbreak of Covid-19 at a care home in Shinfield. Please can you update me and let me know what is happening there?

Supplementary Answer

A very significant outbreak occurred in Shinfield. The situation today is that the number of staff who tested positive during the outbreak was 49. The total number of residents who tested positive was 45. So this is the largest local outbreak so far. Sadly, five residents died. I would like to take this opportunity to pass on my condolences to the families involved. Two residents remain poorly and, again, I would like to take the opportunity to pass on my best wishes. At the moment, obviously, this has caused us significant issues in terms of management because, not only do you have the healthcare issues to respond to, but a situation where 49 staff tested positive and had to go home to isolate. This put tremendous pressure on staffing over a crucial period. I should make it clear that, while from the outside one may assume that this level of cases indicates that something had gone seriously wrong in the home, at the moment we can find no evidence that this is the case. The reports I have seen have been very complimentary about the home manager and the dedication of the staff, many of whom actually lived in the home during the critical period to support the residents. So I wanted to thank them for that.

The Care Homes Taskforce, Public Health England and the CCG have all been involved fully and an investigation is now going on into the possible causes. I am pleased to say that we are over the worst of this from a managerial situation and I wanted to thank all the people who have worked so hard to move this forwards. I also want to take the opportunity to thank Councillor Frewin who contacted me within an hour of finding out about this and offered his assistance and was a great help in pointing out local parts of the community where extra reassurance, extra signage and visits from Covid Marshals could take place to ensure that Covid procedures were being followed.

73.5 Norman Jorgensen asked the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure the following question:

At the time of the heavy rain in October I spoke to residents affected and observed the flooding at Egremont Drive, Earley. The culvert and bushes at that point makes a restriction to water flow in the stream which causes the flooding. I wrote to you and the Council at the time, asking that the restriction is removed so that residents are not flooded every time there is heavy rain. I was pleased to hear from an Executive Member that works are planned. Please will you provide me with an update?

Answer

Firstly, I would like to thank you and Councillor Halsall for turning up so promptly to assess the impact of the flooding in Egremont Drive. Following investigation of the flooding issues, the Council will be removing the concrete culvert in the ditch next to the footpath. In order to do this some tree clearance works are required. This is as a result of the roots of three trees growing into the culvert and exacerbating the blockage, preventing water from flowing downstream.

Following inspection by the Council's Tree Officer, who is satisfied with the removal of the three trees, in the interests of reducing flood risk to nearby properties, it has been arranged for the trees to be removed. The Council's drainage contractor will then be in a

position to remove the culvert.

It is hoped that these works will remove the restriction to the flow of water downstream, in turn reducing the risk of further flooding to properties on Egremont Drive. Subject to weather conditions, it is hoped that these works will be completed by Christmas, so there is light at the end of the tunnel.

Supplementary Question

One concern I have is that, by doing this work, we might create a problem further downstream as more water will get downstream more quickly. Have you considered that point in the assessment?

Supplementary Answer

Yes. We have done some more work and modelling studies to prove that removing the culvert will not cause further flooding downstream. I am confident about the advice given by officers that this should cure the problem.

73.6 Juliet Sherratt asked the Executive Member for Children's Services the following question:

How is the Council planning to ensure that no school child suffers holiday hunger - be they under five and not eligible for free school meals or in the gap between the poverty line and free school meal eligibility?

Answer

We will work closely with our front line services, our partners (including schools, early years settings and health), and the voluntary sector through the Citizens Advice Bureau to understand how we can best identify those children who are not in receipt of free school meals who need our help.

The Citizens Advice Bureau has acted as the front door into the Covid Community Response service during the pandemic, and is well placed, through its own experience of community need throughout the pandemic, and through its links with other voluntary organisations, to support us alongside our partners in ensuring we reach all children who need our support.

It is important that all of us in the Borough, residents and Councillors alike, ensure that no child, no matter what age, goes without food. It is important that it is communicated to me or the CAB. We must never let any child in the Borough go hungry.

Supplementary Question

Given the short timescale to the Christmas holidays, how does the Council plan to deliver on the holiday food programme, as promised by the Government and what will this look like for Woodley.

Supplementary Answer

I can't tell you the details as we are presently working out how to do it. Everyone will be treated the same, so there will not be any different arrangements in Woodley. So you will have to bear with me. I promise that we will have this in place in time for Christmas.

74. PETITIONS

The following member of the public and Members 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.

Peter Dennis	Peter Dennis presented a petition containing 69 signatures requesting a traffic speed review for Montague Park <i>To be passed to the Executive Member for Highways and Transport.</i>
Rachel Burgess (on behalf of Nick Fox)	Rachel Burgess presented a petition containing 145 signatures requesting a safer pedestrian crossing in Rectory Road and Wiltshire Road. <i>To be passed to the Executive Member for Highways and Transport.</i>
Maria Gee	Maria Gee presented a petition containing over 500 signatures, requesting the reinstatement of a police station in Wokingham. <i>To be passed to the Executive Member with responsibility for Community Safety.</i>
Andy Croy	Andy Croy presented a petition containing 484 signatures relating to the provision of free school meals during the Christmas holiday period. <i>To be passed to the Executive Member for Children's Services.</i>

75. PRESENTATION BY THE CHIEF CONSTABLE AND THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

The Council received a presentation from John Campbell (Thames Valley Police Chief Constable), Matthew Barber (Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner) and Felicity Parker (Area Commander, Bracknell and Wokingham).

The presentation gave details of additional funding for the force of £8.4m and specific areas of investment including local policing and investigations and contact management. A restructured local policing model and increased patrol numbers had resulted in a 13% increase in arrests and a 58% increase in Stop and Search, which was effective if used appropriately.

The presentation gave details of specific operations carried out over the past year including protests and demonstrations (including Black Lives Matter), HS2 – Extinction Rebellion, Operation Venetic (serious organised crime) and the Forbury Gardens murders.

In relation to the Covid-19 pandemic, the policing approach had been based on the four E's – Engage, Explain, Encourage and Enforce. In relation to Covid-19 offences in the Borough, there had been 73 crimes, 539 incidents and 8 fixed-term penalty notices. There had also been 10 Covid-19 related assaults on police officers in the Borough.

Following the presentation, Members asked questions relating to anti-social behaviour, shortfall in police numbers, recruitment of new police officers, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on police priorities and the increased incidence of domestic abuse linked to the pandemic.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) John Campbell, Matthew Barber and Felicity Parker be thanked for attending the meeting;
- 2) the presentation to Members be noted.

76. CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION

The Council considered a report from the Constitution Review Working Group which set out proposed changes to the Constitution. The proposals related to:

- The Council's Policy Framework – suggested amendments to the list of policies which should be taken to full Council for consideration;
- Record of attendance – only those Members who are members of a Committee, asking a question or have been invited to participate to be recorded as being in attendance;
- Virtual Meeting Protocol – amendments relating to voting at virtual meetings (voting twice) and public speaking rights and submission of statements at the Planning Committee;
- The Executive – all supplementary Capital and Revenue Estimates to be considered by the Executive;
- Overview and Scrutiny Committees – entitlement to substitutes for each Group equivalent to the number of seats held on each Committee;
- Local Code of Corporate Governance – to be included in the Constitution as an Appendix to Section 9, Ethics and Corporate Governance;
- Procurement and Contract Rules and Procedures – amendment of table in Section 13 of the Constitution to enable automatic adjustment in line with biennial changes to OJEU Threshold Values.

Andy Croy requested that Recommendations 1, 3, 4, 7 and 8 be voted on together with separate votes held on Recommendations 2, 5 and 6, on the grounds that his group could not support the latter recommendations.

It was proposed by Stuart Munro and seconded by John Halsall that the recommendations in the report be agreed.

Upon being put to the vote, it was:

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

- 1) Section 4.1.1 Policy Framework be amended as set out in Appendix 1 and explained in Paragraph 1 of the report;
- 2) Section 4.2.17 Record of Attendance be amended as set out in Paragraph 2 of the report;
- 3) the Virtual Meeting Protocol (an Appendix to Chapter 4) be amended as set out in Paragraph 3 of the report;
- 4) the Virtual Meeting Protocol be amended as set out in Paragraph 4 of the report;
- 5) Section 5.1.9.2 be amended as set out in Paragraph 5 of the report;
- 6) Section 6.1.2.1 Substitutes be amended as set out in Paragraph 6 of the report;
- 7) the Local Code of Corporate Governance (Appendix 2 to the report and explained in Paragraph 7 of the report) be attached as an appendix to Chapter 9 Ethics and Corporate Governance;
- 8) that Section 13.3.1.1 Procurement Business Case (including options appraisal) be amended as set out in Paragraph 8 of the report.

77. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

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

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

What is the Council doing to allow children and their parents to see their prospective schools before applying for their school choices in the unusual circumstances of this year?

Answer

It is a bit tricky, as you know, because of Covid. We sought specific guidance from the Department for Education on this matter. They are saying that the decisions have to be made by the individual schools in line with the individual school's risk assessment.

In the current period of enhanced national restrictions, the Council has advised all schools to move to virtual engagement with prospective parents.

Throughout the pandemic period we have advised against large school gatherings to minimise the potential for community transmission into schools and settings and we have relayed this message to schools several times. Having said that, each school is supported to make their own determination as to what is safe for their particular setting. So they will have to rely on their own Covid risk assessment.

77.2 Jim Frewin asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

I welcome the recently proposed highway changes to Rose Street, a proactive initiative to reduce pedestrian risk. I believe this is a preventative initiative and thankfully not as the result of accidents.

Grazeley resident, Simon Cooper, has spoken at several WBC meetings including the February 2020 Council.

He told us about:

- Two fatalities (Jan 2017, Jan 2020) where vehicles crashed into his property;
- Multiple other non-fatal crashes;
- The effects on his family and the Grazeley community;
- His frustration at the lack of any action.

Nearly four years since the first fatal accident, WBC have gathered multiple sets of data, the same data after both fatalities. Frustrated Simon has also captured large amounts of data and video examples.

Since the first fatal accident a range of Executive Members, Senior Council and Senior TVP Officers have offered kind words of condolence, support and sympathy to the Coopers and the bereaved families.

The reality is, however, that nothing has changed despite this stretch of highway that includes a school and community hall. My question is why is the proactive and protective approach to resident safety being demonstrated by the Rose Street initiative, not being applied across the whole Borough?

Answer

The Council's position with regard to questions raised by Mr Cooper at previous Council meetings has been very clear. In addition you, as the local Member for Shinfield, have also been made aware of this position, through direct correspondence from officers, advising you of all of the actions and measures taken by the Council, both whilst the outcome of Thames Valley Police criminal investigation was pending and since their conclusions and recommendations were reported to officers.

I must remind you that the officers are not allowed to release the police report to me due to requirements set by the police, but they have assured me that they have acted on all the recommendations in that report, which was received in July 2020. I believe they have told you this as well.

You are correct in saying that we have acknowledged and empathised with the Coopers' situation following the fatal collision at their property at the start of this year and that officers have collected and calibrated traffic flow and speed data to support both the police investigation and their own professional assessment of viable measures to prevent any reoccurrence of such a collision.

In addition to this, the Council has resurfaced this section of road, refreshed all road markings and, in direct response to the police report, has undertaken maintenance measures to ensure that their speed enforcement team can commence such action, an investment of some £65k, whilst continuing to liaise with police officers and their

investigative timescale. In parallel with this, officers have also undertaken feasibility design of a back-up £100k average speed camera enforcement scheme, which would have to be approved by the police before it is installed, and are continuing work with the Parish Council on gateway signing.

The Council's statutory duty with respect to road safety is set out in S389 of the Road Traffic Act and involves the study of accidents and taking of measures it deems appropriate to prevent them from happening again. The Council, therefore, takes a proactive and protective approach to road user safety through the application of standards and due diligence in its design and maintenance processes.

The application of engineering measures in circumstances such as Grazeley is, by nature, 'remedial' and therefore targeted at the specific factors deemed by investigators to have been material in the cause of a collision. In this case the highway design or condition was not viewed by the police as a material cause of the collision.

Supplementary Question

I welcome the news that funding has been put aside for this area. I would like to understand the criteria we use in the justification, approval and implementation of highway safety measures to ensure that they are consistently applied across the Borough. There are examples across the Borough where safety measures have been put in place when there have been no reported incidents.

Supplementary Answer

I can give you a layman's answer, but in case I get it slightly wrong I would prefer to give you a written answer, having talked to the officers.

77.3 Alison Swaddle asked the Executive Member for Resident Services, Communications and Emissions the following question:

Professor Paul Chatterton of the University of Leeds and a leading national expert on climate change, has already praised our local Climate Emergency Action Plan as an example of best practise nationally, and has said that we are on the right track with our focus areas and actions.

What, therefore, is the point of engaging a vast number of our residents in running a wide-reaching Citizen's Assembly in Wokingham Borough?

Surely both the evidence presented and therefore the recommendations received will be similar or identical to those already run by other local authorities nationally and, most notably by the Government via Climate Assembly UK?

Answer

The Council is aware of the scale of the challenge that becoming net-zero carbon will bring to all of us and acknowledge that this will not be achieved without the active involvement of the community. Wokingham Borough Council believes our residents have a great insight into the challenges presented by the climate emergency, and that Local Deliberative Processes, such as Citizens' Assemblies, can empower people and communities to make important decisions in a way that is fair and deeply democratic.

Wokingham Borough Council plans to run a programme of Local Deliberative Process

meetings bringing together residents, local businesses, schoolchildren, environmental and social charities and other stakeholders to help investigate, discuss and make recommendations on some of the challenges we face.

The programme will comprise a series of small meetings focusing on specific topics that will help to find solutions that will reduce the Borough's carbon footprint. Many of these topics may be Borough-specific or new to the Borough or may involve seeking solutions to challenges already identified, such as:

“How the Council can communicate issues around consumption emissions? And, what measures can be introduced aimed at increasing awareness of these emissions amongst residents?”

Or “What should Wokingham Borough Council's 2030 net-zero carbon vision be and what life in Wokingham Borough would look like? How life in the Borough will be different in terms of our homes, travel, work, leisure time and waste and the way we source food, goods and services?”

The Local Deliberative Processes represent an exciting opportunity to engage with our communities and plans will commence in the New Year.

Supplementary Question

You have mentioned Local Deliberative Processes a few times in your answer, is this the same or different to a Citizens' Assembly?

Supplementary Answer

On Saturday morning, as part of the Reading Climate Festival, I attended a presentation by Extinction Rebellion specifically on Citizens' Assemblies, what they are and what they mean.

As part of that presentation I learned that Citizens' Assemblies are just one of many different types of Local Deliberative Processes that can be used to help educate and take action on an important or urgent topic. The Citizens' Assembly, so I learned, is a fantastic tool for national Governments to make decisions on big, controversial or multi-faceted issues. One was used in Ireland to help decide on the topics of Gay Marriage and also Abortion. Recently, the Climate Assembly UK was used to help educate the Government on the Climate Emergency Action Plan which it launched earlier this week. Having taken the time to learn about the subject from experts, I have learned that the term Citizens' Assembly is not a catch-all. It is one of the Local Deliberative Processes that are available to us.

So, while it is easy to jump on a bandwagon and blindly call for a Citizens' Assembly, the simple truth is that other methods of Local Deliberative Processes may be significantly more beneficial for the needs of our community and for our Climate Emergency Action Plan. In fact, during the presentation one of the speakers specifically said about Climate Emergency Citizens' Assemblies “We are only asking for one, a national one. Locally, we need a different deliberative process.”

I am committed to doing the best for our residents and for our community, so we are keeping an open mind and assessing all of the options available to us. Options such as an Advisory Board or Advisory Summit, a Citizens' Panel or Citizens' Jury, as well as a more specific repeat of the Crowdsourcing of Ideas Process that we have already run. All of

these potential Local Deliberative Processes are advocated by an organisation called Involve, who are experts in organising these exact types of Local Deliberative Processes.

Whichever route we go down, we are committed to it being run independently of the Council, of party politics and of activism. It will be representative of our community, including our secondary school children and will also make recommendations, having listened to evidence from informed experts.

77.4 Graham Howe asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

The Leader of the Opposition has recently been sending a leaflet to homes across the Borough claiming that the Council's debt is £700 million. Could the Leader of the Council set out what our debt situation actually is, including where borrowing is generating revenue income to pay for our vital services?

Answer

I am indeed aware of such a letter that has been sent out to households across the Borough sent by the Leader of the Opposition, Lindsay Ferris. I was shocked and distraught that such alarming and incredulous mistruths are being infiltrated across our community, especially at a time when it is so important we demonstrate calm and assured leadership to engender assurance and confidence in the work of our Council.

Rather than make up fanciful figures intended to alarm our residents in the way Lindsay has chosen to do, let me focus on the facts and the truth. Although I appreciate that it is often extremely inconvenient to the scaremongers amongst us when I do so. I refer you to the recently published Mid-Year Treasury Management Report to be considered by the Audit Committee in November and Executive in November. It is written by our statutory Chief Finance Officer (CFO) and Deputy Chief Executive, the single person in the Council charged to be aware of and report on the veracity of our Financial Management and Financial Standing.

Our CFO's report states that the real external debt in relation to our Council Taxpayers as at 30th September 2020 is £324m which reduces to only £83m net indebtedness after deducting the money we lend out ourselves to others. This means that the figure in Lindsay's statement is overstated by at least £376m if I wanted to be generous but, in reality the true measure of his overstatement is £617m. Yes, that's right Councillors, Lindsay has written to our residents overstating the Council's position of indebtedness by £617m, which is two years of Council receipts.

Furthermore, he goes on to state that our borrowing activities are costing our Council Taxpayers (or households) £10,000 each. Turning again to the facts contained in the Mid-Year Treasury Management Report, our CFO says that the financial impact on Council taxpayers is not £10,000 per Council taxpayer but is, in fact, £7.52 for a Band D payer. This is an incredulous overstatement by Lindsay of 133,000 percent.

Moving to your specific point, the income from our investment activities financed by borrowing, are also set out in the Treasury Management Report. It shows that over £7.2m per annum is generated from one form or another, most of this attributable to the acquisition of commercial assets and our Wokingham Town Centre Regeneration. Those of you involved in the O&S Scrutiny of our budget preparations will be aware that this figure of £7.2m p.a. income is projected to increase substantially. In addition to this significant and vital income stream needed to fund our essential services, we do of course

retain the assets which could be sold to cover off debt if we needed to. Against our net indebtedness figure of £83m we have realisable assets currently valued at over £500m, or just under £200m if we take the narrowest focus of purely commercial assets.

Supplementary Question

Would you agree that the Council is in safe hands and the administration is steering a steady course through these turbulent and uncharted waters?

Supplementary Answer

It is clear that our borrowing and investment activities are extremely well managed and through this we are serving our community well through the creation of vital income streams that would otherwise necessitate the draconian cutting of services we provide for our residents. At the same time we are clearly also creating a sizeable asset base that we always have the opportunity to turn into cash if we need to.

I would like to commend the Conservative Finance Lead Members over the years, particularly the current incumbent John Kaiser together with our very experienced and capable CFO, Graham Ebers, for getting us to such a solid and strong financial position. On the other hand I can only shake my head in despair at the destabilising, desperate and deceitful attempts of the opposition. It is irresponsible and brings the Council, together with all those that serve it, into disrepute. Sometimes politics can stray into some shameful and questionably ethical places, and I am sad to say this is one such occasion. Our residents deserve better.

We are determined to support those in need in the Borough during this period and to eliminate poverty in the Borough. Profligacy would not enable us to do so. Sound financial management from this Conservative administration does enable us to direct funds and efforts to those in need whilst maintaining our services as business as usual.

78. MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND WARD MATTERS

78.1 Stephen Conway asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

Will the Leader of the Council join with me in thanking those local businesses, such as the excellent Emma's Kitchen in Twyford, which supplied free nutritional meals in the recent half-term holiday to children in receipt of free school meals in term time. I am not, I hasten to add, making a political point and I would appreciate it if the response was also not a political answer. I am merely looking for an acknowledgement of the Council's gratitude.

Answer

We have been very fortunate during the pandemic. Not only have we been fortunate in the excellent and magnificent performance of our officers, but also in the voluntary sector who have supported us, all the Covid groups and all the independent businesses who have supported us. I can only state my very grateful thanks. It has been a proud moment to be the Leader of the Council. It is a really fine Council to be the Leader of.

78.2 Rachel Burgess asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

I have a ward question about proposed changes to Rose Street. I am glad to see that action is finally being taken to make the crossing point on Rose Street (between Waitrose and Peach Place) safer. It has been far too dangerous there for too long. However, the

proposed solution creates a single lane raised carriageway for the pedestrian crossing point with no right of way for pedestrians, as far as I can see. Priority is given in one direction for traffic but, crucially, priority will not be given for pedestrians. The design also begs the question of how pedestrians will know standing traffic is giving way for them to cross or giving way to the oncoming traffic. We have heard already this evening that residents have raised the need for pedestrian crossings in other parts of my ward and this is another case in point.

So, my question is: will the Council reconsider these proposals and put a proper pedestrian crossing in Rose Street such as a zebra crossing which gives pedestrians priority and puts pedestrians first?

Answer

The diagrams that you were sent as a Ward Member, showing the layout of the crossings, are open for consultation. They are not the final drawings. I welcome your comments and will feed them into the mix we receive from residents. We will then come up with the final design.

78.3 Pauline Helliar-Symons asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Road safety is a big issue in one of my roads, the Avenue in Wokingham Without. People park indiscriminately and unsafely on the road where children go to three schools. It took over two years to get to the point where promised consultation with residents actually took place. This was completed last March, with the results being promised to residents several times over the summer. In July they were told that it was imminent. In mid-August they were told that it would be as soon as possible. It has still not been sent. Now, new yellow lines have been put down outside one of the schools and this has exacerbated the problem even further.

This issue has been dragging on for over two years. It was first raised in 2018, long before the excuse of the Covid-19 outbreak. Please can you follow this up for me with both residents and officers?

Answer

I have a partial answer. If it doesn't answer all the points in the question please do come back to me.

Waiting restrictions to tackle poor parking behaviour in the Avenue were recently amended outside Our Lady's Preparatory School as part of Amendment 2 to the Borough-wide Traffic Regulation Order. These measures were brought forward in response to local residents' concerns raised in 2018 and following the process of statutory consultation to which all residents in the Avenue were invited to respond. Unfortunately, that does take quite a long time. The local Member for Wokingham Without will be aware that a second, informal consultation with residents was carried out in March 2020. Residents' responses to further restrictions being implemented have been mixed with several stating that they do not wish to see any further restrictions. Notwithstanding this, in response to the request from one resident and a local Member, which I assume is you, the Council has recently advertised an intention to introduce a further amendment and will be consulting residents in the Avenue and other residential streets in Crowthorne within the next two weeks.

It is important to point out that, whilst residents' perceptions of poor road safety are

acknowledged, the Avenue has a very good safety record. There are some occasional obstructive parking issues against which the Council does not have the power to enforce – that is down to the police – and, as some residents have pointed out, these are short in duration and only to be expected where residents live near to schools where parents drive to drop and collect children. The issues to be addressed are, therefore, much lower urgency than issues to be addressed elsewhere in the Borough. I can assure you that we will follow up. If you have further comments after that I will be happy to take them on board.

78.4 Caroline Smith asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Since the end of the first lockdown, the shopping centre at Chalfont Way – the Plaza – has seen a significant increase in car usage, mostly queuing for the McDonald's drive through. The Costa coffee shop has added traffic in the car park, which exacerbates this issue. This is before KFC opens. Cars are often seen queuing onto the roundabout, blocking Chalfont Way and affecting access to the BP garage and ASDA. This is seriously impacting on local highways. Please can Highways look into this matter to solve the problem before it becomes dangerous?

Answer

I believe that this car park is private, so I am not sure if we will be able to do much about the flow around the car park. I am happy to look at the roads in and out. It may be a planning issue plus Covid-19 is resulting in more people travelling by car, but I am happy to look at it.

78.5 Andy Croy asked the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement the following question:

My question relates to Planning, but it is not about a specific planning application. I wonder whether there is an occasion when a proposed development is likely to change the height of a property quite substantially. As Ward Councillors we have been told that there is nothing we can do about this as the decision is delegated to officers. Is that really the case? Is there really nothing that the Borough can do? What is the origin of this legislation?

Answer

You have the opportunity to list it. If it is a delegated decision to officers, that doesn't mean that you can't list it. That doesn't mean that you can't speak to the officer. That doesn't mean that you can't speak to me. That doesn't mean that you can't speak to Clare Lawrence. I would exercise all of these first. I do not necessarily agree with you and I don't know where you got the information from. Let me have a look at the case and we can pick it up later.

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

John Halsall, Leader of the Council

I don't think that any previous Leader has made the decision to dedicate his or her full time allocation to the issue of the Council's finances. I am choosing to do this, this evening as I consider it is a matter of extreme importance that our finances are well managed and just as important, that the actual state of our finances are properly understood by Council and

by our residents. If our financial health is poor then it is not just an issue of questioning our collective competence in managing such a vital matter, but more fundamentally it brings into question our ability to be a viable entity and provide the critical services we need to for our residents, particularly in such unprecedented challenging times. If the public have no confidence in our financial management, they have no confidence in the Council and the loss of confidence in this Council at such a crucial time in our history would be disastrous.

Because of cheap political headlines, the proffering of alarmist messages and pervasive political propaganda intended to mislead our residents, it will I suspect surprise you to know that our Council's finances are in fact in extremely good health. This is especially true in the context of the recent financial challenges we have faced as a result of the COVID-19, such challenges precipitating claims of insolvency or mass draconian service and staff cuts in other Local Authorities. Although we need to remain financially astute and responsible, our position is a far cry from this terrain.

Our financial strength and financial standing is not something that has materialised overnight. In 2002 we, the Conservatives, inherited what can only be described as a financial crisis following a period of mismanagement by the Liberal Democrats. We had perilous balances at only £2.3m, an uncontrolled overspend of £1.0m and had to act quickly to arrest a fatal decline into insolvency. Eighteen years of responsible Conservative leadership has, amongst other things, been devoted to restoring, maintaining and enhancing this Council's financial wellbeing. This has entailed replenishing balances to a safe level of approximately £10m, delivering efficiencies of many million pounds year on year, generating new income sources through our commercially minded activities, whilst investing at unprecedented levels in key priorities such as Highways, Affordable Housing and Climate Change. We were financially strong and resilient coming into COVID-19 and that was despite years of austerity from 2008 when we faced continual escalating statutory care costs and severe reductions in Government funding. It is this financial resilience that has enabled us to step up in the ways we have needed to for our community throughout this pandemic.

This is not just me making fanciful misleading statements in the way that some have chosen to do. This is our financial track record and financial health is based on facts and on the reports of external experts. Our Medium Term Financial Plan agreed at this Council meeting only February this year states the following:

“Our real terms cost of delivering services has reduced by 31% since 2011, which is primarily as a result of continually finding more cost-effective ways of going about our business. Our service efficiencies over the past five years alone amount to over £22m on a net service budget of approximately £130m and I can find very little, if anything over the years that amounts to service cuts. Indeed we have been investing in services like Waste Collection and Libraries whilst other authorities have been pairing these back”.

Our balances over the past 5 years have held at approximately £9m to £10m. We are the lowest government funded Unitary Authority at £84 per person whilst other Authorities receive as much as £450 and yet we still manage to invest in services, including a capital investment programme for our community of £150m to £180m each year. Isn't it an incredible testament to our huge efforts and competence over the past nineteen years that we have been able to manage our finances in this way for our residents, year after year?

Turning to the recently published Mid-Year Treasury Management statement which I referenced in my answer to a question earlier in this meeting. I apologise that it is again

based on facts and not fanciful stories. In that you will see our income from investment activities amounts to £7.2m per annum, which is a not inconsiderable sum. Because of that income, all of the borrowing the Council has ever had to make to deliver on all our capital schemes since WBC has existed such as Roads, Schools, Affordable Housing, Regeneration, is of almost no cost to our Council Taxpayer. Well, £7.52p for a Band D to be precise. What's more, we have accumulated realisable assets of over £500m.

I am extremely proud to say that I currently preside over a local party that has demonstrated, over many years, the highest levels of financial responsibility and financial acumen.

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

I wanted to take this opportunity to bring you up to date on our plans for the Covid-19 situation in the Borough and our plans going forward. Cases in Wokingham, as I said earlier, have risen this week to a rate of 155 per 100,000. This is partly due to an outbreak at a local care home. Wokingham still has a lower weekly case rate than the south east or England. Our expectation over the next few weeks is that we will see a levelling off of the rise in cases as the lockdown hits our figures. However, the overall trend is likely to be upwards and the situation will get worse before it gets better over the winter. Whilst a vaccine has been widely trailed in the national media it is still many months away from the ground and it is really important that we all work together to minimise the threat to our Borough.

I take this opportunity to remind all who are listening of the importance of the key public health messages about washing hands properly, social distancing correctly and isolating correctly when asked to. We have been concerned about the level of Covid-19 for some weeks and have made robust plans to protect our residents from the threat over the winter. The key points are as follows:

Our Care Homes Taskforce remains in place and remains hard at work. Their role is to support our care homes, give guidance on infection control methods, provide support with PPE, distribute additional Government grant money and support outbreaks such as Shinfield View. This approach served us well from the end of April and we will keep it in place until the threat to our care homes has passed. This service is now available to all of our care settings.

We are carrying out Track and Trace across the Borough. We have a contact rate of close to 90% in partnership with the national system and are phoning and door knocking positive cases to ensure that they are following guidance and receiving all the support they need.

We have set up a group of Covid-19 Marshals who are out and about across Wokingham, enforcing the lockdown and ensuring that Covid-secure rules are in place.

We have set up a specialist Schools Taskforce to support and advise our schools as they deal with the threat of Covid-19 positive cases amongst children, parents and teachers.

We have an active Communication Plan to ensure that residents are aware of the key messages to remain safe and understand what to do to minimise the risk of Covid-19.

We have continued with our One Front Door system with our partners at the CAB. This is the route any resident should follow if they need help during the lockdown. Please call this number if you need assistance. You will receive support.

We are making regular calls to the 4,600 of our most vulnerable residents. To date we have phoned 4,000. The purpose of these calls is to check on their welfare and mental health and to offer any support they may need. These calls are then referred to our voluntary sector partners or Adult Social Care to ensure that people receive any help they need.

We are knocking on the door of every resident known to Social Services who is over 75 to check that they are ok and to identify any needs. We have continued with our befriending calls with our partners at the Link. These calls are a vital way to provide support to those who are isolated or lonely.

The Council and the voluntary sector are working in partnership, as they did in the first lockdown, to ensure that every resident in the Borough is able to get through this period. We will continue to work hard to ensure that no-one is left behind.

Turning to the future, I can advise Members that we have an allocation of Point of Care tests coming to us very shortly. We are planning on how to deploy these tests with optimal benefit and will announce our plans in the next few weeks. Point of Care tests are the tests used in Liverpool and featured heavily in the national media.

We are particularly aware of the risk to mental health for our residents during the second lockdown. One of the key aims of the phone calls I mentioned earlier is to identify people who are struggling and help them through this period. We have brought forward, as a result of this, our new Mental Health Programme and hope to launch this formally early in the New Year.

I would like to conclude with a summary of the key messages for the winter months. Wash hands properly. Social distance. Follow all the rules. Wear masks when required to. Keep mixing indoors to an absolute minimum. The more we can all follow the rules, the lower the case numbers will be, the sooner we will be through this and the lower the impact on Wokingham. Please call if you need us and we will be there to help you.

UllaKarin Clark, Executive Members for Children's Services

The Covid-19 Winter Grant scheme, announced on 8 November 2020, is making over £200k available to Wokingham Borough Council to support struggling families and others in need. It covers the period 1 December 2020 to 31 March 2021. It is up to the Council to decide who is most in need and who should benefit from the grant. The scheme is not designed to directly replace the additional free school meal provision made earlier in the pandemic. However, we know that families with children who qualify through means testing for free school meals are some of the most vulnerable. We must ensure that children are not at risk of going without food during the winter school holidays.

We will make funds available from this grant to support over 2,000 children and young people in the Borough who receive means-tested free school meals at a cost of approximately £100k. We are currently working out the detail on how the support will be distributed. One option is to provide food vouchers via schools. We are also exploring the possibility of providing hot meals directly. However, this may be extremely complicated. The vouchers would be designed so that they can only be used for food and groceries. The balance of the fund will be used to support vulnerable families and children which includes nearly 100 care leavers.

I recognise that there are families with children who do not qualify for free school meals and others who will struggle over the winter. We are working with the CAB who, as our “Front Door”, are the best people to reach other families and individuals in need, because they are already aware. This will also include the possible distribution of funds to voluntary organisations who are also providing support for those who need it.

I would like to encourage any Councillors who are aware of families in need to write to me or our Front Door, or anybody else out there who is aware of people in need. Please don't hesitate. Please let us know. I recognise the hardship faced by many people as a result of the pandemic and I will continue to work to support those who need our help during these difficult and unsettling times.

John Kaiser, Executive Member for Finance and Housing

It is nice to hear the Leader of the Council, who is a qualified accountant, and the CFO, who is also a qualified accountant, making the statement tonight. That was quite interesting. Before I go on, I would like to talk about one area which we, as a group, were keen to keep on track. This was the action to eradicate poverty and deprivation in the Borough, extending to affordable homes, homelessness, rough sleeping and general support to lift people out of poverty. I am pleased to report that the control and investments made by the Council have allowed us not just to deliver the support needed such as PPE and food amongst a host of other support packages, but now allows the Council to offer support and concessions to the poorest and most vulnerable in the Borough. As such it gives me great pleasure to announce that we will be looking to extend two Council discount schemes:

1. The extension of the Council Tax Reduction Grant to carers by discounting carers allowance as part of the income taken into account when assessing who should receive the allowance, thus meaning more carers will be able to access this financial support.
2. Additional support for care leavers, this means the removal of the financial burden of Council Tax for these people up to the age of 25, a very important concession for these young people making their way in life.

Both are worthwhile benefits for residents who need support and forming part of the Borough Council strategy to eradicate poverty in the Borough. This has only been possible due to the successful management of the Council's finances. In addition, as you heard earlier, we will provide free school meals to children who qualify on a needs basis not just for the Christmas holiday period but also during the half-term break. We are working on the way that this is going to be implemented.

It has been frustrating listening to the lies and rumours about the Council's finances during this time when people have many fears, illness, loss of jobs and income and in some cases deterioration of mental health. Families have been unable to meet with the most at risk, such as grandparents. Statements to scaremonger at such a time is not only irresponsible but lacking any sense of feelings or respect for all those who benefit and rely on the many services delivered by Wokingham Borough Council. Rest assured, my intention is to run the Council's finances in such a way that creates savings and investments which make available money so, when we get back to normal, whatever that will look like, the Council will still be in a position to deliver those services at the same time having supported the residents throughout this very difficult and challenging time.

Whilst we have been responding to the pandemic, we have been ensuring those in most need receive the services and support required. This has meant we have incurred substantial costs. All of this has been going on at a time when key income to the Council has dried up, most notably Leisure and Car Parking and we have been diverted away from delivering on savings initiatives. I have found this extremely challenging, to ensure the needs of our vulnerable are met and trying to manage the Council's resources responsibly.

Fortunately, we came into this pandemic with a strong financial standing created through a robust and a sound business-like approach to the Council finances over many years. This has provided income critical to funding our response. Whilst contrary to some of the dramatic and vastly inaccurate statements about the Council's finances, we have always borrowed sensibly and continue to do so. We have used this to generate income and continue to have assets far, far, far in excess in value of our borrowing liabilities.

As we come out of the shadow of Covid you will see other initiatives for the poor and vulnerable. We are well placed to pursue the goal to eradicate poverty and will continue to do so. As I have said on many occasions: "a broke Council is no use to anyone".

80. MOTIONS

80.1 Motion 444 submitted by Maria Gee

The Council considered the following Notice of Motion, submitted by Maria Gee and seconded by Imogen Shepherd-Dubey:

A carer with a buggy, a blind or partially sighted child, a teenager who has difficulty processing everyday sensory information, and a mobility scooter user, all use our pavements to access our shops, services and businesses. All residents should be able to move unhindered along our streets, without having to negotiate unnecessary pavement obstructions, such as pavement advertising. Unhindered access for all our residents will encourage more use of our shops and services and invigorate our town centres, benefitting businesses.

Residents look to us as a Council to change policies, procedures and practices that are discriminatory, and to take reasonable steps to enable disabled people and others with protected characteristics to avoid substantial disadvantages caused by physical features.

Under the Public Sector Equality Duty, public authorities are required to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination. Not taking action on street obstructions may also breach the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of Persons with a Disability.

It is not an option to leave things as they are, which is a one page guidance document for traders that is not resourced or enforced and which pays scant regard to equalities and human rights responsibilities, highways and road traffic legislation, planning law and guidance, and ignores our local context including our conservation areas.

This Council resolves to:

- Consult with local charities, voluntary organisations, residents' groups and business representatives to develop policies, procedures and practices with respect to (i) pavement advertising and (ii) street and café furniture, to eliminate unlawful discrimination against residents with protected characteristics.
- Develop, working cross-party, a street charter by no later than 15 January 2021, that

puts a 'clear highway' policy at the heart of decision-making and specifically addresses each of the above two areas of street obstruction.

- Develop, working cross party, policies, practices and procedures, that are resourced and enforced, no later than 31 March 2021 that specifically address the above two areas of street obstruction.
- Implement and monitor the adopted policies, procedures and practices from 1 April 2021, report on their successes or failures on an annual basis, and make improvements.

Pauline Jorgensen stated that she supported the principle of ensuring that pavements were not obstructed. However, she was forced to oppose the Motion as the Council already had a policy (approved in 2018) on 'A' Boards. That policy stated that the needs of the public to pass and re-pass safely when using a public area were paramount and the following requirements must be met at all times when positioning 'A' boards in any place to which the public had access. This included:

- Freedom of movement for the disabled;
- Freedom of movement for pushchairs;
- Flow of pedestrians;
- Access for emergency vehicles at all times.

The policy stated that 'A' Boards would only be tolerated on pavements where sufficient width of footway could be left clear to ensure safe passage for pedestrian/wheelchair traffic or those using the area with pushchairs (a minimum area of 2m should be left clear). The policy stated that all 'A' boards should be of high quality of a specified height and should be removed if they:

- Were unsightly or unsafe;
- Inappropriate due to new developments;
- Included any protruding elements that can caused a trip or fall;
- Made of materials that could cause injuries.

The policy also limited the number of 'A' boards to one per business premises. In the event that an 'A' Board was considered to be causing a nuisance or an obstruction to the free passage of the public, the Council would remove it without notice.

Councillor Jorgensen felt that this policy was adequate, if respected by shopkeepers or enforced, balancing the desire of businesses to advertise with the need to keep the streets safe for all our residents.

Councillor Jorgensen also stated that the Council should immediately adopt one part of Councillor Gee's proposal, expanding the existing policy to include bollard covers. She stated that officers would put the amended policy out to public consultation to ensure that the views of groups representing disabled people, impacted residents and shopkeepers were captured and any substantive issues with the current policy were addressed. The Council would further commit to ensuring that these guidelines were followed when issues were raised.

Upon being put to the vote, the Motion was declared by the Mayor to be lost.

80.2 Continuation of the Meeting

At this point in the meeting, 10.10pm, in accordance with Procedure Rule 4.2.12 (m), the

Council considered a Motion to continue the meeting beyond 10.30pm for a maximum of 30 minutes to enable further business on the Agenda to be transacted. The Motion was proposed by Prue Bray and seconded by Stephen Conway.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was declared by the Mayor to be lost.

80.3 Motion 445 submitted by Gary Cowan

The Council considered the following Notice of Motion, submitted by Gary Cowan and seconded by Jim Frewin.

“The continued failure of recent Council meetings to conclude the agenda business suggests that the existing democratic process has failed. As a direct result of this Wokingham Borough's Residents and their Borough Council elected Members have been let down very badly. To correct this serious democratic failure and get the Council back on track this Council must immediately programme in as many additional Council meetings as is required to get Council business up to date.”

In accordance with section 4.2.15.5 of the Constitution, six Members requested that a recorded vote be held. The voting was as follows:

For	Against	Abstain
Rachel Bishop-Firth	Parry Batth	Keith Baker
Shirley Boyt	Laura Blumenthal	Malcolm Richards
Prue Bray	Chris Bowring	
Rachel Burgess	Jenny Cheng	
Stephen Conway	UllaKarin Clark	
Gary Cowan	Michael Firmager	
Andy Croy	Charlotte Haitham Taylor	
Richard Dolinski	John Halsall	
Carl Doran	Pauline Helliari-Symons	
Lindsay Ferris	Emma Hobbs	
Paul Fishwick	Graham Howe	
Jim Frewin	Pauline Jorgensen	
Maria Gee	John Kaiser	
David Hare	Dianne King	
Clive Jones	Abdul Loyes	
Tahir Maher	Charles Margetts	
Adrian Mather	Ken Miall	
Andrew Mickleburgh	Stuart Munro	
Imogen Shepherd-Dubey	Gregor Murray	
Rachelle Shepherd-Dubey	Barrie Patman	
Caroline Smith	Angus Ross	
	Daniel Sargeant	
	Chris Smith	
	Wayne Smith	
	Bill Soane	
	Alison Swaddle	
	Simon Weeks	

Upon being put to the vote, the Motion was declared by the Mayor to be lost.

80.4 Motion 446 submitted by Clive Jones

Due to time constraints, this Motion was not considered.

80.5 Motion 447 submitted by Gregor Murray

Due to time constraints, this Motion was not considered.

80.6 Motion 448 submitted by Prue Bray

Due to time constraints, this Motion was not considered.

80.7 Motion 449 submitted by Andy Croy

Due to time constraints, this Motion was not considered.

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**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT
REMUNERATION PANEL APPOINTED TO
REVIEW THE ALLOWANCES PAID TO
COUNCILLORS OF WOKINGHAM BOROUGH
COUNCIL FOR 2020/21**

**FOR SUBMISSION TO THE COUNCIL ON
21 JANUARY 2021**

Introduction

1. The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 provide for the payment of Allowances to Members of the Council in connection with their work as Councillors. Before the Council can make or amend a scheme of allowances, it should consider the recommendations made in relation to it by an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP).
2. The Council appointed its first Independent Remuneration Panel in 2003. In each of the following Municipal Years, the Panel has made recommendations on the levels of Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances for consideration by the Council. Council resolved that future reviews of Members' Allowances would be carried out on a biennial basis at their meeting on 21 March 2019. An independent review of Members' Allowances has been carried out in 2020 and early 2021. Details of the Panel's remit are described in paragraph 4 below.

The Independent Remuneration Panel

3. The Members of the Independent Remuneration Panel are:

Diana Anderson is married and has lived in Crowthorne (Wokingham Without) for 37 years and has strong connections with Wokingham. Both her children now live there; her daughter attended The Holt School and her granddaughter has just started Year 2 at Walter Infant School. Before retiring Diana was Campus Administrator for 25 years at Imperial College's postgraduate campus at Silwood Park, Ascot, looking after both staff and students. She has been Clerk to the Local Advisors (Governors) at St Crispin's School for nearly six years and for the last 15 years has been an independent member - and now Chair - of Wokingham's School Admission Appeals Panels.

David Harwood has been living in the Wokingham Borough for seventeen years having moved to Twyford in 2004. He is married with a teenage daughter. He has been working as a company secretary for the past 11 years and previously worked in financial control in the retail and financial services sector.

Bob Nancarrow has lived in Remenham since 1991. At that time and until retirement he was and is still living in the village within the Wokingham Borough. He worked for the University of West London as Principal Lecturer in Management Accounting before retirement. There, he also volunteered for and undertook the role of Treasurer of the local branch of NATFHE, the Lecturers Union for several years. In 1994/5, and 1995/6 he was Berkshire Branch President of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants. He is qualified as a Chartered Secretary and as a Chartered Management Accountant. He attended King Edward VI School, Bath. He has a BA in Business Studies from the University of Hertfordshire and a teaching Certificate from the University of Roehampton, London. He has also worked for and trained with Lucas Aerospace, Deloitte, Grant Thornton, Interpublic Inc. and Allied Domecq PLC.

Ian Newlove has lived in Crowthorne (Wokingham Without) since 1973. He is married with two grown up daughters who also live in Crowthorne. He is an independent Member and Chairs Education Appeals Panels for Wokingham,

Reading and Bracknell since around 2001. Prior to retiring he worked for a major food retailer based in Bracknell for 28 years. His role within the company at various times involved heading the Internal Audit function and also other Financial roles including systems and procedures. He was also a member of a Patient Participation Group in Crowthorne.

Angela Slade has lived in Wokingham since 1980. After graduation from the University of St Andrews, her career, mostly in the field of Procurement was with Unilever, 3M and Smithkline Beecham (now Glaxo Smithkline). This final position involved responsibility for a portfolio valued at £13 million. Fortunately made redundant before her 40th Birthday, she was able to set up her own business and has remained self-employed for the last 25 years. Angela has 5 years as a contributing guest on BBC Radio Oxford's live phone-in on the Sunday Gardening programme. She now advises on an ad hoc basis on BBC Radio Berkshire when the resident gardener, Colin Evans, is unavailable.

Callum Wernham, Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist provided guidance and administrative support to the Panel.

Background and National Context

4. The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations, which came into force in 2003, stated that Independent Remuneration Panels, established by local authorities, should make recommendations in respect of the following issues:

Basic Allowance (BA) – each local authority must make provision for a basic, flat rate allowance payable to all Members.

Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) – each local authority may make provision for the payment of Special Responsibility Allowances to those Councillors who have significant additional responsibilities. The Panel has to recommend the responsibilities that should be remunerated and the levels of each allowance.

Childcare and Dependants Carers' Allowance – local authorities may make provision for the payment of an allowance to those Members who incur expenditure for the care of children or dependant relatives whilst undertaking particular duties.

Travel and Subsistence Allowance – local authorities may make provision for the payment of a travelling and subsistence allowance to its Members for undertaking a list of eligible duties as defined in the current scheme.

Co-optees' Allowance – local authorities may make provision for the payment of an allowance to co-optees for attending meetings, conferences and seminars.

5. The Regulations also provide for Panels to make recommendations in respect of the following issues:

- The cessation of payments to Members who have been suspended or partially suspended from their duties, and the repayment of allowances;
 - The backdating of allowances to the beginning of the financial year in which they are set, and provision to recommend annual adjustments by means of an index.
6. Non-Executive Director (NED) payments are made by Council-owned companies to Members who act in non-Executive roles. They are similar to SRAs but have a different legislative basis and are not included in the Council's Members Allowances Scheme. It is not within the remit of the Independent Remuneration Panel to review the level of payments to NEDs on the Council-owned companies unless a specific request for a review is made by one or more of the companies.

Terms of Reference for the 2020/21 Review

7. As a newly appointed Panel, the Panel agreed that it should carry out a 'light touch' review. The review was carried out following examination of previous IRP reports and recommendations, survey responses received from Members regarding the Members' Allowances scheme, key points raised during discussions with a range of Members including all Group Leaders (conducted virtually using Microsoft Teams), and data from the South East Employers Members' Allowances data.

Work Programme for the 2020/21 Review

8. The Panel met on the following occasions (some of these meetings were discussions with Members):
- 18 February 2020
 - 12 March 2020
 - 4 August 2020
 - 14 August 2020
 - 21 September 2020
 - 23 September 2020
 - 29 September 2020
 - 30 September 2020
 - 4 November 2020
 - 9 November 2020
 - 10 November 2020
 - 18 November 2020
 - 7 December 2020
 - 18 December 2020
9. The Panel made reference to the following information to provide background, context and assistance in reaching its conclusions:
- Copies of the current Members' Allowances Scheme agreed by the Council in November 2018 and previous versions.
 - Copies of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003;

- The summary of the South East Employers (SEEMP) Members' Allowances Survey 2019/20.
10. The Panel met Members including the Leader of the Council, the Leaders of the Opposition Groups, Members of the Opposition and a number of present and former Executive Members. A number of Chairman of Committee's, both current and former, also met with the Panel. The Panel also met with the Chief Executive.

All Members were invited to meet the Panel. In all, the Panel met a representative cross section across all groups: 11 Conservative, 7 Liberal Democrat, 2 Labour and 2 Independent.

The Panel sent out a survey to all Members, attached at Appendix A to this report. 35 out of 53 surveys were returned and all comments were treated confidentially. The Panel were pleased that the number of responses to the survey far exceeded the 26 received for the previous review. The Panel wished to thank Members for coming forward and providing comment and evidence from which the Panel would reach its recommendations. There was a slight reduction in the number of Members who came forward for discussions with the Panel, however the Panel was satisfied that a representative cross-section of the Membership had come forward.

Reference to the information from the combined sources are referred to as 'responding Members' in the report. Any percentages are calculated out of 35. Where information was obtained from meetings, this is referred to as 'Members who met the Panel...'.

11. Some Members made suggestions which fell outside the scope of the current Members' Allowances Scheme legislation and the remit of the Panel. Therefore, those suggestions have not been addressed in this report.

Remuneration

12. In considering its proposals concerning Members' remuneration, the Panel has tested each recommendation against three core principles:
- a) Is it affordable relative to Wokingham Borough Council budget constraints?
 - b) Is it reasonably similar to the practice in other unitary authorities in the region?
 - c) Would Borough residents consider it to be fair?

Basic Allowance

13. As per previous Independent Remuneration Panel's, the Panel would like to reiterate the premise (which previous Independent Remuneration Panels have used) that 50% of Members' time is pro bono as the role is that of a volunteer. This is based on the premise that the other 50% was originally set at the Local Government Association's daily rate of the national male median white-collar wage. Whilst an allowance is appropriate, it is not a salary.

14. 51% (18 out of 35) of responding Members felt that the allowances scheme “fairly compensated you for the time spent and the expenses incurred”. Of the remaining 49% (17 out of 35) who responded negatively to that comment, most were generally commenting not that they were out of pocket but that WBC remuneration was well below the market rate. A variety of comments referred to specific SRAs and their associated remuneration levels, which will be addressed later within this report.
15. The previous Panel recommended to Council in 2017 a 1% increase to the time contributed element of the Member Basic Allowance, which was in line with the Officer Pay increase for that year. Subsequently, Officer Pay was increased by 2% for the 2018/19 municipal year and as such the previous Panel recommended a 2% increase to the time contributed element of the Member Basic Allowance. This recommendation was not agreed by Council, and therefore the current Basic Allowance level sits at the level as agreed in 2017.
16. This year, the Panel had considered a small increase to the Basic Allowance, between the value of 0.5% and 1%, and noted that this would represent an increase of between £33.42 and £66.84 per Member, taking the time contributed element of the Basic Allowance from £6,684 to between £6,717.42 and £6,750.84. This would be an increase in budget from £360,936 to between £362,740.68 and £364,545.36. Following recent announcements from the Chancellor of the Exchequer relating to a public sector pay freeze, which includes professions such as teachers, prison officers and civil servants, the Panel took pause with the idea of an increase to the Basic Allowance for Members for both the 2020/21 and 2021/22 financial years. During these times of uncertainty, the Panel believes it appropriate to not increase the Basic Allowance at present, where over 50% of responding Members believe that they are currently fairly compensated for the time spent and expenses occurred in the role. The Panel does however believe that it is more suitable to allow modest regular inflationary increases to the Basic Allowance rather than a much larger single increase to “catch up” with increases after a long period of abstention. As such, the Panel intends to devise a formula for small inflationary increases to elements of the Members’ Allowances Scheme during their next biennial review. Any devised formula would be evidence based, using benchmarking data from other Local Authorities.
17. The Panel reviewed the out of pocket expenses segment of the Members’ Basic Allowance scheme, taking in to account the £100 increase that was recommended and approved by Council in 2017. For the reasons set out above, the Panel does not recommend any change to this value at this time.
18. The Panel recommends that 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.

19. It is the Panel's view that remuneration should not be a barrier to attracting a diverse range of Members from a variety of backgrounds. Instead, the Panel wishes the Members' Allowances scheme to be an element of a wider drive to attract a range of Members from across the entire spectrum of protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. Therefore, this may be an area where further investigation and research is conducted in a future review of the Members' Allowances scheme.
20. In conclusion, the Panel recommends that the Basic Allowance remain at the existing levels for the 2020/21 and 2021/22 financial years, comprising the following components:
 - £6,684 for time contributed; and
 - £600 for out of pocket expenses ; and
 - £500 for IT, communication and home office.

Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs)

21. The Council previously agreed that the SRA = £5,000, and individual posts attracting an SRA be assessed as a factor of £5,000.
22. Being a newly formed Panel, the Panel agreed to take an information gathering approach to SRAs during this review. The Panel met with a variety of Committee Chairmen, both current and former, and gathered a good deal of both statistical information and opinions regarding various roles which attract SRAs. After receiving comments from a cross-section of Members, areas which the Panel may decide to investigate further in a future biennial include a potential increase to the Opposition Leader's SRA, and the reintroduction of a specific SRA for Deputy Leader of the Council, which would attract a higher SRA than that of an Executive Member. Other roles which attract an SRA will also be reviewed more thoroughly during a future biennial review. For the time being, for reasons previously stated within this report, the Panel thought it pertinent to keep SRAs at their existing levels.

Travel and Subsistence Allowance

23. The vast majority of Members did not raise this area of the Members' Allowances scheme as a concern, or as something that was holding them back from carrying out their duties. As such, the Panel recommends no changes to the existing Travel and Subsistence allowances for the time being.
24. The Panel has made a note of the Council's Green Climate Emergency agenda, and wishes for the Members' Allowances scheme to be able to aid and assist this going forward. As such, the Panel may decide to investigate recommending implementation of schemes relating to sustainable travel and electric vehicles in a future review.
25. The Panel wishes to make it known that a claimable rate of £0.35p per mile bicycle allowance was available for Members to claim when travelling to and from an approved duty. A variety of Members were not aware of this element of the existing Members' Allowances Scheme.

Children and Dependant Carers Allowance

26. The Panel wants to ensure that Members from a variety of backgrounds are not disadvantaged from being able to carry out their roles as Councillors. The Children and Dependant Carers Allowance was one such area where the Panel felt that the Members' Allowances Scheme could be adjusted to fairly reimburse Members who have additional caring responsibilities, which occur during times when Council meetings are held.
27. The Panel felt that the current scheme did not fairly reimburse Members who had caring responsibilities which required specialist support. Specialist support would include, but not be limited to caring for: health needs, disabilities, mental health issues, and multiple young children. Lifting an adolescent or adult would also be considered a specialist caring responsibility.
28. Arranging appropriate care for the above listed caring responsibilities incurs costs in excess of the current flat rate of up to £10 per hour. As such the Panel recommends the following amendments to the Children and Dependant Carers Allowance:

From April 2021, the Dependent & Carers allowance is to be two tiered.

Tier 1 – Standard childcare (e.g. babysitting) up to £10 per hour, to increase with the national living wage as and when this overtakes this amount;

Tier 2 – Specialist caring (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 etc.) up to £20 per hour, to rise by the same monetary increase as granted to Tier 1 of the Dependent and Carers allowance. Tier 2 would require an invoice, of any description, to be provided.

Combined claims from either tier are to be limited a maximum of thirty five hours per month, and the carer employed must not be a member of the Councillor's family that lives at the same address. Claims over and above the 35 hour per month limit can be claimed in exceptional circumstances with the agreement of the Lead Specialist for Democratic and Electoral Services, upon receipt of suitable evidence.

The Allowance can only be claimed by Members with direct caring responsibilities.

29. The Panel would like to reiterate from previous years' recommendations that Members should feel confident about claiming for expenses that they are entitled to.

Mayor and Deputy Mayor

30. The Panel met with holders of the Mayoral and Deputy Mayoral office (for purposes of anonymity, details as to whether they were former, present or both

shall not be disclosed). The general view was that the current level of Mayoral Allowance was sufficient to allow the incumbent to carry out their assigned duties. At present, the Panel recommends no change to the Mayoral and Deputy Mayoral Allowances.

Publication of IRP Press Release

31. Being a newly formed Panel, the Panel had various assumptions and expectations regarding Members' Allowances prior to being appointed to the Panel. These preconceptions have changed over the course of their inaugural review of Members' Allowances. The Panel believe that it would be useful to share their experiences with the public, from an independent viewpoint, in a format which was more palatable to residents than a formal Council report.

32. The Panel asks that the Council allows the IRP to publish a "press release" type newspaper article in the 2021/22 municipal year, when a review of Members' Allowances is not being carried out. This article would be published in local news and via WBC media sources, with administrative support from Democratic Services Officers. This article will be in the form of a 'questions and answers' piece from the IRP, outlining their assumptions about allowances when they applied from the role, how that has changed. Other elements of this piece may include factual points such as: "did you know that your Ward Member's time is remunerated on a 50% voluntary basis". The purpose of this piece is to provide information to the public, in a more personal story focussed nature from independent Panel members, about the work of the Borough's Councillors and the associated remuneration that they receive.

MEMBERS ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2020/21

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE INDEPENDANT REMUNERATION PANEL

The Panel recommends to the Council 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.***

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Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) form: Initial impact assessment

If an officer is undertaking a project, policy change or service change, then an initial impact assessment must be completed and attached alongside the Project initiation document.

EqIA Titular information:

Date:	14 December 2020
Service:	Democratic Services
Project, policy or service EQIA relates to:	IRP Report
Completed by:	Callum Wernham
Has the EQIA been discussed at services team meeting:	Yes
Signed off by:	
Sign off date:	

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1. Policy, Project or service information:

This section should be used to identify the main purpose of the project, policy or service change, the method of delivery, including who key stakeholders are, main beneficiaries and any associated aims.

What is the purpose of the project, policy change or service change , its expected outcomes and how does it relate to your services corporate plan:
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An independent review of the Members' Allowances scheme is carried out on a biennial basis. This is a statutory function. Volunteers, who either live or work in the Borough make up the Independent Review Panel (IRP). The aim of the Panel is to review the scheme, and identify any potential changes based on evidence and statistical analysis.

Outline how you are delivering your project, policy change or service change. What governance arrangements are in place, which internal stakeholders (Service managers, Assistant Directors, Members ect) have/will be consulted and informed about the project or changes:

Panel members are sought via local press and WBC media streams. Candidates are interviewed by the Lead Specialist for Democratic & Electoral Services, and the Assistant Director for Governance. Panel Members are given support and guidance from Democratic Services officers. Panel members have discussions with a range of Members, in addition to offering a survey to all Members asking for their views on the Members' Allowances scheme. The public are informed of recommendations in the local press, as dictated by statutory legislation.

Outline who are the main beneficiaries of the Project, policy change or service change?

Any increase to financial elements of the Members Allowance would mean that Members could financially gain as a result. As stated before, recommendations are made to Council by an Independent Panel.

Outline any associated aims attached to the project, policy change or service change:

The aim of the review is to make recommendations to the Members' Allowances scheme based on feedback from Members, statistical analysis of data from other Local Authorities, and a range of other factors. One of the main changes proposed by the Panel aims to add a second tier to the Dependent & Carers allowance, for those with direct caring responsibilities which require specialist care. In addition, it is proposed that the first, or current tier, be increased in line with the national living wage when this value overtakes the current £10 per hour rate. The aim of these changes are to allow Members with direct caring responsibilities to attend their assigned duties, and be reimbursed (up to the maximum proposed value of £20 per hour) for the caring responsibilities during these times.

2. Protected characteristics:

There are 9 protected characteristics as defined by the legislation:

- Race
- Gender
- Disability
- Gender re-assignment
- Age
- Religious belief

- Sexual orientation
- Pregnancy/Maternity
- Marriage and civil partnership:

To find out more about the protected groups, please consult the EQIA guidance.

3. Initial Impact review:

In the table below, please indicate whether your project, Policy change or service change will have a positive or negative impact on one of the protected characteristics. To assess the level of impact, please assign each group a Positive, No, Low or High impact score:

For information on how to define No, low or high impact, please consult the EQIA guidance document.

If your project is to have a positive impact on one of the protected groups, please outline this in the table below.

For details on what constitutes a positive impact, please consult the EQIA guidance.

Protected characteristics	Impact score	Please detail what impact will be felt by the protected group:
Race:	No	None of the recommendations would affect persons with this protected characteristic specifically.
Gender:	Positive	75.1% of women were in work, compared to 92.6% of men according to the ONS in 2019. The recommendation to add a second tier to the Dependent & Carers allowance would be of benefit to those individuals with multiple young children. According to the ONS statistics, this would be a particular positive impact for women.
Disabilities:	Positive	The recommendation to add a second tier to the Dependent & Carers allowance would be of benefit to those Members who have direct caring responsibilities for a person with any form of disability who required specialist care. It would

		have no specific impact for Members who themselves had a disability.
Age:	Positive	The recommendation to add a second tier to the Dependent & Carers allowance would be of benefit to those Members who may have an older partner or parent who required specialist care.
Sexual orientation:	No	None of the recommendations would affect persons with this protected characteristic specifically.
Religion/belief:	No	None of the recommendations would affect persons with this protected characteristic specifically.
Gender re-assignment:	No	None of the recommendations would affect persons with this protected characteristic specifically.
Pregnancy and Maternity:	Positive	The recommendation to increase the first tier of the Dependent & Carers allowance in line with the national living wage would be of benefit to those Members who have recently had children. It could allow them to attend assigned duties and claim back associated childcare costs.
Marriage and civil partnership:	No	None of the recommendations would affect persons with this protected characteristic specifically.

Based on your findings from your initial impact assessment, you must complete a full impact assessment for any groups you have identified as having a low of high negative impact. If No impact, or a positive impact has been identified, you do not need to complete a full assessment. However, you must report on this initial assessment and it must receive formal approval from the Assistant Director responsible for the project, policy or service change.

Initial impact assessment approved by Anne Hunter

Date: 16 December 2020

TITLE	Support and Care Procurement
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Council on Thursday, 21 January 2021
WARD	None Specific;
LEAD OFFICER	Director, Adult Social Care and Health - Matt Pope
LEAD MEMBER	Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Services - Charles Margetts

PURPOSE OF REPORT (INC STRATEGIC OUTCOMES)

In accordance with WBC's Procurement and Contracts Rules and Procedures, this report seeks approval of Full Council to proceed with the Support and Care procurement framework. The procurement exercise will enable ASC to commission high quality, cost effective care for vulnerable adults in need of supported living or home care.

A key element of the ASC and the Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy, this procurement exercise will support our focus on prevention and reducing demand, delaying the need for more costly services. People will be supported and enabled to remain as independent as possible for as long as possible in their own homes and communities and not in residential care homes.

The final specifications will require providers to deliver reablement and strength based commissioning where the individual will continue to receive personalised support and be at the centre of any support. WBC will work closely with providers to ensure high quality choice of services are provided that support and safeguard its vulnerable residents.. Through this tender, WBC will ensure that improvements are made in the training and development of the carer workforce.

The Support and Care Procurement will strengthen our commissioning practice, improving the strategic oversight of commissioned activity, market intelligence and engagement with social care providers. This will create greater stability of placements for our most vulnerable and increase quality assurance resulting in improved outcomes.

Delegated authority is being sought for the Director of Adult Social Services to agree the procurement model for support and care services and enter into call off agreements with the successful organisations which meet value for money and quality requirements.

The Executive has considered the proposals set out in this report and agreed the recommendations at the meeting held on 26th November 2020.

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our ambition is for Wokingham Borough to be one of the best boroughs for adults and carers in need of support to live, where they feel safe, included and a key part of our community. Our ASC strategy focusses on how WBC and its partners will prevent, reduce and delay the need for formal support and care and where possible to improve people's health and wellbeing, focusing on prevention and self-help.

In 2018/19 approximately 2,025 new clients made 4,345 requests for information, advice or support from WBC. 69% (2970) of these led to signposting to universal services or no service provided and 11% (460) led to long term care. 1,860 people (existing and new) received support and care provided by WBC throughout the year. Most people (1,320) received support and care in their own home – and it is this aspect that will fall under the scope of this project. At any one time approximately 700 people are in receipt of a supported living or home care service, approximately 30 adult care packages are let each month totalling 360 per year.

Supported Living is a service designed to help people with a wide range of support needs retain their independence by being supported in their own home. People in supported living are usually aged between 18-64 and may live with their family or have their own tenancy as part of a shared accommodation and are responsible for their own bills and cost of living. To afford these, the person may be entitled to a wide range of benefits and grants. In single person supported living, they will also have their own front door.

Home care is looking after a person from the comfort of their own home. Care workers go into people's homes to help with the day to day aspects of living such as personal care. Home care is flexible and can be anything from a couple of visits a week right through to 24/7 live in care. Providers who provide the personal care element must be CQC registered. Usually people who receive home care service are aged 65 and over.

The procurement exercise will be delivered within existing budgets, approximately £14 million per annum. This will deliver existing efficiency programmes within the Medium Term Financial Plan, managing demand and utilising our budget to its full potential. It is based upon restructuring of existing spend through compliant and competitive procurement processes. The identified spend does not represent a change in expenditure and further efficiencies against this spend is not possible. This exercise will enable to Council to maintain sufficiency within the local adult social care market.

Given that WBC has had unforeseen expenditure due to Covid 19 it is important that all possible models to procure support and care are considered. This procurement will ensure that we continue to comply with WBC financial regulations, UK Public Procurement Regulations and EU law. At present, packages are spot purchased and there is little market engagement with providers. The project will ensure high quality services are delivered that continue to safeguard individuals, achieve value for money,

continued service improvements and enhanced outcomes for residents and the workforce. This will also allow WBC to have a better market oversight and influence the development of the market to meet strategic priorities. By working with providers who have agreed to our requirements and our rates we will be able to budget and forecast spend more accurately including controlling any future cost increases.

It is anticipated that the contract will be awarded by May/June 2021.

Key milestones

1. Cost modelling by end of October/November 2020 to ensure a sustainable rate of care and any future costings will be based on these models
2. Ongoing provider and stakeholder engagement
3. Tender advertisement February/March 2021
4. Framework award by April/May 2021
5. Full mobilisation by April/May 2021
6. Framework go live date May/June 2021

BACKGROUND

Our ambition is for Wokingham Borough to be one of the best boroughs for adults and carers in need of support and care to live, where they feel safe, included and a key part of our community. Our procurement will help us achieve this ambition and with our partners will enable us to prevent, reduce and delay the need for formal support and care and where possible to improve people's health and wellbeing, focusing on prevention and self-help.

Providers on the framework will support vulnerable adults, adults with disabilities and older people to achieve the desired outcomes that are important and personal to them. They will help deliver Wokingham's ambitions for ASC in the borough, to ensure that all residents are enabled to achieve their personal goals and ambitions, in a context which promotes safety, independence and choice.

The procurement will help deliver the four key aims or priorities of the new ASC strategy:

- protect and safeguard adults
- prevent, reduce and delay the need for formal care and support
- promote and support choice and independence
- work in partnership and commission services that deliver quality and value for money

Supported Living is a service designed to help people with a wide range of support needs retain their independence by being supported in their own home. People in supported living are usually aged between 18-64 and may live with their family or have their own tenancy as part of a shared accommodation and are responsible for their own bills and cost of living. To afford these, the person may be entitled to a wide range of benefits and grants. In single person supported living, they will also have their own front door.

Home care is looking after a person from the comfort of their own home. Care workers go into people's homes to help with the day to day aspects of living such as personal care. Home care is flexible and can be anything from a couple of visits a week right through to 24/7 live in care. Providers who provide the personal care element must be CQC registered. Usually people who receive home care service are aged 65 and over.

At present supported living and home care is commissioned on a spot basis - there has not been any formal process whereby a select or approved group of providers has been selected. We are therefore, in a position where we work with a number of providers, ranging from those with single packages of support and care to those with a significant amount of Council work. Providers have raised concerns that there is a need to improve how providers are awarded work. There is a lack of competition, it is difficult for new entrants to enter the market and a lack of innovation/use of technology. There are also different start and end dates for contracts that causes additional work for Officers when renewing contracts. In addition for supported living, support provision in some cases is dependent on provision of housing (and vice versa.) So if the support provider changes, this may also affect the tenancy. There is a need to amend this so that the person has security of tenure in line with their tenancy agreement.

A procurement exercise will address these issues. There is a need to ensure that we approach the procurement of support and care strategically and this is more imperative

given the financial outlook due to COVID 19. The procurement will allow WBC to prequalify providers to a minimum quality level that ensures meeting our statutory duty as well as promoting continuous improvement in the care market. Encouraging competition through formal market competition may support management through forecasting budgetary pressures and requirements. Allowing providers to register their interest in working with WBC at any time may increase the number of providers and new entrants to the market as there is no time constrained tender period; this can promote choice, quality, competition and innovation in the market.

BUSINESS CASE

Under the Public Contracts Regulations (PCR) 2015, both frameworks and dynamic purchasing systems (DPS) are compliant techniques for procurement. A framework is a 'closed' approved provider list to which providers agree to general terms and conditions of performance and quality, and from which you can subsequently directly award contracts or run mini competitions. Frameworks may only be let for up to 4 years. A DPS is similar in nature to a framework, except that it remains open for new provider applications, all contracts are let through mini-competitions, and it does not have the 4 year limitation, and must be run entirely electronically.

The proposal looks to implement a model that selects best and compliant elements of a DPS and framework designs to meet our requirements (following internal and external stakeholder engagement). All providers will have to meet quality and/or price standards to be accepted, and if/where concerns relating to this arise, they may be temporarily or permanently suspended from bidding for WBC care packages

Other benefits this will provide to WBC will be:

- Delivery of the ASC Strategy and the Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy. This will include a focus on prevention and in reducing, and delaying the need for more costly services, by supporting people to live independently in their own homes and communities and not in residential care homes. This is particularly important, given the experiences of care homes during COVID19 and the expected increase in support and care at home as the main choice for many people. This puts emphasis on the ability of care providers to 'enable and reable' people to stay in their own homes, particularly on discharge from hospital.
- The specifications will enable providers to deliver reablement and strength based commissioning where the individual will continue to be at the centre of any support, they will include improvements in the training and development of the carer workforce.
- Quality control and service improvement –this method of procuring delivers a single set of overarching terms for quality and performance which providers must agree to, creating a standard, equal and transparent expectation to all providers who successfully apply in order to maintain framework status. In addition individuals who are receiving Direct Payments will benefit from the framework, all providers would expect to ensure the same terms and conditions including rates are applied to these packages.
- We will work closely with framework providers, including having regular forum and engagement opportunities to ensure that quality is improved. This will also require

us to meet Care Act (2014) requirements – the procurement will allow for planning around supporting sustainability of the market through more efficient contract monitoring, consistent cost modelling and price variance management. This will improve not only our market intelligence but our influence over our local market both financially and through improved supplier relationship management.

- The contract price will be determined through a standardised model and may be a set rate for all providers, ensuring consistency, equal opportunity and treatment. By working with providers who have agreed to our rates we will be able to budget and forecast spend far more accurately including controlling any future cost increases (including for Direct Payments as mentioned above).
- Through cost modelling with the market, we can ensure the design encapsulates a sustainable and efficient rate for both supported living and domiciliary care applicable to Wokingham borough.
- We will explore any opportunities of making the process more efficient for WBC including guaranteeing hours where appropriate, zoning certain parts of the borough, and exploring how technology can be used in delivering support and care.
- Efficiencies for internal staff including linking with wider partners and taking into account the changes that have taken place in the market following Covid19.
- Modernising our procurement procedures – the majority of LAs have designed and utilise their own or a consortium framework e.g. Nottinghamshire; Stockport, Trafford and Rochdale Councils; Oxfordshire; Reading Borough. Providers are familiar with using these systems. Additionally, WBC already successfully uses frameworks for Children’s residential care and independent foster agency placements.
- Procurement process will reflect the market – and support and invite newer and smaller businesses to contract for services as well as larger national organisations.

See procurement business case for more details including timeline.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

WBC faces severe funding pressures, particularly in the face of the COVID-19 crisis. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	£0 (this is within planned Medium Term Financial Plan envelope)	Actual spend will vary by the amount of care assessed as eligible under The Care Act.	Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£0 (this is within planned Medium Term Financial Plan envelope)	Yes - any inflation added to the framework will be agreed annually as part of the medium	Revenue

		term financial planning process. Amount of inflationary award will be limited by the new contractual terms in this procurement.	
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£0 (this is within planned Medium Term Financial Plan envelope)	Yes - any inflation added to the framework will be agreed annually as part of the medium term financial planning process. Amount of inflationary award will be limited by the new contractual terms in this procurement.	Revenue

Other Financial Information
The procurement exercise will be delivered within existing budgets, approximately £14 million per annum. This will deliver existing efficiency programmes within the Medium Term Financial Plan, managing demand and utilising our budget to its full potential. It is based upon restructuring of existing spend through compliant and competitive procurement processes. The identified spend does not represent a change in expenditure and further efficiencies against this spend is not possible. This exercise will enable to Council to maintain sufficiency within the local ASC market.

Stakeholder Considerations and Consultation
As above

Public Sector Equality Duty
Attached

Climate Emergency – <i>This Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to playing as full a role as possible – leading by example as well as by exhortation – in achieving a carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030</i>
The tender process will ensure any environmental considerations are taken into account, particularly where travel time in home care can be minimised.

List of Background Papers
Procurement Business Case

Contact Iftkhar Ahmed	Service Adult Social Care
Telephone	Email iftkhar.ahmed@wokingham.gov.uk

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In accordance with the Procurement and Contracts Rules and Procedures (PCRP) (see section 3.1.1): a formal business case is required for any procurement with a total value above £50,000. The level of approval required for the Business Case depends on the type of procurement and total ascertainable value of the contract, as indicated in the table below:

1. Level of Approval

State “YES” in the applicable box at either Level 1 or Level 2:

Type of Procurement	Level 1		Level 2	
	Assistant Director & Director	“Yes”	Assistant Director, Director & Executive Approval	“Yes”
Goods and Services	£50k – £500k		> £500k	
Schedule 3 Services	£50k – £615k		> £615k	Yes
Works	£50k – £4,551k		> £4,551k	

2. Project Information

Project / Contract Title	Support & Care Framework
Project / Contract Description	Implementation of a compliant procurement method for supported living and domiciliary/home care packages as allowed under the Light Touch Regime (LTR)
Expected Start Date & Duration (months)	5 years – 60 months
Any Extension/s Allowed (months) (e.g.: 1 x 24m / 1 x 12m + 1 x 12m)	N/A
Total Ascertainable Value	£74 million (£70 million without inflation) <i>Approx £74 million total lifetime value (if allowing for 2.5% annual increases due to inflation etc. any inflation added to the framework will be agreed annually as part of the medium term financial planning process)</i>
Procurement Procedure (Open, Restricted, other agreed procedure)	Open
If not an Open or Restricted procedure, has it been approved by Procurement? (state “Yes”, “No” or “Not Applicable”)	Project being designed in conjunction with procurement
Budget Available (please state the value)	Approx. £70 million (calculated on 5 times current spend) £14 million per annum Approx. 300 supported living and 400 home care users

Source of Funding (revenue or capital or specified other)	Revenue
Any specific comments or notes associated with the budget	The procurement exercise will be delivered within existing budgets, approximately £14 million per annum. This will deliver existing efficiency programmes within the Medium Term Financial Plan, managing demand and utilising our budget to its full potential. It is based upon restructuring of existing spend through compliant and competitive procurement processes. The identified spend does not represent a change in expenditure and further efficiencies against this spend is not possible. This exercise will enable to Council to maintain sufficiency within the local adult social care market.

1. Recommendations

We are seeking approval to initiate design of a procurement model for support and care services:

Implement a procurement model that includes best and compliant elements of Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) and Framework designs to meet our requirements (following internal and external stakeholder engagement)	<p>Packages of care are currently commissioned as part of a spot purchase arrangement. A framework will improve the management of spend and budget forecasting</p> <p>Opportunity to let block or spot contracts on aligned terms and conditions, and reducing costs where this is feasible</p> <p>Consistent quality assurance and emphasis on driving up standards, for providers to join the framework and on an ongoing basis</p> <p>Improve WBC oversight and management of market including engagement with providers</p> <p>Increased competition possible between providers including attracting new providers and continuous service improvements – giving people choice in provision</p> <p>Low risk of legal challenge around compliance</p> <p>Moderate contract management resource required</p> <p>Single method of working with WBC for supplier and</p> <p>Improved internal efficiencies as all contracts will be for a five year term therefore reducing the number of contracts renewed annually.</p>
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Following stakeholder consultation and Executive and Full Council approval to allow the DASS to enter into agreements with support and care providers and the final model will be referred back to ASCLT for sign-off prior to implementation and mobilisation.

Alternatives that have been considered as non-viable options:

<p>Do nothing – continue spot purchasing</p>	<p>High risk of uncontrolled spend</p> <p>High risk of lost opportunity for quality assurance</p> <p>Lack of WBC management of market competition</p> <p>Significant risk of legal challenge around non-compliance with procurement regulations</p> <p>Lack of synergy in process between different brokerage/ commissioning teams</p> <p>Significant contract management resource required</p>
<p>Block contract for predictable spend and continue spot purchasing otherwise</p>	<p>Improved management of spend</p> <p>Potential risk for loss of consistency in quality assurance</p> <p>Some WBC management of market competition possible allowing WBC to capitalise on any opportunities in the market</p> <p>Some risk of legal challenge around compliance</p> <p>Some risk of wasted funding through unutilised voids</p> <p>Moderate contract management resource required</p>

2. Project Justification

Link to Service or Corporate Objectives:

Background

- Our ambition is for Wokingham Borough to be one of the best boroughs for adults and carers in need of support and care to live, where they feel safe, included and a key part of our community. Our procurement will help us achieve this ambition and with our partners will enable us to prevent, reduce and delay the need for formal support and care and where possible to improve people’s health and wellbeing, focusing on prevention and self-help.
- Providers on the framework will support vulnerable adults, adults with disabilities and older people to achieve the desired outcomes that are important and personal to them. They will help deliver Wokingham’s ambitions for ASC in the borough, to ensure that all residents are enabled to achieve their personal goals and ambitions, in a context which promotes safety, independence and choice.
- The procurement will help deliver the four key aims or priorities of the new ASC strategy:
 - protect and safeguard adults
 - prevent, reduce and delay the need for formal care and support
 - promote and support choice and independence
 - work in partnership and commission services that deliver quality and value for money

- This will include a focus on prevention and in reducing, and delaying the need for more costly services, by supporting people to live independently in their own homes and communities and not in residential care homes. This is particularly important, given the experiences of care homes during COVID19 and the expected increase in support and care at home as the main choice for many people. This puts emphasis on the ability of care providers to 'enable and reable' people to stay in their own homes, particularly on discharge from hospital.
- The specifications will enable providers to deliver reablement and strength based commissioning where the individual will continue to be at the centre of any support, they will include improvements in the training and development of the carer workforce.
- WBC will work closely with providers to ensure high quality choice of services are provided that support and safeguard its vulnerable residents and enable them to remain as independent as possible for as long as possible in their own homes and communities.
- Supported Living is a service designed to help people with a wide range of support needs retain their independence by being supported in their own home. People in supported living are usually aged between 18-64 and may live with their family or have their own tenancy as part of a shared accommodation and are responsible for their own bills and cost of living. To afford these, the person may be entitled to a wide range of benefits and grants. In single person supported living, they will also have their own front door.
- Home care is looking after a person from the comfort of their own home. Care workers go into people's homes to help with the day to day aspects of living such as personal care. Home care is flexible and can be anything from a couple of visits a week right through to 24/7 live in care. Providers who provide the personal care element must be CQC registered. Usually people who receive home care service are aged 65 and over.
- At present both supported living and home care is commissioned on a spot basis - there has not been any formal process whereby a select or approved group of providers has been selected. We are therefore, in a position where we work with a number of providers, ranging from those with single packages of support and care to those with a significant amount of Council work. Providers have raised concerns that there is a need to improve how providers are awarded work. There is a lack of competition, it is difficult for new entrants to enter the market and a lack of innovation/use of technology. There are also different start and end dates for contracts that causes additional work for Officers when renewing contracts. In addition for supported living, support provision in some cases is dependent on provision of housing (and vice versa.) So if the support provider changes, this may also affect the tenancy. There is a need to amend this so that the person has security of tenure in line with their tenancy agreement.
- A procurement exercise will address these issues. There is a need to ensure that we approach the procurement of support and care strategically and this is more imperative given the financial outlook due to COVID 19. The procurement will allow WBC to prequalify providers to a minimum quality level that ensures meeting our statutory duty as well as promoting continuous improvement in the care market. All providers will have to meet quality and/or price standards to be accepted, and need to demonstrate they are continuing to meet these standards to remain on the framework and if/where concerns relating to this arise, they may be temporarily or permanently suspended from bidding for WBC contracts.
- Competition will be encouraged and it will support management through forecasting budgetary pressures and requirements.

- Allowing providers to register their interest in working with WBC at any time may increase the number of providers and new entrants to the market as there is no time constrained tender period; this can promote choice, quality, competition and innovation in the market.
- Under the Public Contracts Regulations (PCR) 2015, both frameworks and dynamic purchasing systems (DPS) are compliant techniques for procurement. A framework is a 'closed' approved provider list to which providers agree to general terms and conditions of performance and quality, and from which you can subsequently directly award contracts or run mini competitions. Frameworks may only be let for up to 4 years. A DPS is similar in nature to a framework, except that it remains open for new provider applications, all contracts are let through mini-competitions, and it does not have the 4 year limitation, and must be run entirely electronically.
- Approximately 30 adult care packages are let each month totalling 360 per year. These will identify individual care package requirements, (either for supported living or home care)
- Two non-LTR DPS have already been approved by the Executive, and are being designed for Corporate Transport and Operational Property.

Project Specific Objectives, Appraisal of Options and Project Timetable:

Objectives

- Delivery of strategies as highlighted above
- Improvements in the training and development of the carer workforce.
- Quality control and service improvement –this method of procuring delivers a single set of overarching terms for quality and performance which providers must agree to, creating a standard, equal and transparent expectation to all providers who successfully apply in order to maintain framework status. In addition individuals who are receiving direct payments will benefit from the framework, all providers would expect to ensure the same terms and conditions including rates are applied to these packages.
- We will work closely with framework providers, including having regular forum and engagement opportunities to ensure that quality is improved. This will also require us to meet Care Act requirements – the procurement will allow for planning around supporting sustainability of the market through more efficient contract monitoring, consistent cost modelling and price variance management. This will improve not only our market intelligence but our influence over our local market both financially and through improved supplier relationship management.
- The contract price will be determined through a standardised model and may be a set rate for all providers, ensuring consistency, equal opportunity and treatment. By working with providers who have agreed to our rates we will be able to budget and forecast spend far more accurately including controlling any future cost increases (including for Direct Payments).
- Through cost modelling with the market, we can ensure the design encapsulates a sustainable and efficient rate for both supported living and domiciliary care applicable to Wokingham borough.

- We will explore any opportunities of making the process more efficient for WBC including guaranteeing hours where appropriate, zoning certain parts of the borough, and exploring how technology can be used in delivering support and care.
- Efficiencies for internal staff including linking with wider partners and taking into account the changes that have taken place in the market following Covid19.
- Modernising our procurement procedures – the majority of LAs have designed and utilise their own or a consortium framework e.g. Nottinghamshire; Stockport, Trafford and Rochdale Councils; Oxfordshire; Reading Borough. Providers are familiar with using these systems. Additionally, WBC already successfully uses frameworks for Children’s residential care and independent foster agency placements.
- Procurement process will reflect the market – and support and invite newer and smaller businesses to contract for services as well as larger national organisations.

3. Additional considerations

When designing the new model for procuring, the following elements will be considered:

- The changing needs of Wokingham – promote innovation, maximise use of technology, changes in demographics (i.e. dementia)
- Sustainability of the market
- Market changes given Covid19
- Consideration of how best to achieve value for money including management and control of market pricing
- Welfare of care workers including Ethical Care Charter principles
- Prevention and reablement including strength based approach
- Outcomes based commissioning
- Electronic call monitoring
- Health and hospital discharges including 7 day working
- Reducing social isolation
- Updating terms and conditions of contracts to further benefit WBC and its relationship with partners
- Migration of packages for providers who have not successfully applied where better value can be achieved without detrimental effect on residents
- To award individual packages (one package) and block packages where required i.e. where there is provider failure or serious safeguarding concerns we can tender the entire work out including TUPE.
- No packages to be let outside of the approved provider system, unless in specific circumstances

4. Options

- *Purchasing methods*
We are recommending designing a model based on the most useful elements of frameworks or dynamic purchasing systems, which making use of the flexibility in design as allowed under the Light Touch Regime of the Public Contracts Regulations.
- *Consortium considerations*
We are recommending a WBC focussed design (with a Bracknell and or Reading option for “use only” should consultation demonstrate no significant delays to timescales). This will only affect our design by requiring Bracknell and or Reading to be named on the OJEU notice and the model’s total ascertainable value being great enough to cover the requirements of all Authorities without impacting on known WBC contracting needs.

5. **Timetable**

- *Project closure*

To ensure effective planning time for design, engaging stakeholders whilst acting efficiently to implement this model, we are working towards a contract award by May/June 2021.

- *Key milestones*
 - Cost modelling by end of October/November 2020 to ensure a sustainable rate of care and any future costings will be based on these models
 - Ongoing provider and stakeholder engagement
 - Tender advertisement February/March 2021
 - Framework award by April/May 2021
 - Full mobilisation by April/May 2021
 - Framework go live date May/June 2021

6. **Cost Benefit Analysis:**

- I. *Compliance risk* – continuing risking compliance could result in any current care contracts being terminated, unlimited penalties and damages to be paid per complainant, plus fines up to 10% of revenue, following referral to the High Court of Justice. Mitigation approach: approve use of aggregated spend model
- II. *Supplier events* - A number of market warming, training and support events on accreditation process are essential for this set of providers. However, due to Covid this may have to be virtually and consist of a number of 121's and surveys to providers. Mitigation approach: maximise content and minimise frequency of events (design and mobilisation currently proposed)
- III. *Insufficient providers apply* – time spent on the project will have been an ineffective use of officers' time. Mitigation approach: reference point 2 above
- IV. *Accreditation failure* - the quality of providers in the market does not meet the accreditation process. Mitigation approach: reference point 2 above
- V. *Changes to ways of working* – there will be a significant change to operational officers' ways of working which will require training from internal teams to include Commissioning and Procurement. These teams will be involved throughout the design of the new framework. Following on from this project, a secondary phase will be required for preparing officers on how to use the model.

7. **Contract Management:**

This will be managed within the People Commissioning team by their dedicated Contracts and Quality Assurance officers. Staff resource is unknown at this time since the framework will aid in supplier rationalisation, however new providers may be attracted to the market. Any increase in resourcing will be made through an establishment bid.

8. **Value for money and commercial sustainability:**

The model will allow WBC to prequalify providers to a minimum quality level that ensures meeting our statutory duty as well as promoting continuous improvement in the care market. Encouraging competition through formal market competition may support management through forecasting budgetary pressures and requirements. Allowing providers to register their interest in working with WBC at any time may increase the number of providers and new entrants to the market as

there is no time constrained tender period; this can promote quality, competition and innovation in the market. Packages tendered via the model may be block contracting (ensuring supply of services) as well as smaller contracts which will encourage local and smaller providers to register an interest via accreditation.

Moving towards a compliant model will also give clearer oversight of the market, and whilst working with our providers in the design phase, will generate a solution that meets both partners requirements, allowing from stronger partnership working and supplier management (which often lead to positive, innovative practice). This will allow us to plan and manage demand and work with providers to ensure that we understand and can plan for the cost of services, enabling us to deliver within our budget.

9. Approval

Please fill in the applicable fields according to the level of approval required.

Note: If Level-2 approval is required, the document should be signed by Assistant Director and Director at Level-1 first, and then presented to the Executive for final approval.

Level 1

<i>Position</i>	<i>Department</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Assistant Director		
Director		

Level 2

NOTE: Level 1 approval must be completed first.

Please state the date of the relevant Executive meeting or Individual Executive Member Decision at which the Business Case has been approved.

<i>Date of Executive meeting / approval</i>
Executive Approval

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) form: Initial impact assessment

If an officer is undertaking a project, policy change or service change, then an initial impact assessment must be completed and attached alongside the Project initiation document.

EqIA Titular information:

Date:	October 2020
Service:	Adult Services
Project, policy or service EQIA relates to:	Support and Care Procurement
Completed by:	Iftkhar Ahmed
Has the EQIA been discussed at services team meeting:	
Signed off by:	
Sign off date:	

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1. Policy, Project or service information:

This section should be used to identify the main purpose of the project, policy or service change, the method of delivery, including who key stakeholders are, main beneficiaries and any associated aims.

What is the purpose of the project, policy change or service change , its expected outcomes and how does it relate to your services corporate plan:

Our ambition is for Wokingham Borough to be one of the best boroughs for adults and carers in need of support to live, where they feel safe, included and a key part of our community. Our procurement will help us achieve this ambition and with our partners will enable us to prevent, reduce and delay the need for formal care and support and where possible to improve people's health and wellbeing, focusing on prevention and self-help.

At any one time approximately 650 people are in receipt of a service, approximately 30 adult care packages are let each month totalling 360 per year. The purpose of the new procurement is to enable WBC to work with a select group of providers who have demonstrated meeting quality criteria, both to get onto the framework and on an ongoing basis. The procurement will lead to compliance with procurement regulations and help

the Council deliver the priorities as set out in the Adult Social Care Strategy ensuring that every resident is kept safe and protected through high quality service provision.

Providers on the framework will support vulnerable adults, adults with disabilities and older people to achieve the desired outcomes that are important and personal to them. They will help deliver Wokingham's ambitions for Adult Social Care in the borough, to ensure that all residents are enabled to achieve their personal goals and ambitions, in a context which promotes safety, independence and choice.

The anticipated outcomes of the procurement will be:

- There are a wide range of high quality services, that meet our residents needs and offer value for money
- A vibrant and sustainable market where people have a good choice of providers
- People are supported to remain independent in the community in their own homes
- People are enabled to build on their strengths, learn new skills and continue to live independently
- People are more familiar and confident with technology to deliver care and support
- Social isolation and loneliness is reduced, including better partnership working between private care agencies, the Voluntary and Community Sector and WBC
- Some complex needs can be met at home where appropriate without the need for residential care
- Better engagement and dialogue with providers, pro-activeness in continuous service improvement and developing services
- Enhanced carer workforce where retainment is encouraged
- Better demand and cost management by WBC allowing improved forecasting and spend analysis

The priorities and outcomes of the procurement are in line with the Adult Social Care strategy. This is strongly aligned to the objectives of the Corporate Plan for Adult Services which include shaping the market to ensure there are sufficient numbers of varied, quality care services widely accessible to those with care and support needs; increasing the number of people supported to live independently in their own home; and reducing social isolation and loneliness in older people, people with mental illness and carers.

Outline how you are delivering your project, policy change or service change. What governance arrangements are in place, which internal stakeholders (Service managers, Assistant Directors, Members etc) have/will be consulted and informed about the project or changes:

The consultation will be informed with input from providers and operational staff.

Data from the Adult Social Care Strategy has been utilised and commissioning models will be developed based on feedback from stakeholders.

Internally, the social care leadership team has been consulted, this has been through presentations at meetings and 1 2 1 meetings as required.

External consultation has included presentations to social care providers at a Care Conference, and a virtual consultation through Pro Contract. Voluntary and Community Sector provider representatives have also been sent a copy of the proposals.

Outline who are the main beneficiaries of the Project, policy change or service change?

The procurement will benefit all vulnerable adults and carers in the borough who use or may use care and support services both now and in the future including self funders. It will also benefit social care providers. Internal staff will benefit from having a framework to call upon when sourcing care and support.

Outline any associated aims attached to the project, policy change or service change:

The procurement will help deliver the four key aims or priorities of the new Adult Social Care strategy:

- protect and safeguard adults
- prevent, reduce and delay the need for formal care and support
- promote and support choice and independence
- work in partnership and commission services that deliver quality and value for money

2. Protected characteristics:

There are 9 protected characteristics as defined by the legislation:

- Race
- Gender
- Disability
- Gender re-assignment
- Age
- Religious belief
- Sexual orientation
- Pregnancy/Maternity
- Marriage and civil partnership:

To find out more about the protected groups, please consult the EQIA guidance.

3. Initial Impact review:

In the table below, please indicate whether your project, Policy change or service change will have a positive or negative impact on one of the protected characteristics. To assess the level of impact, please assign each group a Positive, No, Low or High impact score:

For information on how to define No, low or high impact, please consult the EQIA guidance document.

If your project is to have a positive impact on one of the protected groups, please outline this in the table below.

For details on what constitutes a positive impact, please consult the EQIA guidance.

Protected characteristics	Impact score	Please detail what impact will be felt by the protected group:
Race:	Positive	<p>The procurement recognises that the borough profile is changing and this needs to be taken into account to ensure there is equal access and provision to services for everyone.</p> <p>Through the technical aspects of the tender we will ensure that there is parity of service provision for all residents regardless of background. If providers cannot demonstrate that they can provide this, they will not be allowed to join the framework. This will also be monitored actively through Key Performance Indicators and contract monitoring meetings.</p>
Gender:	No	
Disabilities:	Positive	<p>The procurement will have the following positive impact on people with disabilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through better partnership working, they will be supported to access more of the information and advice they need to make good decisions about care and support as early as possible • They will receive high quality services that prevent their care needs from becoming more serious through reablement people where possible, including the use of technology where possible to ensure people can achieve greater independence and control over how they want to live

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For self-funders, there will be a public list of appropriate providers that have been quality checked and will continuously be monitored – for them to choose from which will help them to be healthier.
Age:	Positive	<p>The procurement will have the following positive impact on people with disabilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through better partnership working, they will be supported to access more of the information and advice they need to make good decisions about care and support as early as possible They will receive high quality services that prevent their care needs from becoming more serious through reabling people where possible, including the use of technology where possible to ensure people can achieve greater independence and control over how they want to live For self-funders, there will be a public list of appropriate providers that have been quality checked and will continuously be monitored – for them to choose from which will help them to be healthier.
Sexual orientation:	No	
Religion/belief:	Positive	<p>The procurement recognises that the borough profile is changing and this needs to be taken into account to ensure there is equal access and provision to services for everyone.</p> <p>Through the technical aspects of the tender we will ensure that there is parity of service provision for all residents regardless of background. If providers cannot demonstrate that they can provide this, they will not be allowed to join the framework. This will also be monitored actively through Key Performance Indicators and contract monitoring meetings.</p>
Gender re-assignment:	No	
Pregnancy and Maternity:	No	

Marriage and civil partnership:	No	
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Based on your findings from your initial impact assessment, you must complete a full impact assessment for any groups you have identified as having a low of high negative impact. If No impact, or a positive impact has been identified, you do not need to complete a full assessment. However, you must report on this initial assessment and it must receive formal approval from the Assistant Director responsible for the project, policy or service change.

Initial impact assessment approved by....

Date:....

TITLE	Council Tax Base 21/22
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Council on 21 January 2021
WARD	None specific
LEAD OFFICER	Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

Set the Council Tax Base for 2021/22 in respect of the whole Borough and all constituent parts so that each precepting body can subsequently set their Council Tax budgets for the year. The higher the tax base, the greater opportunity to generate much needed income to help fund council services.

RECOMMENDATION

Council is asked to agree the proposed Council Tax Base, for the whole area and by Parish, as set out in the report.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

Council Tax Base

The council tax base is the total number of Band D equivalent dwellings liable for Council Tax after discounts, exemptions.

Local authorities must ensure their council tax base for the forthcoming financial year is approved by Council, or a delegated body, by 31st January each year. This year's tax base calculation continues to include the significant changes to the council tax base from 1 April 2013 arising from the changes to the council tax benefits system. Financial support to individuals for council tax, formerly known as council tax benefit, is now offered as a discount within the council tax system, known as council tax reduction.

This year's tax base calculations show that with a total of 70,810 properties on the Council Tax register as of 1st October 2020, after making all relevant adjustments for discounts, exemptions, new builds, bad debts, etc. the proposed tax base of band D equivalent is 73297.1 for 2021/22.

The proposed tax base for 2021/22 reflects an increase of 1.75% on the equivalent figure for the 2020/21 financial year.

A summary of the impact of the movements on the council tax base is as follows:

(i) The Borough had 73,220.9 properties on 1 October 2020 net of the loss due to any Council Tax Reduction.

(ii) The increase arising from the estimated new properties in 2021/22 and other changes is estimated at 816.5 band D equivalent properties.

iii) The total of (i) to (ii) above is 74,037.4 properties. The bad debt provision for

2021/22 is 1% of this amount, i.e., 740.3 properties.

The net total of (i) to (iii) above is 73,297.1 properties as set out in the analysis.

Background

The Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations require the billing authority (Wokingham Borough Council) to notify its major precepting bodies (The Police and Fire Authorities) and its Parishes of the tax base for the following financial year. The precepting bodies may request this information between the 1st December 2020 and 31st January 2021.

Analysis of Issues

The prescribed calculation is made as follows.

(i) A return is made to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (form CTB1). This analyses the valuation list as at a prescribed date into the various property bands and then provides details of discounts and exemptions.

(ii) The Band D equivalent property numbers for tax purposes for the whole of the area are broken down into each constituent Parish area.

(iii) An adjustment is made to allow for the impact of council tax reduction grant (which reduces the Band D equivalent property numbers in each area and overall).

(iv) An estimate of unbanded and new properties expected to be banded during 2021/22 are added.

(v) An adjustment is then made to take account of bad debts. This has been maintained at 1.0% as in previous years.

The resultant outcome reflects the tax base for the coming financial year in accordance with the table overleaf:

TAX BASE BY PARISH & WHOLE DISTRICT – 2021/22

	LOCAL TAX BASE 2021/22	LOCAL TAX BASE 2020/21 (last yr)	CHANGE FROM 2020/21 TO 2021/22	% CHANGE FROM 20/21
PARISHES				
ARBORFIELD & NEWLAND	1,324.2	1,304.6	19.6	1.50%
BARKHAM	2,012.9	1,830.1	182.8	9.99%
CHARVIL	1,437.2	1,417.4	19.8	1.40%
EARLEY	11,961.2	11,957.0	4.2	0.04%
FINCHAMPSTEAD	6,032.0	6,031.2	0.8	0.01%
REMENHAM	329.0	329.5	(0.5)	(0.15%)
RUSCOMBE	533.0	528.2	4.8	0.91%
ST. NICHOLAS HURST	1,086.3	1,082.7	3.6	0.33%
SHINFIELD	6,703.2	6,295.9	407.3	6.47%
SONNING	835.7	829.0	6.7	0.81%
SWALLOWFIELD	1,075.1	1,074.6	0.5	0.05%
TWYFORD	3,037.2	3,029.9	7.3	0.24%
WARGRAVE	2,128.1	2,130.2	(2.1)	(0.10%)
WINNERSH	4,298.5	4,214.2	84.3	2.00%
WOKINGHAM TOWN	16,396.3	16,032.6	363.7	2.27%
WOKINGHAM WITHOUT	3,300.4	3,290.4	10.0	0.30%
WOODLEY	10,806.8	10,659.0	147.8	1.39%

WHOLE AREA

73,297.1

72,036.5

1,260.6

1.75%

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe funding pressures, particularly in the face of the COVID-19 crisis. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.

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

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision
The revised tax base and total grant allocation will be factored in to the 2021/22 budget setting process.

Cross-Council Implications
Council tax income contributes to the funding of all General Fund services.

Public Sector Equality Duty
An equalities assessment is not required in this instance as it relates to setting of the Council Tax Base and does not directly affect individuals.

List of Background Papers
None

Contact Andrew Kupusarevic	Service Housing, Income and Assessments
Telephone No 07920 785784	Email andrew.kupusarevic@wokingham.gov.uk

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TITLE	Council Tax Reduction Scheme
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Council on 21 January 2021
WARD	None Specific;
LEAD OFFICER	Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

The adoption of a Localised Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) 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.

The local CTRS does not impact pensioners who still come under the Government's "prescribed scheme"

RECOMMENDATION

That the 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.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

Each year Wokingham Borough Council has to decide a Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) that fulfils the purpose of supporting our most vulnerable residents and is contained within agreed budgets.

Wokingham Borough Council has reviewed its current CTRS, assessing its impact and effectiveness.

After the review and consultation, the CTR Scheme that WBC proposes to implement for 2021/22 will be the same as for 2020/21 with addition of disregarding Carers Allowance.

Background

COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION

In April 2013 Council Tax Benefit (CTB) was abolished and replaced by Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS). This was accompanied by a 10% reduction in Government funding, which was equivalent to around £600k to WBC, and schemes were written to reflect this. The funding for this was withdrawn from 2015 and was then incorporated within the Revenue Support Grant, which was reduced to zero in 2018 for WBC.

This scheme is not provision of grant to individuals but a reduction in the amount of council tax they are required to pay; this means that there is no budget as such but a reduction in the level of council tax receipts.

Therefore when considering a new or revised scheme, various alternatives are modelled in the context of affordability which considers the overall impact on the recipients benefiting from the scheme and the Council's collection fund.

The main features of the scheme are:

- It is an income-banded scheme
- There is no provision for back-dating awards, prior to the claim date
- the minimum level of support available is set at £3.00 per week
- the maximum level of support is 78% of council tax liability
- claims restricted to Band D and below
- an investments and savings limit of £4,000
- Disability Living Allowance/Personal Independence Payments, Armed Forces Independence Payments and War Disablement Payments are disregarded.
- Child Benefit and Child Maintenance are disregarded.
- Carers Allowance disregarded (proposed for 2021/22)

In addition to the CTR scheme the Council is also doing what it can to assist those in hardship which includes:

- £150 Hardship Payment for each CTR recipient paid against their council tax*
- Test & Trace Support Payments for those on low income who have to self-isolate*
- Winter Grant*
- Council lead voluntary support for the vulnerable
- Local Welfare Provision
- Discretionary Housing Payments
- Section 13a scheme.

**Please note that further guidance from Central Government may change what support is available as the pandemic continues.*

It should be noted that the local CTRS only impacts on those of working age. Pensioners are assessed and awarded under the Government's "prescribed scheme".

Annual review

Each year, all collecting local authorities are required to review their scheme and consider whether changes should be made. In considering a review for our CTRS, the following criteria have been considered:

- How the current scheme is working both directly for residents/recipients and administratively
- Financial impact to the council, all its residents and recipients of CTR
- Impact on council tax collection rates on an overall basis and broken down to recipients of CTR.

Other considerations:

- Any known future changes to government legislation/schemes and funding as well as other activity at a local level
- Effectiveness of the S13a scheme (hardship fund available to assist those residents who cannot pay their council tax for a variety of reasons)
- Available additional fund of £100k to assist those residents in receipt of CTR who have been severely impacted by CTRS changes (claimed under S13a scheme)
- Financial status of the Council and its balances
- The impact of the COVID pandemic on the Council and its residents.

Findings

- Generally administration of CTR has worked well and without any substantial problems or issues;
- We have had a low level of tribunal cases
- Previous years have shown that the scheme has been affordable for the Council
- Overall council tax collection has held up relatively well including payments by those in the CTR scheme and is mainly on target, despite the pandemic. The services (Income & Assessments) continue to analyse the impact of COVID on the CTRS, the effect on the vulnerable and how this impacts on collection levels.
- There are a small number of claims made to the S13a scheme (hardship fund) each year. This scheme is discretionary and assists those residents who are unable to pay their council tax due to hardship. A policy is agreed each year and the scheme advertised on our website (<https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/council-tax/discounts-and-appeals/council-tax-discounts-and-reductions/>).

Table on spend below:

Year	Spend on S13a awards	Number of awards
13/14	£2,383.93	5
14/15	£4,766.88	10
15/16	£5,804.00	14
16/17	£8,978.22	15
17/18	£16,227.13	15
18/19	£10,682.05	11
19/20	£13,544.70	16
20/21	£10,421.04 (to 29.12.20)	17

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2021/22 - Recommendation

A public consultation was carried out and overall the data collected from the responses would suggest that residents felt that vulnerable groups should be protected and that no adverse change to the scheme would be supported. As Carers Allowance is currently taken into account in the calculation it is proposed that Carers Allowance is disregarded in the 2021/22 scheme.

The results of the public consultation were reviewed by Corporate Leadership Team and Community & Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

When devising a scheme we have to consider both the impact on the residents eligible to receive CTR and all residents who pay council tax, along with the financial impact it will have on the council and its delivery of services.

The impact of COVID still remains a key issue for the Council and it needs to be able to react appropriately to provide whatever support we can to those in genuine hardship in accordance with our commitments under the emerging Anti-Poverty Strategy. CTRS and S13a scheme are and will remain a source of help to fulfil this.

In conclusion it is recommended that the scheme remains the same for 2021/22 with the addition that Carer Allowance is disregarded, which results in a more generous scheme. This addition is affordable within current collection fund balances.

Summary

As a result of reviewing the current scheme, consultation with the public and the financial circumstances of the authority, it is proposed that a local CTR scheme for 2021/22 is approved by Council on 21st January 2021 on the same basis as the 2020/21 scheme, with the addition of disregarding Carers Allowance.

Protection to pensioners would still apply.

The Council remains aware that a relief scheme such as CTRS may exclude some claimants who, in the short term at least, are unable to improve their financial circumstances. This may present them with difficulties in paying council tax liabilities. In this respect, the provision for further discretionary reductions is to be made under Section 13A(l)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as substituted by the Local Government Finance Bill 2012.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe funding pressures, particularly in the face of the COVID-19 crisis. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	£4 mill (20/21)	Yes	Revenue

Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£4.2 mill (21/22)	Yes	Revenue
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	Not decided		

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision
Provision has been made for the current scheme and disregarding Carers Allowance within the MTFP.

Cross-Council Implications
None

Public Sector Equality Duty
The Scheme is in the main the same as the previous year when an equality assessment was carried out. This has been reviewed to ensure all things still remain relevant and mitigation effective. An initial assessment was made for 2021/22 as there is a proposed change, although it is a positive one.

List of Background Papers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012 No. 2885), as amended - The Welfare Reform Act 2012 - The Equality Act 2010 - The Housing Act 1996 - Initial EQIA

Contact Nicky Thomas	Service Assessments, Resources & Assets
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Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) form: Initial impact assessment

If an officer is undertaking a project, policy change or service change, then an initial impact assessment must be completed and attached alongside the Project initiation document.

EqIA Titular information:

Date:	9.12.2020
Service:	Assessments
Project, policy or service EQIA relates to:	Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2021/22
Completed by:	Nicky Thomas
Has the EQIA been discussed at services team meeting:	Yes
Signed off by:	Simon Price
Sign off date:	

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1. Policy, Project or service information:

This section should be used to identify the main purpose of the project, policy or service change, the method of delivery, including who key stakeholders are, main beneficiaries and any associated aims.

What is the purpose of the project, policy change or service change , its expected outcomes and how does it relate to your services corporate plan:

To have an agreed Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) for 2021/22 to support some of our most financially vulnerable residents.

Outline how you are delivering your project, policy change or service change. What governance arrangements are in place, which internal stakeholders (Service managers, Assistant Directors, Members etc) have/will be consulted and informed about the project or changes:

There is a legal requirement for WBC to have a CTRS and many services/groups are involved in its creation and sign off.

The service (Assessments) carries out the initial review and is then guided by Lead Member, Service AD and Finance on a steer on what the scheme should look like. Modelling of any changes to be considered is carried out to give both a financial and customer impact. There is a legal requirement for a public consultation to take place prior to any decision on what scheme to adopt. Ultimately a scheme is proposed and signed off at Full Council in January.

Those involved in the process are Lead Member, AD Housing, Income & Assessments, Head of Finance, Director of Resources & Assets, Senior Specialist – Assessments, Specialist L3 – Assessments.

This policy also goes through RALT, CLT, Group, O&S and finally Full Council.

Outline who are the main beneficiaries of the Project, policy change or service change?

Any resident of WBC that experiences financial difficulties and struggle to pay their council tax liability, due to low income.

Outline any associated aims attached to the project, policy change or service change:

To fulfil our vision ‘a great place to live, learn, work and grow and a great place to do business’ and our priority to “*Ensure our borough and communities remain safe for all*”. To deliver the requirements set by central government.

2. Protected characteristics:

There are 9 protected characteristics as defined by the legislation:

- Race
- Gender
- Disability
- Gender re-assignment
- Age
- Religious belief
- Sexual orientation
- Pregnancy/Maternity
- Marriage and civil partnership:

To find out more about the protected groups, please consult the EQIA guidance.

3. Initial Impact review:

In the table below, please indicate whether your project, Policy change or service change will have a positive or negative impact on one of the protected characteristics. To assess the level of impact, please assign each group a Positive, No, Low or High impact score:

For information on how to define No, low or high impact, please consult the EQIA guidance document.

If your project is to have a positive impact on one of the protected groups, please outline this in the table below.

For details on what constitutes a positive impact, please consult the EQIA guidance.

Protected characteristics	Impact score	Please detail what impact will be felt by the protected group:
Race:	No	Scheme and charging processes apply equally to all. Could be complicated to understand changes/scheme for claimants whose first language is not English particularly since the move to on-line claim forms. Already mitigated with use

		of translation tools, such as google translate, since the last full EqIA, and will continue, no change.
Gender:	No	Scheme and charging processes apply equally to all. Already mitigated with use of Section 13a Hardship Scheme since the last full EqIA, and will continue, no change.
Disabilities:	Positive	All previous mitigations stand. However, due to the proposal to disregard Carers Allowance in 21/22 this will be a positive move for those with carers responsibilities, giving them more weekly income as the whole amount they receive will not be used as income in the calculation of their CTR entitlement.
Age:	No	Pensioners claiming localised council tax support are fully protected from any changes under our local scheme by Government legislation; Other age groups - Already mitigated with use of other support available such as Local Welfare Provision, S13a and Discretionary Housing Payments. Will continue, no change
Sexual orientation:	No	None
Religion/belief:	No	None
Gender re-assignment:	No	None

Pregnancy and Maternity:	No	Already mitigated with use of other support available such as Local Welfare Provision, S13a and Discretionary Housing Payments. Can also refer to child charities such as “First Steps” with help towards costs. This mitigation will continue, no change
Marriage and civil partnership:	No	None – treated the same within the CTRS

Based on your findings from your initial impact assessment, you must complete a full impact assessment for any groups you have identified as having a low of high negative impact. If No impact, or a positive impact has been identified, you do not need to complete a full assessment. However, you must report on this initial assessment and it must receive formal approval from the Assistant Director responsible for the project, policy or service change.

Initial impact assessment approved by....

Date:....

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WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL - TIMETABLE 2021/22

2021/ 22	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY
MON							1 LAB/LD						
TUES		1 EB					2 EB			1	1		
WED		2 AC			1 CoSC		3	1		2 AC	2 L&A/SC		
THURS		3	1 CoSC		2 LD		4 ChSC	2 LD		3 CON/LD	3 LD		
FRI		4	2		3	1	5	3		4	4	1	
SAT	1	5	3		4	2	6	4	1	5	5	2	
SUN	2	6	4	1	5	3	7	5	2	6	6	3	1
MON	3	7 LAB	5 LAB	2	6 LAB	4 LAB	8 HOSC/ SACRE	6 LAB	3	7	7 LAB	4 LAB	2
TUES	4 EB	8	6 EB	3	7 EB	5 EB	9	7	4 EB	8	8 EB	5	3 EB
WED	5	9 PC	7 S	4	8 PC	6 CoSC	10 PC	8 SF/PC	5 CoSC	9 PC	9 PC	6	4
THURS	6 Elec	10 WWB/ CON/LD	8 JWB/ CPB/ WWBB	5	9 WWB B	7 LD	11 WWBB/CON	9 WWB/ CON	6 LD	10 WWB/CON	10 WWBB /CON	7	5 Elec
FRI	7	11	9	6	10	8	12	10	7	11	11	8	6
SAT	8	12	10	7	11	9	13	11	8	12	12	9	7
SUN	9	13	11	8	12	10	14	12	9	13	13	10	8
MON	10 CON/ LD	14 HOSC/ SACRE	12 HOSC	9	13 LD	11 SC	15 LD	13 CoSC	10 LAB/ ChSC	14 LAB/LD	14 LD	11	9 CON/LD /LAB
TUES	11 Mtrg	15	13	10	14	12	16	14	11 S	15	15	12	10 Mtrg
WED	12 PC	16 S	14 PC/ SF	11 PC	15 ChSC	13 SF/PC	17 S	15	12 PC/ SF	16 CPB	16 SF/HOSC	13 PC	11 PC
THURS	13 WWBB /CON	17 ChSC	15 CON/ LD	12 WW B	16 CON	14 WWB /CON	18 C	16	13 WWBB/ CON	17 E/C	17 S	14 WWB/CON	12 WWBB /CON
FRI	14	18	16	13	17	15	19	17	14	18	18	15	13
SAT	15	19	17	14	18	16	20	18	15	19	19	16	14
SUN	16	20	18	15	19	17	21	19	16	20	20	17	15
MON	17 CON/LD/ LAB	21	19 SC	16	20 S	18 S	22 LD	20	17 LD	21	21 ChSC	18	16 LD
TUES	18 Mtrg	22	20	17	21	19	23	21	18	22	22	19	17 Mtrg
WED	19 CPB	23 L&A	21	18	22 AC	20 L&A	24 CoSC	22	19 HOSC	23 S	23 Mtrg	20	18
THURS	20 C	24 E	22 C	19	23 C	21 CPB	25 E	23	20 C	24 Mtrg	24 C	21	19 C
FRI	21	25	23	20	24	22	26	24	21	25	25	22	20
SAT	22	26	24	21	25	23	27	25	22	26	26	23	21
SUN	23	27	25	22	26	24	28	26	23	27	27	24	22
MON	24 CoSC	28 Mtrg	26 Mtrg	23	27 Mtrg	25	29 LD	27	24 SC	28	28 CoSC	25	23 CPB
TUES	25 Mtrg	29	27	24	28	26	30 AC	28	25 EB		29	26	24
WED	26	30	28 AC	25	29 HOS C	27 Mtrg		29	26 L&A		30	27	25
THURS	27 E		29 E	26	30 E	28 E		30	27 E		31 E	28	26 E
FRI	28		30	27		29		31	28			29	27
SAT	29		31	28		30			29			30	28
SUN	30			29		31			30				29
MON	31			30					31 Mtrg				30
TUES				31									31

C = Council Executive Briefing
 E = Executive Briefing
 EB = Executive Briefing
 HOSC = Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee
 SC = Standards Committee
 AC = Corporate Parenting Board
 CPB = Licensing and Appeals
 L&A = Licensing and Appeals
 S = Overview & Scrutiny Management
 CoSC = Community & Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee
 WWB = Wokingham Wellbeing Board
 WWBB = Wokingham Wellbeing Board Briefing
 JWB = Joint Waste Disposal Board
 LD = Liberal Democrat Group
 CON = Conservative Group
 LAB = Labour Group
 PC = Planning Committee
 SF = Schools Forum
 SACRE = Schools Advisory Council for Religious Education
 MTRG = Member Training Session
 Bank Holidays
 School Holidays
 JPPC = Joint Public Protection Committee

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