



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

A Meeting of the **COUNCIL** will be held virtually on
THURSDAY 18 MARCH 2021 AT 7.00 PM

Susan Parsonage
Chief Executive
Published on 10 March 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/nf4OygplziQ>

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.
98.		APOLOGIES To receive any apologies for absence	
99.		MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING To confirm the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 18 February 2021.	17 - 46
100.		DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST To receive any declarations of interest	
101.		MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS To receive any announcements by the Mayor	
102.		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	
102.1	Arborfield	<p>Jim Murphy has asked the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure the following question:</p> <p>Question</p> <p>I am horrified at the recent destruction of healthy, mature trees at Gravel Pit Hill Lane and the surrounding area. My understanding is that this was permitted under health and safety grounds related to the raised Reservoir which is claimed to be a 'Category A' Dam (LLR). I was unaware that the lake was categorised as such. Yet, despite this categorisation, I cannot find any documentation showing this in the form of a Functioning Local Resilience Form (LRF), that has publicly reported on Population at Risk (PAR) or/and Likely Loss of Life (LLOL). Neither can I find any Reservoir Plan or</p>	

specific reference to it in the Borough Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. Can you please confirm these plans exist and advise how I can gain access to them?

102.2 None Specific

Liz Mayers has asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

Question

On 18th February 2021, at the last full Council meeting, you said that the WBC Equality plan utilised the existing LGA Equality Framework. The Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) has been successfully implemented by other councils. Based on EFLG process map and WBC's self-analysis, what is WBC's assessment of its current level and what is the projected timeframe for attaining each of the subsequent levels i.e. Developing, Achieving and Excellent?

102.3 None Specific

Kiran Nar has asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

Question

I, along with other Wokingham Residents were invited to participate in WBC's Equality review, after a summer of unrest due to the Council's attitude about the Black Lives Matter movement. We complained and made representation to the Council which gained negative media attention. Did you invite us to participate in the Review so that you can keep us quiet and on-side?

102.4 None Specific

Beth Rowland has asked the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure the following question:

Question

I would like to ask a question regarding disability groups and the new style paper collection bags. Please will you tell me how many disability groups were consulted as part of this work, and what difficulties did they raise regarding using these bags?

102.5 Emmbrook

Peter Humphreys has asked the Executive Member for Regeneration the following question:

Question

Normally when a major planning application to build houses is submitted developers are required to provide around 35% affordable housing. Yet, when the Council granted itself permission to destroy Elms Field, it excluded itself from this requirement on the

grounds that the development was not viable.

At last months' Council meeting, you provided a glowing account of the finances and stated income will cover costs in each of the next three years, even though there are numerous empty units and of the occupied ones, many are in the rent free period. You later stated profits are set to rise to £6m per annum.

In fact, you painted such a rosy picture of the development claiming 90% of the units have been let, and as can be seen businesses are so keen to be a part of the place that they are not even bothering to fit-out their empty units ahead of the lifting of lockdown restrictions.

In view of this, would you please state how much affordable housing could be built per annum, with the £6m per year profits and explain why this is not being done?

102.6 None Specific

Louise Timlin has asked the Executive Member for Children's Services the following question:

Question

I have heard anecdotally that some local child care providers are struggling financially due to a number of issues related to the pandemic; including furloughed parents not needing childcare or parents reluctant to take up child care places due to lack of COVID testing available in Early Years settings. What actions, in addition to those already taken, are the Council planning to further support the viability of the local child care sector, so that working parents will have access to local, affordable, high quality care after the pandemic?

103.

PETITIONS

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

104. None Specific

TRADING STANDARDS, ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND LICENSING

To consider the recommendations from the Executive in relation to bringing back in-house to Wokingham Borough Council the services currently delivered by the Public Protection Partnership (PPP), as from 1st April 2022.

47 - 56

RECOMMENDATION That:

- 1) the Council serves formal notice on the Public Protection Partnership before 31st March 2021, which if effected would take place on 31st March 2022;
- 2) the delegation to PPP in respect to the Executive and Council functions and duties (including environmental health, licensing and trading standards) will end and will be exercised by the Council directly from 1st April 2022;
- 3) The Director of Place and Growth and Deputy Chief Executive (and Section 151 Officer), in consultation with the Lead Member for Environment and Lead Member for Finance & Housing, are authorised to commence design of the new services structure and any resulting negotiations on an Exit Plan and to address timeframe (including earlier dates than stated in recommendation 1 and 2 if agreed by the Councils), mitigation of risks and costs, key milestones, ongoing resources and staffing implications for a successful departure from the partnership;
- 4) The Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Place and Growth create and work with a task force of Officers and Members to create the new in-house service;
- 5) it be noted that a special item of £500k, spread over financial years 2021/22 and 2022/23, was included in the Medium Term Financial Plan to fund a safe and effective transition.

105.	None Specific	EQUALITY PLAN To consider adopting the Equality Plan as recommended by the Executive. RECOMMENDATION: That Council approves the Equality Plan (2021-2025) and associated Action Plan (2021-2022).	57 - 90
106.	None Specific	TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID-YEAR REPORT 2020-21 To consider the mid-year Treasury Management report for 2020-21.	91 - 102

RECOMMENDATION Council is recommended to note:

- 1) Appendix A, the Treasury Management Mid-Year report which was agreed at Audit Committee on 23rd November 2020;
- 2) that all approved indicators set out in the Treasury Management Strategy have been adhered to and that prudent and safe management has been maintained and;
- 3) that the Council's Chief Finance Officer is able to appraise Council of any supplementary information considered to be relevant to their consideration

107. None Specific

OFFICER RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REPORT - WBC'S RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

103 - 140

To consider the recommendations of the Executive in relation to the Officer response to the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny report into the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

RECOMMENDATION That Council:

- 1) note the Officers' responses and the recommendations as set out in the Overview and Scrutiny report and contained within this report and as agreed by the Executive;
- 2) note the Officers' responses to the two additional recommendations submitted by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee at its meeting on 20 January 2021 and as agreed by the Executive.

108. None Specific

ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AND THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES 2020/21

141 - 158

To receive a report from the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on the work undertaken by the Management Committee and the associated Overview and Scrutiny Committees over the past year.

RECOMMENDATION: That the report from the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management

Committee be noted.

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| 109. | None Specific | STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21
To receive a report from the Vice Chairman of the Standards Committee on the work undertaken over the past year.

RECOMMENDATION: That the report from the Standards Committee be noted. | 159 - 166 |
| 110. | None Specific | REPORTS FROM MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES
To note those reports from Members on Outside Bodies as circulated in the agenda.

RECOMMENDATION: That the reports from Members appointed to Outside Bodies be noted. | 167 - 202 |
| 111. | | 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. | |
| 111.1 | None Specific | Pauline Helliar-Symons has asked the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure the following question:

Question
Please can you tell me what the Borough is doing for cyclists, and what progress has there been on the Greenways programme? | |
| 111.2 | Winnersh | Paul Fishwick has asked the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement the following question:

Question
Bearwood Park Planning Applications
On 1 st April 2015, Wokingham Borough Council gave the developer Reading Football Club planning approval with conditions attached to create a training ground at Bearwood Park.

Conditions included several areas around the Environment and Biodiversity including condition 28 which prohibits works or removal of trees, shrubs or hedges without written consent, and if any work is required, they should be replaced. | |

The approved plans demonstrate that all the trees around the Bearwood Lake including on the dam are to be retained and covered by a TPO.

On 8th December 2020, the developer submitted another application for various works on TPO trees.

The application was devoid of any detail on why any single tree needed to be felled and went against all the previous conditions related to the Environment, Biodiversity, Climate Change and Air Quality.

So why did this Council allow a developer to destroy between 400 and 500 protected trees without question? The majority of which were mature and included at least 9 veteran trees listed by the Wokingham District Veteran Tree Association?

111.3 Emmbrook

Rachel Bishop-Firth has asked the Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Services the following question:

Question

The number of people in the UK living with dementia is forecast to nearly double during the next 20 years. I am therefore pleased to see that the Council is proposing to build a new care home, specialising in the provision of care for people with dementia, within Emmbrook ward. While we have a number of questions about the site, in particular about safe access, in principle an increase in care provision has to be welcomed.

Can you please confirm that this care home is in addition to Suffolk Lodge and not a replacement?

111.4 Maiden Erlegh

Tahir Maher has asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Question

I was very pleased to see that Betchworth Avenue has been resurfaced, this resurfacing was needed, and we had been calling for it to be done for some time. Silverdale Road starts at the end of Betchworth Avenue and I was a little disappointed that it wasn't included as part of the resurfacing programme for Earley.

I have highlighted the issue of the state of the Silverdale Road several times especially the part from Sevenoaks Road to Allendale Road. The road is at

best patchy with numerous badly worn 'joint lines' which run from one side of the road to the other. The zebra crossing which is heavily used by children who attend Maiden Erlegh and Aldryngton schools is in a poor state and needs repair.

As the Executive Member for Highways will you arrange to have the resurfacing of this small stretch of the Silverdale Road done sooner rather than later or have the whole of Silverdale Road included in the resurfacing programme for Earley.

111.5 None Specific

Sarah Kerr has asked the Executive Member for Resident Services, Communications and Emissions the following question:

Question

In autumn 2020, the Climate Emergency Task & Finish group from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee presented a report to the Executive that advised that "the commitments in the current WBC Capital Programme would increase the number of vehicle miles travelled, thereby increasing CO2 emissions whilst not reducing the level of traffic congestion across the Borough." This advice was based upon the "fundamental law of traffic congestion" developed by academics. The Executive seems to have ignored this advice and doubled down on its error, increasing to £17m investment in making driving easier within the climate emergency budget.

My question is; what is the predicted reduction in CO2 emissions from this £17m investment, and what is the methodology by which it has been estimated?

111.6 Twyford

Stephen Conway has asked the Executive Member for Children's Services the following question:

Question

Will the Executive Member responsible for schools meet with my colleague Lindsay Ferris and me, as a matter of urgency, to try to find a solution to the difficult situation experienced by nearly sixty families in southern Twyford, that have discovered that their children cannot get into the Piggott Secondary School? I appreciate that academies such as the Piggott have control over their own admissions policy, but the Local Education Authority has a duty to ensure all children have access to an appropriate school. The Piggott is Twyford's secondary school and is much closer to families in southern Twyford than the alternatives offered in Woodley and

Wokingham.

111.7 Winnersh

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

Question

When will the Council finish the process of reducing the speed limit from 40 to 30 on Bearwood Road; from the Pub to the roundabout at Old Road King Street Lane, which was started 3 years ago?

111.8 Hawkedon

Clive Jones has asked the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure the following question:

Question

I am delighted that in a Conservative leaflet distributed in Earley in the last couple of weeks, the Executive Member for Transport says that she and her colleagues are committed to protect Chalfont Woods (Area DD) from being built on. Of course, this was not always the Conservative's position and that when the 'about face' was announced after the Conservative loses in the 2019 local elections your commitment then was only for the life of the current Council.

I am concerned, though, that the leaflet refers to planting more trees and to 'cleaning' the existing woodland in Chalfont Woods. My understanding is that this may be the last remaining pocket of vegetation of its specific type in Earley, making very important contributions to biodiversity. Cleaning the site might harm this important ecological niche. Is there an ecologist's report that can be shared publicly to show that this was considered before the announcement was made in this leaflet, and demonstrate that what is proposed will be of benefit ecologically and helping to tackle climate change?

111.9 None Specific

Jim Frewin has asked the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement the following question:

Question

I would like to recognise the Council Senior Officers, the Leaders of the all the political parties and the Independents, who have worked closely together throughout the pandemic. Forgetting politics and collaborating to help protect Wokingham residents, they have met on a regular basis to ensure clarity of direction, consistency of message and alignment of effort. This collaborative approach should be

applauded and perhaps more widely used in the future.

I was however, deeply disturbed to hear that recently one of these vital meetings was refocused at the very last minute and without notification, to be given over to a development planning presentation. This taking priority over Covid issues.

The landowner and their agents were allowed the opportunity to present to the most senior level of both Council Officers and political party leadership, prior to submitting an application.

Question: - Is this level of preplanning 'consultation' going to be offered to other planning applicants?

111.10 None Specific

Shirley Boyt has asked the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure the following question:

Question

According to the Royal Horticultural Society, the optimum time for planting trees is between October and April. Trees planted at this time have a greater chance of survival and need less watering than those planted at any other time of year. How many of the promised quarter of a million trees has the Council planted during the last six months?

111.11 Bulmershe and Whitegates

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

Question

On 9th March 2020, I wrote to the Property Investment Group asking the Group to consider investing in the land associated with the Good Companions public house and adjacent businesses in Woodley.

I have not received a reply.

Has the Property Investment Group considered this investment?

112.

MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND WARD MATTERS

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

113.

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

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

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

114.

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.

114.1 None Specific

Motion 454 submitted by Clive Jones

My Liberal Democrat colleagues and I are proposing that this Council fully supports a cross party parliamentary bill that allows the creation of local energy schemes.

Renewable energy generation currently accounts for only 11% of UK energy use - I'm sure that all of us in this Council agree that this has to be increased.

A government report in 2014 stated that the community energy sector could deliver 3000 megawatts of energy by 2020. Sadly after 2015, enthusiasm for green projects evaporated.

The huge potential for community energy is being blocked by licensing rules which benefit the big suppliers and lead to higher energy costs. The bill will change all this and enable local renewable schemes at more affordable tariffs which will benefit both local residents and businesses.

If this bill goes through Parliament, OFGEM would be required to enable local energy groups to create renewable energy for use locally with excess power also being used locally by businesses and residents rather than being passed back into the national grid

which is currently a costly exercise.

Locally produced renewable energy from solar panels on commercial and Council owned buildings and houses would most likely be cheaper than energy provided by the big energy suppliers. As I said earlier, this could be a big benefit for our local residents.

The bill already has the support of two of the Borough's MP's; we are asking the Council leader to contact the other two MP's inviting them to also support the bill.

We are also asking the Councils Chief Executive to write to the Minister of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy asking them to support the aims of the bill.

Hopefully all parties will support this Lib Dem motion this evening and hopefully in the future we can consider setting up a successful local energy company of our own.

114.2 None Specific

Motion 455 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 non-compliance.
- 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

114.3 None Specific

Motion 456 submitted by Pauline Helliard-Symons

Wokingham Borough has been found to be the healthiest place in England, according to England's Health Index, published by the Office for National Statistics. In addition, the need for improved mental health provision across our community was recently identified and action has been taken. These developments are welcome, but there is always more to do.

The Health Survey for England 2019 estimates that 28% of adults in England are obese. A further 36.2% are identified as being overweight. This can result in increased hospital admissions and is frequently linked to numerous medical conditions, including type 2 diabetes, which affects many of our residents.

Therefore, this Council:

1. Commends the hard work of Officers and Councillors in delivering the outstanding result of the Borough being the healthiest place in England;
2. Notes the work completed on the Health and

Wellbeing, Strategy including the work on creating physically active communities and work with our health partners in this area;

3. Thanks the residents of the Borough for their continued commitment to striving to live healthier lives, and helping their family, friends and neighbours to improve their lifestyles; and
4. Commits to review and revise the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, learning the lessons of the COVID-19 pandemic to reflect the need to tackle obesity in all ages in our community.

114.4 None Specific

Motion 457 submitted by Shirley Boyt

This Council aspires to a 70% recycling rate by 2030 and resolves to make it easier for every resident to recycle at every opportunity whether at home or on the move:

1. by replacing all litter bins in the Borough with dual litter and recycling bins commencing with those in local town centres, shopping parades and parks;
2. to provide dual litter and recycling bins on popular walking routes to schools in places not covered in 2 above.

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