



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

The Annual Meeting of the **COUNCIL** will be held in the Council Chamber - Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham RG40 1BN on **THURSDAY 20 MAY 2021 AT 7.00 PM**

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

Susan Parsonage
Chief Executive
Published on 12 May 2021

Note: Although members of the public are entitled to attend the meeting in person, space is very limited due to the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic. You can however participate in this meeting virtually, in line with the Council's Constitution. If you wish to participate either in person or virtually, via Microsoft Teams, please contact Democratic Services. The meeting can also be watched live using the following link: https://youtu.be/d_sJBYC3xxI

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.
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1.

ELECTION OF MAYOR FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2021/22

To elect a Mayor for the 2021/22 Municipal Year.

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

The outgoing Mayor will then call for nominations for the Office of Mayor for the 2021/22 Municipal Year.

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

At this point in the proceedings, the outgoing Mayor and the incoming Mayor may adjourn in order to place the Cloak and Chain of Office on the incoming Mayor.

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

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

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

2.

APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY MAYOR FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2021/22

To appoint a Deputy Mayor for the 2021/22 Municipal Year.

The Mayor will call for nominations for the Office of Deputy Mayor for the 2021/22 Municipal Year.

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

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

The Mayor will present the Deputy Mayor's badge of office to the Deputy Mayor.

The Deputy Mayor will address the Council for up to 3

minutes.

3.

APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies for absence.

4.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 March 2021.

13 - 40

5.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive any declarations of interest.

6.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

To answer any public questions. A period of 30 minutes will be allowed for members of the public to ask questions submitted under notice.

The Council welcomes questions from members of the public about the work of the Council.

Subject to meeting certain timescales, questions can relate to general issues concerned with the work of the Council or an item which is on the Agenda for this meeting. For full details of the procedure for submitting questions please contact the Democratic Services Section on the numbers given below or go to www.wokingham.gov.uk/publicquestions

6.1

None Specific

Rio Elms has asked the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure the following question:

Question:

As the pandemic has split us apart so much socially, there hasn't been enough done to try and aid young people aged 11-17 in terms of places to go and things to do. The Council has not provided places for young people to commune independently. As a result, young people have been socialising in places that were not intended to have any number of people. This can be exemplified in the Woosehill underpass which has had several complaints from residents on social media about gatherings of young people before and during the pandemic. So, the question that I put to the Council today is; In light of the things that I have stated today what will you do to make a place for our young people to gather in Wokingham?

6.2

Emmbrook

Kate Benson has asked the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure the following question:

Question:

Based on the amount of opposition from local

residents following on from the Public Path Creation Order notices in Jubilee Ave recently, and that the public consultation in summer 2020 was not widely known about, I would like to ask, please can you reconsider the routing of Greenway Route B through the middle of the land that runs alongside Jubilee Ave?

The local residents' opposition is clear that Section 26 of the Highways Act 1980, 'would add convenience or enjoyment to a large section of the public or local residents' cannot be demonstrated. Please consider adjusting this section of the greenway, so as not to destroy the wildlife habitats within this wildlife corridor from Joel Park to Cantley Park. Please either widen the pavement on the northern side or adapt this section to be signage, like is planned for the Clifton Road section

6.3 None Specific

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

Question:

The Government's plan to introduce a requirement for photographic identification before allowing people to exercise their right to vote will disenfranchise Wokingham Borough residents who do not have photo ID. Depending on the forms of ID allowed, about 8% of electors do not have photo ID. I am sure no member of this Council will wish to see voter suppression on this or scale or indeed any attempt at voter suppression. Will the Leader of the Council write to the Borough's MPs to express Council's opposition to voter suppression and to urge the MPs to speak out against these measures and to vote against the Bill when it comes before Parliament?

7.

PETITIONS

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

8.

MAYOR'S OR HEAD OF PAID SERVICE'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

9.

None Specific

RETURNING OFFICER'S REPORT ON MAY 2021 ELECTIONS

The Council's Assistant Director, Governance, as Returning Officer, to report on the Borough elections held on 6 May 2021.

41 - 44

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

10. None Specific **HOUSING STRATEGY 2020 - 24** 45 - 90

To consider and approve the Council's Housing Strategy 2020-24, as recommended by the Executive.

RECOMMENDATION: That Council approve the adoption of the proposed Housing Strategy 2020-2024.

11. **STATEMENTS FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, EXECUTIVE MEMBERS AND LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION**

The Leader of Council will notify Council of any changes to the Executive and their respective portfolios, Deputy Executive Members and, if applicable, the terms of delegation to them and Officers.

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

The Leader of the Opposition will be allowed to speak for up to 5 minutes.

12. **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.

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

Question:

What is being done about visibility problems with Reading Road residents exiting their driveways near the new relief road roundabout?

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

Question:

According to the Wokingham Borough Council Yearbook – 2020/2021, page 52 shows the Parishes/Town, Population, households subject to council tax and Band D equivalent tax.

Calculating the proposed Band D tax, as shown, the total band D council tax paid by Early households is 18% of the total (which is only bettered by 22% paid by the households in Wokingham).

Based on this large share of council tax contribution made by Earley Households – shouldn't they get better equivalence on roads that needs resurfacing for their residents, especially, for those roads that are near schools - specifically, those in Maiden Erlegh.

12.3 Twyford

Stephen Conway has asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Question:

Would the Executive Member for Highways agree that the 40 MPH speed limit on the stretch of the A321 from the A4 roundabout to the outskirts of Wargrave village should be reduced to increase the safety of pupils walking to the school?

12.4 Emmbrook

Imogen Shepherd-DuBey has asked the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure the following question:

Question:

While on the most part we all support Greenways, there is a lot of concern about the proposed Jubilee Avenue section in Emmbrook. The concerns are about damage to the historic trees as well the undergrowth & local wildlife. The off-road greenway being put in this location will be so short that it has very little to offer cyclists or pedestrians along this already quiet road. However, it just ends at a busy roundabout junction, with no obvious benefit. I have yet to meet a resident who thinks this section along Jubilee Avenue, is a good idea and good value for money, but it feels like this is just being railroaded through.

We do not feel that the consultation for the Jubilee Avenue section has been done properly. Residents are confused about what is happening and are horrified by what it might mean. The first that most knew about this was when they saw notices about a small section of bridleway, but there has been nothing that shows the full plans for this area. Residents want to ask questions. Please can we have a consultation that includes displays, full detailed designs and proper bi-directional communication. If not, why not?

12.5 Evendons

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

Question:

The absence of a woodland management plan for the Council owned part of Foxhill woodland in Woosehill has been raised in both public and Members questions in the past. Whilst some progress has been made regarding engagement with the community volunteer group Friends of Foxhill, who are finally able to do some conservation works in the woodland, they are not responsible for the management or the health and safety of the woodland. There needs to be a clear management plan from this Council similar to what Reading Borough Council have with Clayfield Copse. What is the time scale for developing and publishing the woodland management plan for Foxhill woodland?

12.6 Norreys

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

Question:

The new cycleway on London Road in Wokingham is not fully segregated and for long stretches cyclists share the road with heavy traffic moving at 40 mph with just a single white painted line between them and the passing cars, lorries and buses.

Published research has shown a statistically significant increase in risk associated with an on-road cycle lane, and that such painted lines lead to vehicles passing cyclists more closely. Back in 2019 six cycling commissioners described them as “pointless white lines on the road” and a waste of public money.

The design does not represent best practice for cycleways and due to safety concerns, a build-up of grit from the passing traffic, or the fact that the cycleway diverts from the road to the shared path and back again, it may in fact put cyclists off.

Why hasn't the Council implemented a properly segregated cycleway on the London Road?

12.7 None Specific

Shirley Boyt has asked the Executive Member for Children's Services the following question:

Question:

In March this year, the Guardian published a report

revealing a huge disparity in school exclusions, between black and mixed-race children compared to their white peers.

Research by the Runnymede Trust has shown that exclusions have a detrimental impact on children, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation and with diminished life chances. The report revealed that in Wokingham had the largest disparity in the country at 12.8% meaning that black and mixed-race students at schools in the Borough are 5 times more likely to be excluded than white students.

According to the Guardian, WBC declined to comment on the report. What will the Council do to ensure black and mixed-race children are treated fairly in our schools?

13.

POLITICAL BALANCE OF THE COUNCIL AND ALLOCATION AND APPOINTMENT TO SEATS ON COMMITTEES AND BOARDS

91 - 116

To receive a report on the political balance of the Council and to appoint to Council Committees/Panels/Boards in accordance with the Groups' wishes as set out in Appendix 1.

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

RECOMMENDATION That Council:

- 1) having reviewed the representation of the political groups on the Council, confirms that it has 31 Conservative Group Members, 18 Liberal Democrat Group Members, 3 Labour Group Members, and 2 Independent Group Members;
- 2) approves the appointment and composition of Committees and Boards as set out in Para 2.1;
- 3) approves the allocation of seats on Committees and Boards on the basis that, of the 89 seats (as set out in Para 3.6), 53 be allocated to the Conservative Group 28 be allocated to the Liberal Democrat Group, 5 be allocated to the Labour Group and 3 be allocated to the Independent Group;
- 4) approves the proposals submitted by the respective Group Leaders and that those Members be appointed to the Committees and

Boards as set out in Appendix 1 (to follow);

- 5) agrees that the second part of procedure rule 4.2.1.1r) and procedure rule 4.2.26 continues to be suspended and for the 2021/22 Municipal Year enabling the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of those Council Committees etc, set out in Appendix 1A to be appointed as stated;
- 6) agrees that the principles of proportionality be applied when Members are appointed to Sub Committees, Panels or Working Groups;
- 7) notes the appointment of the Independent Persons to assist the work of the Standards Committee and the co-opted Parish/Town Council Representatives as set out in Appendix 1;
- 8) notes the elected Member representatives on the Wokingham Borough Wellbeing Board, as set out in Appendix 1, as nominated by the Leader of Council in accordance with Section 194 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

14.

APPOINTMENTS TO PANELS/WORKING GROUPS, ETC

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

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

15.

APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

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

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

CONTACT OFFICER

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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF
THE COUNCIL
HELD ON 18 MARCH 2021 FROM 7.00 PM TO 10.30 PM**

Members Present

Councillors: Malcolm Richards (Mayor), Keith Baker (Deputy Mayor), Parry Batth, Rachel Bishop-Firth, Laura Blumenthal, Chris Bowring, 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, Sarah Kerr, 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, Wayne Smith, Bill Soane, Alison Swaddle and Simon Weeks

109. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted from Oliver Whittle.

110. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 18 February 2021 were confirmed as a correct record and will be signed by the Mayor at the next available opportunity.

111. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Members declared a general personal interest on items on the agenda.

Councillor Emma Hobbs declared a Personal Interest on the grounds that she was a Trustee of the Citizens Advice Bureau.

Councillor Maria Gee declared a Personal Interest on the grounds that she was a Trustee of the Citizens Advice Bureau.

Councillor John Kaiser declared a Personal Interest on the grounds that he was a Non-Executive Director of WBC Holdings Ltd.

Councillor Lindsay Ferris declared a Personal Interest on the grounds that he was a Non-Executive Director of Loddon Homes.

Councillor John Halsall declared a Personal Interest on the grounds that he was a Non-Executive Director of Optalis Holdings Ltd.

Councillor Stuart Munro declared a Personal Interest on the grounds that he was a Non-Executive Director of WBC Holdings Ltd.

Councillor Wayne Smith declared a Personal Interest on the grounds that he was a Non-Executive Director of WBC Holdings Ltd.

Councillor Daniel Sargeant declared a Personal Interest on the grounds that he was a Non-Executive Director of Wokingham Housing and Berry Brook Homes.

Councillor UllaKarin Clark declared a Personal Interest on the grounds that she was a Non-Executive Director of Loddon Homes.

112. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor informed Members that he had attended a number of online meetings throughout his time as Mayor.

The Mayor indicated that his charity had organised an art competition for children aged 4-11 years old, the results of which would be announced shortly. During April there would be a photographic competition for juniors and adults.

113. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

113.1 Jim Murphy asked the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure the following question:

Question

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 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?

Answer

The Environment Agency are the statutory authority responsible for monitoring compliance, in relation to reservoir safety and reservoir flood risk in England. Reservoirs capable of holding above 25,000m³ of water are regulated under the Reservoirs Act 1975. To perform its role in monitoring compliance, the Environment Agency maintains a register of regulated reservoirs and acts as a repository for various reports and certificates that are completed by the appointed reservoir engineers for each reservoir. The Environment Agency also holds reservoir flood inundation maps which show the route of flooding if a reservoir dam were to breach. These maps are publicly available via the Environment Agency website.

Supplementary Question:

I accept that the Environment Agency has a role to play but so does the local authority and I am convinced that ironically the justification to grant this emergency planning application permitted the destruction of these mature trees. Bear in mind that some of these are 300 year old oak trees. It is a consequence of some unacceptable previous failure to properly recognise account and report the known risks of this reservoir, because I refer to the fact that this decision exposes and calls into question whether the planning application for the Reading Football Club training ground and if it would have been granted if the known categorisation and resulting inundation risk of the reservoir had been properly accounted for. I believe you need to undertake a full, transparent investigation of this, and my question is will you do that?

Supplementary Answer:

I take your points of view Mr Murphy but health and safety comes first. Wokingham

Borough Council does carry out its duty as per its procedures and we follow them to the letter. I can assure you that we will not do anything underhand or anything like that. We follow the rules and the health and safety comes first on top of everything else.

113.2 Liz Mayers 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?

Answer

Thank you for your question, the LGA framework is a useful tool for Local Government to use to identify areas of activity that need to be addressed to deliver good equality outcomes and provides a framework for monitoring and measuring progress. We used the LGA Equality Framework for the basis of the Equalities Audit that was carried out through 2019/2020. Whilst this did not provide an overall rating it did identify areas for improvement. The revised Equality Plan and first year action plan have been informed by the LGA framework and also through stakeholder engagement and consultation.

As set out in the plan, it is intended that we will carry out a self-assessment in quarter 4 of the first-year plan period. This will provide us with a self-analysis rating.

As I have shared before, my focus is to create the architecture within the Council and the Borough to make meaningful progress in tackling inequality. We know that not everybody shares equally in the benefits of living here – and we are committed to tackling that issue. Inequality can be suffered for a whole range of reasons – age, gender, sexuality, race and disability among others – but it is never acceptable, and I believe the draft plan we have is a comprehensive guide to tackling all of these.

May I say as a footnote how delighted I am that there is so much interest in the Equalities Policy tonight with five questions. We are all on the same side. Diversity, equality, anti-racism and addressing need must be part of everything we do and the example we set. No rational person would take any other point of view and no responsible person would play politics with this issue. Every one of our residents must be able to live the life that he or she wishes without fear from harm or harming others. The Equality Policy that we put before you today is the first step in this continuous journey, which every day we must strive to do better. There is no magic bullet. It is a continuous work on architecture which I hope will be my legacy when I am all but forgotten.

Supplementary Question

Despite your encouraging words and claims of progress and intention around equality, it is widely recognised through my engagement and others with the Council, from the CEO down, that there have been massive failures including disability, gender and racial discrimination, evidenced by recent tribunals, complaints, your pay gap reporting, all of which needs to be addressed with meaningful action not just some more comforting words. So, what budget and resources are you committing to create some competent activity not just another tick box exercise, which is actually going to improve inequality in the Borough?

Supplementary Answer

It is certainly not a tick box exercise Liz. Certainly not. The Equalities engagement has to be across the whole Borough. We have a budget of some £150million in the General Fund and we spend some £600million. So, all of that is committed to the Equalities Policy. It is not singled out as something which is separate. You really need to take this up with me personally Liz rather than the Council because the Mayor is going to chop me off in my prime.

113.3 Kiran Nar 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?

Answer

Thank you for the question. You were certainly not invited to join the review to be kept quiet – completely the opposite, you were invited to take part in the review because we want to hear and understand your opinions and experiences – along with those of others - so that these can help make our equalities plans and practices better.

I very much appreciate the time you gave to this and hope that you will be able to continue your involvement. As regards to being on-side, I certainly hope we are on the same side as what I want is a Borough Council that tackles inequality, celebrates diversity and challenges all discrimination.

As the Equality Plan being discussed tonight sets out, we are committed to ongoing improvement through collaboration with the community. This is an ongoing challenge that needs external scrutiny as well as support and I sincerely hope you will continue to be part of that. The more engagement we have as a Council with groups with protected characteristics and our residents generally the better we will be able to make progress in this vital area. I hope it continues at a working level and not limited to Council questions. The work can only progress with consent with genuine wish to improve the lives of our residents and with cooperation of the whole community. We need all of you to actively participate in the solutions enthusiastically, cooperatively and collegiately.

Supplementary Question

Invitations and promises about the equality initiatives and review are very encouraging and I agree your residents should have a voice and be at the heart of decision making. Whilst I recognise the work that has been done so far, I am concerned that it is not truly representative of our diverse communities. The Equalities Survey had 563 responses and the Equality Plan has been built on those responses alongside broad data points. However, the ethnic majority population in the Borough is over 17,500. So, a) how can the Equality Plan be built on 563 responses, not all of which are from non white residents? b) without any consultation from the BME Forum who are meant to be your critical friends in these matters and c) without full engagement of claimed community groups?

Supplementary Answer

I fully accept that we do not have all the answers at the moment. We are on the initial

steps of a very long journey, and that is what we are trying to do in all good faith. You can criticise us easily for not having done enough and I criticise us for not having done enough, but we are on that journey and we would like your cooperation and help to put us on a course that will generate continuous improvement.

113.4 Beth Rowland 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?

Answer

As part of the process of assessing the suitability of the green recycling bags a full Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken which was included as part of the decision on 11 September. This demonstrated that all groups were carefully considered in assessing the impact of this minor change to the waste collection service.

Consultation with protected characteristic groups was not undertaken as the method of collection has not significantly changed and therefore it is not a substantial alteration to the existing service. However, testing has shown that the empty bags weigh a little bit less than the current boxes so will be easier to handle because they are softer. The assisted collection service, which I think you benefit from, will continue as well as providing advice for residents who may have specific issues. I am therefore confident that these new containers are very convenient, practicable and in some ways easier to use for those who are elderly or have a disability.

Supplementary Question

Parry when I last brought up a question around the new bags you promised to contact me, and you did not. Last week a lady arrived at my door with one bag. She did not know why she was bringing it and neither did I. I had been promised one to try last year. I did try it this week and I could not even open the velcro. I have severe arthritis in my hands as I am sure a lot of other residents do, so the bag to me to begin with, I cannot open it, so it is absolutely useless. Neither can I cut or fold cardboard to go in it, so I do not know quite what I am going to do with all my cardboard. The assisted collection is really good. The men know that I cannot fold it and anything I cannot deal with, I leave, and they deal with it on my behalf very kindly, but I cannot see that I will be able to get anything in the bag at all.

Supplementary Answer

Once again, the assisted collection is there for people who may have difficulty in putting the card in and they will assist you. That is what the assisted collection service is there for, for residents who are having difficulty, so they will assist you.

113.5 Peter Humphreys 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?

Answer

Throughout, the Council has been completely open and transparent about the limited amount of affordable housing in the town centre regeneration and very specifically why this is the case.

The regeneration, which consists of three sites, has already provided 22 affordable key worker homes as part of the Peach Place phase. We have not included further homes as the community benefits of the regeneration scheme are so much greater than anything anyone who was not the local authority would have been able to provide.

Instead, the funds, that other private developers would have expected to use towards providing affordable homes, are being fully utilised to pay for all of the non-profit making elements of the scheme. These are things like the new park and destination play area, new open and pedestrianised spaces for events, public toilets, water fountains, the new road and, when it opens next year, a brand new swimming pool, leisure and library hub, which will also help cater for community and cultural events.

Being able to reinvest these funds into the scheme has also helped with making lettings decisions that have put the town and community before pure profit margins. This has allowed us to bring in a new cinema to the town for example, and make choices to let to an independent boutique rather than generic high street clones, who arguably would pay more, but would contribute little towards creating a great future for the town.

In regards to vacant units, the picture this question paints is strange. A simple walk around the town would show anyone that the majority of the regeneration units are already up and trading, or simply waiting for permission, post lockdown, to reopen their doors.

The few that have not started fit out expect to do so soon, although the impact of Covid-19 remains an issue for the industry, with many tenants waiting for factories to begin manufacturing specialist equipment again, or for their contractors to start again as existing jobs are taking longer than planned.

But right now, when our businesses have suffered so much, when livelihoods, and much more are on the line, we should all be 100% behind our businesses. For two Council meetings in a row now, you seem to be down on Wokingham, and down on its businesses. Some of these businesses are very new and just about to open up in our town and we welcome them warmly. My message is very clear tonight on behalf of this Council. I am for

this town and for its success.

Supplementary Question

The Council has always pointed out that these are separate schemes so there is in fact no affordable housing in Elms, so make a note of that. Moving on to what you just said, in one of the shop units at Elms Field, the internal flooring area is about half a metre higher than the pavement outside, making it impossible to open the front door inwards. Access is obviously impossible for wheelchair users and difficult and dangerous for the able bodied. Why have the Council accepted a building that does not meet the requirements of health and safety legislation, and are any steps being taken to get the developer to fix this at their expense? All those units facing the field are still empty as a matter of interest.

Supplementary Answer

The units facing the field may be empty at the moment, not all of them are actually, but the ones to which you are referring, some of them are actually already let but are waiting for fit outs at the moment. Just to give you an example at the moment, one unit in the regeneration scheme, we have had three offers for it on the table last week, so it is not all doom and gloom. In terms of what you are saying in terms of the different floor levels I do not know very precisely about that, but I can look into it. Do you know exactly which unit it is because I do not know exactly to which one you are referring to, but I am very happy to look into it. [next to Starbucks]

113.6 Louise Timlin asked the Executive Member for Children's Services the following question. Due to the Executive Member's inability to connect to the meeting written answers were provided:

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?

Answer

No settings have closed due to the effects of the pandemic, nor are we aware of any that are threatened with closure. The Early Years and Childcare service continues to maintain a good oversight of sufficiency and take up rates across the Borough.

At February 2021, settings reported they were at 90% occupancy rates. Year-on-year there has been a 2% decline in the number of funded places claimed for. WBC has maintained funding levels at 100% of take up, regardless of whether a child has been attending, or not.

A £100,000 grant fund has also been made available for settings who are struggling financially due to the effects of the pandemic, however there has been limited requests to this fund that is suggestive that settings are obtaining support via government and other sources.

Extended hours at our community testing sites have been offered, to support asymptomatic testing access by those working in settings, and following recent announcements those working within the Early Years sector will be able to access home

based test kits.

Our normal training offer for providers has this year been offered free of charge, to ensure that finance does not present a barrier to the provision of quality.

Whilst this has no doubt been a challenging year for Early Years settings, we have done much to support providers, and provision has been maintained so as to ensure that working parents will have access to local, affordable, high quality care after the pandemic.

Supplementary Question

Is the Council planning to do an assessment of supply and demand childcare provision to ensure that a lack of spaces is not a factor in preventing parents, which is usually mothers, from returning to work post pandemic?

113.7 Extension of Public Question Time

It was proposed by Andy Croy and seconded by Rachel Burgess that the Public Question Time be extended to allow responses to the remaining public questions.

Upon being put to the vote the proposal was carried.

113.8 Keith Kerr asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

Question

My question relates to the Equality Plan on this evening's agenda. In May 2021 there will be local elections in Wokingham Borough for Councillors and a Thames Valley Police Commissioner. The control of Wokingham Borough Council is likely to be on a knife edge and therefore, keenly contested. Just under 12% of Wokingham Borough Council Residents are non-whites and they are generally clustered in concentrated areas of the Borough. As the current Leader of the Council what will you tell them about how you and the Conservative led Council has positively engaged with the non-white community since their indignation about your Facebook post and your negative statements about Black Lives Matter last Spring/Summer?

Answer

Thank you for your question, although I have to say I find it very odd that you link the Council's proposed Equality Plan with party politics and local elections. It is disappointing that a question introduced as 'relating to the Equality Plan' in fact does no such thing, because we do honestly and earnestly want questions and scrutiny on the plan itself.

However, to answer your question: since last summer I have repeatedly stated, at every available opportunity, my own and the Council's commitment to tackling racism. We have consulted the public on what we need to do to eradicate racism and celebrate diversity; we have signed the Race at Work Charter to increase equality for our staff, and just as a footnote I would say that we have had a pandemic which has occupied our staff very much and ourselves. I have met you and other interested residents to positively engage on these issues and will continue to do so; we have worked to restore the BME Forum, including by funding an independent, highly experienced facilitator to help the forum function well for everybody; and we have ensured that our commitment to stamping out racism is at the heart of the Equality Plan that is on tonight's agenda.

We have also engaged closely with ethnic minority groups and others in the community who are deemed to be at greater risk from Covid 19. This has included providing regular,

targeted advice and support in many ways including with faith groups.

Despite what you may imply, this has nothing to do with party politics and everything to do with protecting and serving all our residents to the best of our abilities. I sincerely hope that you can find it within yourself to work with us and help us improve and enact our Equality Plan and our anti-racist stance.

Supplementary Question

I have a signed agreement with you about engaging the community and the processes by which the Council will adopt, which has been ignored. When these people come to me, people of colour come to me, and say what should we do? How should we vote? What are they doing for us? Should I say to them that you and the Council you lead are incompetent, untrustworthy or duplicitous? Which?

Supplementary Answer

Neither Keith. Your questions are always leading questions so you really should not use this agenda for party politics. It is very, very dangerous. You are certainly a man who understands that. Whoever is in this position will have an Equality Policy that they need to take forward, and I am determined that we will take it forward.

113.9 Pol Exeter asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

Question

The BME Forum was “paused for the Council to find and fund an independent facilitator to take stock and reflect on its direction” by the acting Chair five months ago. What was the outcome of the independent facilitator’s reflection and when will the conclusions be made public?

Answer

I can confirm that an independent facilitator has been engaged to undertake this work. The work will include one to one sessions and focus groups and Councillor Parry Bath has written to many stakeholders to invite them to join. The opportunity to take part is still open as we need to hear from all those concerned, and so would encourage anybody, including yourself, who is interested, to contact us. The findings will be due in May, and at that stage we will work with the BME Forum to implement the recommendations.

Supplementary Question

We understand today from the Wokingham Times that you have consulted several BME organisations, including the St Vincent and The Grenadines Friends Association of which I am the Chairman, on the Equality Policy, but we did not receive your consultation. You then proceeded unilaterally to appoint Judeline Nicholas Associates to work with the BME representatives to decide the future of the BME Forum. Are you, Leader, happy with the way you have consulted the BME groups, and is this what you call partnership working?

Supplementary Answer

Up to when you have raised this query. I have been happy yes. Obviously now that you have raised the query, I will follow this up, and see why you were not invited, or why you were not contacted.

113.10 Jeffrey Hinds asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

Question

As Leader of Wokingham Borough Council, you claimed that equality was hard wired into the Council’s DNA. Of the £129,697,410 (million) budget of the Council for 2020/21, what percentage was allotted for equality initiatives, and how much was spent on equality initiatives for those with protect characters as defined under the Equalities Act 2010?

Answer

Thank you for the question and I hope this starts a real dialogue between us. The answer to your question is all of it. We spend not only £130million but we spend about £600million in a year, and it should all be with equalities and diversity policy in mind.

As you quote, equality is hard-wired into our DNA and so everything we do should contribute to it in some way and we should be mindful of equalities. Unfortunately, that makes the details of your question impossible to answer – for example, when we build roads, schools, leisure facilities, parks and play areas, we do so following an assessment of their impact on equalities.

However, I can say that about 35% of the £129,697,410 budget went on adult social care - that’s more than £45million. The core aims of this service include ensuring that older residents and people with disabilities (both protected characteristics) are safe and cared for, and are free from fear and harm so that they can live, learn and thrive. I believe it is reasonable to define that as money allocated for equality initiatives.

There are also specific services and initiatives, on top of this £45million-plus, which should be mentioned; this is not a comprehensive list but gives an indication of our commitment:

- Disabled facility grants – for adapting the homes of people with disabilities to enable them to live independently
- Provision of Gypsy Roma Traveller (protected characteristic race) accommodation pitches and outreach workers that ensure families are able to access education.

And I go on, there is a whole series of initiatives Jeff.

In addition to these and the many other initiatives we undertake, the Council has also established an Equalities Steering Group and a Tackling Racism Matters working group both of which have a significant dedicated officer resource.

What I would say if I may is, please engage. My phone is there. I take calls to everybody. I have spoken to Keith on a number of occasions, and I am really, really keen to get know you and buy you lunch when we are allowed to.

114. PETITIONS

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

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

Pauline Helliar-Symons	Pauline Helliar-Symons presented a petition on the closure of the local primary school for polling day containing 362 signatures. To be forwarded to the Returning Officer
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Robert Comber	<p>Robert Comber presented a petition containing 197 signatures relating to Safe Walking and Cycling on the South Wokingham Distributor Road.</p> <p><i>To be forwarded to the Executive Member for Highways and Transport</i></p>
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115. TRADING STANDARDS, ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND LICENSING

The Council considered a report regarding Trading Standards, Environmental Health and Licensing, set out at Agenda pages 47 to 56.

It was proposed by John Halsall and seconded by Parry Bath that the recommendations, as set out in the report, be agreed.

John Halsall commented that Wokingham Borough was the lowest funded authority area and also one of the healthiest. The Council's limited resources were focused where the greatest benefit could be achieved. It was the Council's ambition to provide a wraparound service to residents that kept them safe, secure and happy. The Council aimed to tailor a service at locality level which would allow a cohesive response to residents' issues such as anti-social behaviour, fly tipping, unauthorised encampments, noise, bonfires and neighbourhood disputes. The delivery would be integrated into other Council services such as Localities, Community Safety, Legal, Children's Services and Adults Services, making better use of the capacity of the existing Locality Officers, offering early intervention and prevention. John Halsall went on to state that the Council would undoubtedly need to use outside agencies for some services, which might include the Public Protection Partnership.

It was proposed by Lindsay Ferris and seconded by Prue Bray that the recommendations be amended as follows:

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 ***if no satisfactory alternative has been identified;***
- 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 ***or other suitable reconfiguration of the services;***

- 4) The Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Place and Growth create and work with a **cross-party** task force of Officers and Members to create the new in-house service **or other service delivery structure**;
- 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.
- 6) ***the proposals made under recommendations 3) and 4) will come back to Council in or before September 2021, accompanied by a full business case, for a final decision on implementation.***

Lindsay Ferris stated that the Liberal Democrats agreed that the Public Protection Partnership in its current format no longer met the needs of residents or the Council. However, they had concerns about how the changes proposed would be achieved and felt that it was important to have a backup set of arrangements in place should the move to a standalone service encounter problems achieving the timescales or in finding the appropriate staff to perform the new function. He emphasised that the proposed Working Group should look at all possible options including whether it was possible to improve the current service, whether it would be possible to use elements of the Public Protection Partnership Service, or whether a standalone service was achievable. Lindsay Ferris expressed concerns regarding the likely additional costs of developing a standalone service and sought further clarification on that issue.

Prue Bray stated that not enough had been done to resolve the issues with the Partnership before taking irreversible action. The Shared Service had originally been put in place because an in-house service had not been working. She was of the view that the proposals would result in a less resilient service with less specialist staff. Nevertheless, she felt that there were things which could be done in-house to improve service delivery to residents, but a proper plan and costings was required.

John Halsall, proposer of the original recommendations, did not accept the amendments.

Stephen Conway commented that leaving the Public Protection Partnership may be the correct action but there was a need to establish if this was the case.

John Kaiser stated that he was in favour of the original recommendations and that nothing could be progressed until notice had been served. He felt that bringing the service in-house would help to create a stronger enforcement service.

Gary Cowan agreed with John Kaiser regarding enforcement but felt that more time needed to be taken to look at the different options available.

John Halsall emphasised that there was a wish to retain the parts of the service that worked well. However, under the existing agreement negotiations were not permitted until notice had been served. There was a need to choose local priorities and he believed that the proposed amendment would increase costs.

Upon being put to the vote, the amendment was lost.

Rachel Burgess commented that whilst insourcing could help develop public services, she questioned why the Public Partnership had been in place for so long if it were considered

not fit for purpose. She also expressed concern regarding the additional £500,000 required to fund the transition. She went on to question whether there would be any detrimental effects on staffing.

Andy Croy expressed concern that the Public Protection Partnership had not been scrutinised and the proposals had not been through Scrutiny.

John Halsall emphasised that staff were a core resource and that there was a need to have control of decision making.

Parry Bath stated that the time was right to bring services back inhouse.

Upon being put to the vote, it was:

RESOLVED: 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.

116. EQUALITY PLAN

The Council considered the Equality Plan, set out at Agenda pages 57 to 90.

It was proposed by John Halsall and seconded by Laura Blumenthal that the recommendation, as set out in the report, be agreed.

John Halsall stated that diversity, equality, anti-racism and addressing need must be at the heart of everything that the Council did. The Equality Policy was a first step in a continuous journey. The Plan had been developed in line with the Council's vision and Corporate Delivery Plan and outlined the Council's ambition to tackle inequality. He indicated that an online survey had been held and a number of engagement sessions with community groups, staff and Members. The qualitative feedback had provided insight that more could be done within the internal workings of the Council as well as what could be

done to deliver more inclusive services for residents. John Halsall went on to outline the Plan's priorities.

Laura Blumenthal commented that equality was an important issue. The Plan had the right balance of targets and timelines and the flexibility such a complex issue required. Using the Local Government Association Framework ensured a nationally recognised measure and would help benchmark performance against other councils, helping residents and the scrutiny committees know the direction of travel being taken. The Plan itself was a living document and would be reviewed annually. Laura Blumenthal emphasised that the views of over two hundred community organisations, community groups and service providers, had already been sought. She thanked the Officers and the Cross Party Working Group involved in the development of the Plan, for their work.

Shirley Boyt stated that she had asked for the Plan to be written in plain English but felt that was not reflected in the final version and that this could be discriminatory to some. She felt that the Plan was a work in progress and needed further work. Shirley Boyt thanked the Members and Officers involved for their work.

Richard Dolinski thanked Officers and Members for their hard work within a tight timescale. He too felt that the Plan was unfinished but that the Action Plan went some way to address this.

Andy Croy was of the view that the Plan had been rushed and initiated in response to mitigate reputational damage.

John Kaiser stated that it was a work in progress, but that every journey started with one first step.

Imogen Shepherd-DuBey felt that the purpose of the Plan was to fulfil the Council's legal obligation in publishing a plan every four years on how it met the Public Sector Equality Duty. She commented that whilst the Plan involved a lot of good work in a short period of time, it had been rushed and did not go far enough. Imogen Shepherd-DuBey stated that there needed to be regular meetings about progress, a proper complaints process for tackling public inequality issues and internal escalation points, and for ongoing plans from each directorate on how they would improve their areas with regards to equality.

John Halsall commented that equality was an ongoing issue, and the Council could only strive to eliminate inequality.

RESOLVED: That the Equality Plan (2021-2025) and Associated Action Plan (2021-22) be approved.

117. TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID-YEAR REPORT 2020-21

The Council considered the Treasury Management Mid Year Report 2020-21, set out at Agenda pages 91 to 102.

It was proposed by John Kaiser and seconded by Daniel Sargeant that the recommendations, as set out in the report, be agreed.

John Kaiser praised the Council's financial position.

Daniel Sargeant commented that the report demonstrated the Council's excellent financial management. He welcomed the constitutional clarification by Officers but commented that this had also been provided at the Audit Committee previously.

Rachel Burgess stated that the definition of the net cost of borrowing presented within the report, kept changing and that there was no consistency. The £7.52 figure was the net cost of borrowing once it had been reduced by netting off other incomes such as treasury investment income. She questioned the inclusion of recommendation three in the report.

Maria Gee stated that it was important to gauge trends in performance and this was difficult if the presentation changed year on year. She requested transparency in future reports.

John Halsall stated that the presentation was determined by Ernst & Young and CIPFA.

RESOLVED: That Council note:

- 1) Appendix A, the Treasury Management Mid-Year report which was agreed at Audit Committee on 23rd November 2020;
- 2) 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

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

The Council considered the Officer Response to the Recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Report – WBC's response to the Covid 19 pandemic, set out at Agenda pages 103 to 140.

It was proposed by Pauline Helliard-Symons and seconded by Charles Margetts that the recommendations, as set out in the report, be agreed.

Pauline Helliard-Symons praised the large amount of work undertaken by the scrutiny committees in the production of the report and the input from various organisations and partners such as the NHS and the Citizens Advice Bureau. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee had been provided with the results of the residents' survey, which had been very positive towards the Council's response to the pandemic. She praised the cross party working that had been undertaken during the review. Pauline Helliard-Symons emphasised the need for good work to continue and referred to the three most important priorities for the future, identified in the residents' survey; support for local business, mental health and addressing loneliness. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee would continue to monitor progress.

Charles Margetts commented that the pandemic had had a wide ranging impact. The report outlined work undertaken up to July but work still continued. Charles Margetts advised that 19,000 welfare calls had been made to those who had been shielding, the clinically vulnerable and carers. Wokingham Volunteer Centre had recruited 63 volunteers

who had carried out 917 prescription runs. 504 volunteers had been recruited to support the vaccination programme and 220 of those had assisted in the Lateral Flow Testing programme. He went on to outline some of the support provided to residents during the pandemic.

Sarah Kerr commented that the response from the Council and the community, to the pandemic had been phenomenal. She expressed concern regarding the response to some of the recommendations and felt that issues such as poverty should have been on the agenda at an earlier stage.

Andy Croy stated that it had been suggested that the Council work with poverty fighting charities, but this had not been agreed and included in the final report.

John Kaiser referred to the additional £1.2million allocated to support the response to the pandemic.

Jim Frewin stated that the Council should be applauded for the cross party working and partnership working that had been undertaken. His comments were echoed by Pauline Jorgensen.

Pauline Helliard-Symons commented that the recommendation around working with poverty charities had not been included in the report as the Poverty Strategy was already under development.

RESOLVED: 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.

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

The Council considered the Annual report from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Committees, set out at Agenda pages 141 to 158.

It was proposed by Pauline Helliard-Symons and seconded by Alison Swaddle that the report be noted.

Pauline Helliard-Symons thanked the Members and Officers for their work over the past year and advised that a huge range of topics had been covered.

Andy Croy thanked Democratic Services for supporting the scrutiny committees. He added that the role of scrutiny was to help shape and improve the way the Council operated and suggested that Chairmen should not always be from the ruling group.

Alison Swaddle commented that the purpose of scrutiny was to add value.

RESOLVED: That the annual report from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Committees be noted.

120. STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

The Council considered the Standards Committee Annual report 2020/21, set out at Agenda pages 159 to 166.

It was proposed by John Kaiser and seconded by Abdul Loyes that the report be noted.

John Kaiser outlined the activity undertaken by the Standards Committee throughout the year. At the meeting on 11 January a question had been raised with regards to the composition of the Committee. A review had been undertaken and legal advice sought. The Chief Executive had summarised the Council's position in a letter to all Members. It was acknowledged that the appointments did depart from the Council's Constitution. However, the appointments had been made by Full Council and as such the Committee members had been properly appointed and decisions made not unconstitutional. It was proposed that the letter from the Chief Executive be added as an addendum to the report. John Kaiser thanked the Borough Councillors, Town and Parish Councillors, Independent Persons and Officers for their contribution throughout the year.

Prue Bray was of the opinion that the report sanitised the fact that the Standards Committee had been wrongly constituted for 20 months.

Andy Croy asked that the Constitution Review Working Group consider adding something to the Constitution which stated that the Constitution could only be rewritten if it was stated as an explicit aim as part of a Motion or resolution, or if there was a certain threshold applied.

John Halsall indicated that the Leader had to make a large number of appointments in a short period of time. He apologised for the mistake made in the appointments.

Andy Croy proposed that the following amendment be made, which was seconded by Rachel Burgess.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1) the letter from the Chief Executive "SP Letter re Standards 140121.pdf" emailed to all Members on 15th January be added to the report.

2) the report from the Standards Committee be noted.

This was accepted by John Kaiser.

RESOLVED: That

1) the letter from the Chief Executive "SP Letter re Standards 140121.pdf" emailed to all Members on 15th January be added to the report.

2) the report from the Standards Committee be noted.

121. REPORTS FROM MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES

The Council considered the reports from Members appointed to Outside Bodies, set out at Agenda pages 167 to 202.

It was proposed by John Halsall and seconded by John Kaiser that the reports from Members appointed to Outside Bodies be noted.

John Halsall and John Kaiser thanked Members for giving up their time and attending meetings on behalf of the Council.

With regards to the Keep Mobile report, Pauline Jorgensen indicated that she would take forward the issue regarding the bus stop, referred to within the report.

Shirley Boyt noted that a report had not been included from the Wokingham Waterside Centre.

122. EXTENSION OF THE MEETING

At 10.02pm it was proposed by Prue Bray and seconded by Stephen Conway that, in line with Rule 4.2.8, the meeting be extended by an extra 30 minutes, up to 11.00pm.

Upon being put to the vote, the proposal was lost.

123. CONTINUATION OF REPORTS FROM MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Andy Croy was of the opinion that the most appropriate Member was not always appointed to the Outside Bodies. He commented that the representatives on the Woodley Town Centre Initiative did not have Woodley Town Centre within their wards. Bill Soane stated that he was heavily involved in the work of Woodley Town Centre.

Jim Frewin agreed that the most appropriate Members should be appointed to the Outside Bodies.

Guy Grandison indicated that his report had been late due to seeking clarification on an issue.

Michael Firmager clarified that he was the representative of the Sonning & District Welfare and Educational Trust due to being the Ward Member for Sonning.

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

124. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

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

124.1 Pauline Helliard-Symons 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?

Answer

The Council is doing a significant amount of work to ensure that cyclists are catered for within the Borough and there are a wide range of services, cycle routes, clubs and organisations in the Borough that are available to help residents access cycling as a mode of transport, and a fun way to exercise.

The Council's award-winning My Journey Team continue to promote active and sustainable travel, as well as provide training for children and adults to help people ride more confidently and safely.

The ongoing Greenways programme, once completed will provide a network of traffic-free, multi-user greenway routes connecting the Strategic Development Locations of Arborfield, Shinfield, North and South Wokingham. Route I, running through California Country Park has already been completed, and we are now focussing on the delivery of Route B which links Wokingham to Arborfield. The first section of route B, running through Cantley Park, is currently under construction and due for completion by the end of April 2021.

Supplementary Question:

Can you tell me what progress there has been in putting a cycle route through Gorrick Woods to link up with Byway 28 that Wokingham Without Parish Council has surfaced, thus linking Wokingham Without cyclists and walkers right through to Wokingham Town?

Supplementary Answer:

Wokingham Borough Council is working with Wokingham Without Parish Council to continue the surfacing work along Byway 28 through Gorrick Woods. This will provide a much-improved surface for cyclists and walkers. The works are planned to be completed in early summer of this year.

124.2 Paul Fishwick asked the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement the following question which was answered by the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure:

Question

Bearwood Park Planning Applications

On 1st 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.

Answer

The felling of trees at this location was carried out by the landowner, as you rightly say, as

part of the essential safety works to the dam, required under the Reservoirs Act 1975. The Council were notified of these works via a 5 day notification, as they are required to do so, under regulation 14(2) of the Tree Regulations. A 14(2) 5 day notification gives a landowner the ability to carry out works in order to comply with a statutory obligation or to carry out urgent safety works, and this was the case as there was health and safety issues in particular there, without needing consent from the Local Planning Authority. It is an urgent notification, which the Council cannot determine, our hands are tied, nor can we condition the terms on which it was made, because it was purely a health and safety issue on the reservoir issue.

Supplementary Question:

I do disagree with quite a lot of things that you have said there but my supplementary is, this Council has allowed a developer to destroy an irreplaceable, historic parkland of semi mature, mature and veteran trees, some of which are up to 300 years old. They were covered by a Tree Preservation Order, yet it claims that it is tackling climate change, protecting the environment, and wants to improve air quality and biodiversity. It has taken 150 years from the creation of Bearwood Lake to where we were before the park was destroyed. We do not have 150 years, we have less than 30 years. Wokingham Borough Council has allowed this to happen. What is it going to do to replace it, and it now requires an investigation by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, would you agree?

Supplementary Answer:

Paul, this was a health and safety issue. I have checked it all the way through and we had to allow permission to be given to the owner. They took the decision purely on health and safety grounds, and that is where we are at the moment. Certainly, I can discuss it with you outside of this meeting, by all means on a one to one basis, and involve the relevant officers as well. To be quite honest I do sympathise with what you say but we had to allow it on health and safety grounds, and we did so.

124.3 Rachel Bishop-Firth 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?

Answer

It is true that the number of our older people with dementia is expected to increase. We have identified a need for affordable provision locally to support the needs of the community.

Suffolk Lodge currently provides residential care for 36 older people living with dementia who need the support of a secure environment and a higher level of care from staff. Suffolk Lodge is run by Optalis Ltd and was rated as 'Good' in its most recent inspection.

While Suffolk Lodge has served the community well since the 1980s, the building itself

does not provide the level of facilities to meet the projected need for the community. This includes sufficient provision of nursing care.

Subject to planning permission, it is anticipated that the proposed care home will be delivered in late 2023. We envisage that the home will provide Wokingham with the additional capacity to meet both the existing need and future need for residential and nursing dementia care. The proposed care home will provide 68 beds and will be designed to meet the care needs of older people specifically with dementia. The delivery of the new care home will result in the closure of Suffolk Lodge, with residents being accommodated within the new care home within Emmbrook.

We will obviously work, and are in the process of working with residents, families and colleagues at Suffolk Lodge to ensure that the best interests of all parties are represented.

Supplementary Question:

The closure of a dementia care home is a difficult and sensitive issue, as moving these vulnerable older people out of their home can be a frightening and distressing experience for them. Wokingham's team of Adult Social Care Officers is caring and proactive and we can be certain that they will do their best to care for these patients and their families. When the old Fosters care home in Woodley was closed a few years' ago I know these were a deeply worrying time for residents, families and staff who were affected. Many did not want the closure to go ahead, and residents were moved to private care homes, at considerable cost to patients. The concerns reached BBC News. What has the Council learned from that experience which could make the transition easier when Suffolk Lodge is closed?

Supplementary Answer:

I was not obviously in post when Fosters was closed so it is quite hard for me to comment off the bat, basically about that situation. I am happy to come back to you with a written answer. What I would say is already discussions have taken place with staff, residents and with families to make this move as smooth as possible. We are very aware of the need to do that properly, hence the fact that whilst this is still in its very, very, early stages, as I said to late 2023 and subject to planning and business case. There is a lot of things that could change that. We are already engaging with people to make sure that this is as smooth as possible, but what I would also say is that whilst I fully understand and appreciate that it would be disruptive for people, this new investment in this much improved home, basically will be a big step forward for the quality of life and the quality of experience for these people when it opens. I do hear your comments and concerns and it is taken on board, and I will come back to you on the Fosters point.

124.4 Tahir Maher 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 Aldrynton 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?

Answer

The resurfacing plan that you talk about, there is not an Earley resurfacing programme. There is of course a Borough resurfacing programme.

The selection of roads to be included in the annual planned structural maintenance programme is based upon UK Pavement Management System (UKPMS) which includes annual Network Surveys and our own internal design process (including site visits to check the condition survey scores and where required core sampling to establish the scale of intervention to be recommended). We also actually do slip and skid resistance testing using a vehicle, with wheels slightly off kilter on them to see where the major issues on the roads are.

This is recognised by central government and the wider industry through its code of practice as the national standard for a well-managed highway infrastructure. This approach ensures that the annual structural maintenance programme is based on meeting the highest priority needs on WBC network within the funding available.

Silverdale Road, between Allendale Road and Sevenoaks Road, currently shows a condition score of 306.57, which would indicate medium priority, i.e., maintenance in the next 2-5 years, subject to any new condition surveys or updates in the future.

In the meantime, the road will be regularly inspected and kept safe for public use. The Council team works very hard on road repairs. If you report potholes and other issues online, they will be dealt with, as you can see by the fact that we completed 1,882 repairs in the last year and 192 in February alone. Next year because of our intervention in the Budget we will spend even more on resurfacing, £4.8million, and we will resurface based on the Pavement Management Condition Surveys that I mentioned. If you have any dangerous potholes or anything that you think requires reporting in the meantime, please do it on the website. When Silverdale Road gets to the stage that it is at the top of the list it will be done.

124.5 Sarah Kerr asked the Executive Member for Resident Services, Communications and Emissions the following question. Due to time constraints the following written answer was provided:

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?

Answer

The announcement that the Council seeks to fund as many carbon saving projects as possible demonstrates its desire and intent to support climate emergency activities and achieve its ambition of playing as full a role as possible in reducing our carbon footprint to be net carbon zero by 2030.

The £17m investment is for reducing congestion which means that there will be fewer cars travelling slowly, heavily braking or accelerating, or idling in traffic queues across the Borough. The project makes use of existing capacity and aims to improve and smooth flows, reducing journey times for cars as well as for buses as the funding also enables us to upgrade our signals to facilitate bus priority. This will result in air quality improvements as well CO2 savings as vehicles making their journeys will be travelling for less time.

Additionally, by making bus journeys more attractive, we will be encouraging an increase in bus usage as we recover from the impacts of Covid-19.

We must accept that there are many who cannot, or choose not to, travel by more sustainable means. Our aim is to assist these people whilst also providing for those who would travel by other modes if they found them more attractive. This is likely to reduce the likelihood of them choosing to drive on their shorter journeys.

Carbon accounting is an emerging discipline and whilst we are sure that this project will have an impact in terms of a carbon emissions and air quality it is amongst the hardest to quantify, and consequently we have not included any of these savings in the Climate Emergency Action Plan at this stage.

We believe that reducing congestion will reduce idling time, reduce braking and accelerating time, ease movement across our Borough, reduce carbon emissions and improve air quality. All positive benefits for our residents and for our environment.

Following recommendations in the Climate Emergency Task & Finish group report approved last September the Council is introducing an assessment tool which will be used to estimate the carbon savings of all major council decisions, including budget decisions going forward.

In demonstrating its commitment to funding new projects that can help reduce carbon emissions, the Council seeks to encourage its residents, businesses and schools to also do what they can to reduce their own carbon emissions.

124.6 Stephen Conway asked the Executive Member for Children's Services the following question. Due to time constraints the following written answer was provided:

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.

Answer

Thank you Councillor Conway. Further to our meeting with Councillor Ferris and others on the 5th March I will clarify the current circumstances.

It is the case that The Piggott School recently updated their admissions policy, however it should be noted that that change has had limited impact on the current challenge. The primary issue is that this year is a bulge year in terms of pupils moving from year 6 into year 7, and as such making offers at preferred schools has been difficult as schools Published Admissions Numbers are met.

We have operated within the school admissions arrangements and the Admissions Code in order to make offers on 1st March, which is national offer day. Within the Borough we have allocated a total of 2,320 places with 93.51%, receiving one of their four preferences. However, we do expect that there will be some churn during the next few weeks, as parents choose whether to accept places, or place children in private provision or access grammar schools. This may free up spaces which will enable schools to draw from their wait lists, and therefore offer places that were not available on National Offer day.

As we agreed we will keep colleagues and parents updated as the situation and immediate challenge changes.

124.7 Rachel Shepherd-DuBey asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question. Due to time constraints the following written answer was provided:

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?

Answer

The speed limit in this section of Bearwood Road is 40mph, reducing to a part-time 20mph speed limit when the school is in operation. Data shows a high level of compliance with these limits at relevant times and a generally good road safety record, with 3 slight injury collisions over a 10 year period, none of which occurred outside the school.

As Members will recall, the intention to reduce the speed limit on Bearwood Road is related to the opportunity to introduce a formal pedestrian crossing facility for residents and parents/pupils accessing the adjacent Bearwood Primary School which was under consideration following the offer of financial contribution from a local business.

Progress towards this objective has been delayed, partly by issues associated with connecting pedestrian links to the nearby Winnersh Community Centre, where parents are encouraged to park as part of the School's Travel Plan arrangements, and the need to achieve appropriate roadside surface water drainage, and partly by the impacts of Covid which has changed road user behaviour and needs to be reassessed once schools have reopened and normal traffic conditions have resumed.

Notwithstanding these issues, officers are progressing the design of the crossing and will liaise with Thames Valley Police over the speed limit reduction, as soon as on-site inspections are possible. This is being progressed alongside discussion over other speed limit adjustments in the Borough, following the recent review of speed limits on our A & B road network.

124.8 Clive Jones asked the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure the following question. Due to time constraints the following written answer was provided by the Executive Member for Resident Services, Communications and Emissions:

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?

Answer

Very shortly after I was given my current portfolio Councillor Jorgensen came to me specifically to talk to me about how I could support her in her work to protect Area DD from any future speculative development. Since 1992 Councillor Jorgensen has been actively working to protect this area of land. It started with her campaign to prevent Great Mills from building a DIY store on site.

Having discussed the site with Councillor Jorgensen, and subsequently visited the site, it is clear to me that in order to protect this site, one of the most important things to do is to clean it up. That does not mean to clear back the brush, disrupt the wildlife or cut down any of the trees, bushes or shrubs.

What it means is that we intend to clean up the plastic bags, the discarded plastic bottles, and drinks cans, remove the litter and rubbish from the site and to generally clean it up. While I am sure that this is a site that is important to ecology, wildlife and is of great significance to the area, I am sure you will agree with me that leaving the site as a litter trap and rubbish dump is not beneficial to the wildlife, to the flora or fauna or to the vast biodiversity that call this area home.

So, there is no ecologist report. I did not think we needed one for litter picking. But if you want the opinion of an ecologist, I will give you one from internationally renowned American Ecologist and Oceanographer Charles Moore who said "Only we humans make waste that nature can't digest." Councillor Jorgensen and I believe that we owe it to the nature and the biodiversity of Area DD to get rid of the human generated waste at this important site of nature. I hope to see you there helping with the clean up one day very

soon.

124.9 Jim Frewin asked the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement the following question. Due to time constraints the following written answer was provided:

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?

Answer

I'm sure you would agree that a Member briefing is important as indeed you were briefed by the developer at a presentation on 27 January 2021 before any other group including myself as Executive Member.

I can confirm that, in appropriate cases, where there are novel and major development proposals emerging, it is normal to seek to ensure that all parties are briefed. Any similar proposals could be subject to similar briefing measures.

124.10 Shirley Boyt asked the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure the following question. Due to time constraints the following written answer was provided:

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?

Answer

Wokingham Borough Council has gratefully received a grant of £300,000 from Woodland Trust to allow it to plant over 250,000 trees across the Borough. The project is still within the preliminary phases and we are currently identifying the most suitable locations within the Borough to plant these trees.

This funding, which is part of the Woodlands Trust's £2.9 million campaign delivered from the charity's new Emergency Tree Fund, will provide much needed support to local

authorities including Wokingham Borough to boost tree cover and tackle climate change. And I thank my fellow Executive Members John Halsall and Gregor Murray in securing this grant funding.

The Council declared a climate emergency in July 2019 and committed to play as full a role as possible in achieving carbon neutrality by 2030, 20 years sooner than the government's target of 2050.

Growing trees can help remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Not only is wood a great way of storing carbon but the right tree in the right place can help restore the soil around it and a significant amount of carbon dioxide can be sequestered here. Trees can also help communities to adapt to a changed climate by providing a cooling shade.

And I would agree that the best window of time to plant trees is between November and March.

124.11 Andy Croy asked the Leader of the Council the following question. Due to time constraints the following written answer was provided:

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?

Answer

Apologies if a formal response was not provided at the time when the Investment Group (and the entire Council) were covering a lot of extra bases at the onset the Pandemic a year ago. In fact, this was one of five opportunities the Group was reviewing in Woodley (alone) around that time.

In response to the inevitable economic shock of the Pandemic the Investment Group quite rightly decided to focus on high quality assets that provide long-term high-quality income from strong tenant covenants. Outside of this category of quality asset the team was very nervous about buying anything that might be vulnerable to the impact of the pandemic and provide a poor return on taxpayers' money.

The Greene King pub was reported to be under threat from residential development which meant that if we were to buy it, we would have to outbid the developers and pay more than investment value. That would be difficult for the Council to justify and ultimately show a poor return on the funds invested.

As you will be aware, a short time later the Council purchased Waitrose in Woodley town centre which has performed well through the pandemic. By contrast the hospitality sector has suffered severely as a result of lockdowns and tiered controls for much of the last year. So, with the benefit of hindsight, it is probably doubly fortunate that the Council decided not to pursue this pub as an investment vehicle last year.

The pub website currently states that they are preparing to "make a comeback" post

pandemic, which will be seen as good news for the community.

125. MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND WARD MATTERS

Due to time constraints this item was not considered.

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

Due to time constraints this item was not considered.

127. MOTIONS

127.1 Motion 454 submitted by Clive Jones

Due to time constraints this item was not considered.

127.2 Motion 455 submitted by Gregor Murray

Due to time constraints this item was not considered.

127.3 Motion 456 submitted by Pauline Helliard-Symons

Due to time constraints this item was not considered.

127.4 Motion 457 submitted by Shirley Boyt

Due to time constraints this item was not considered.

Agenda Item 9.

TITLE	Returning Officers report on May 2021 elections
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Council on 20 May 2021
WARD	None specific
LEAD OFFICER	Assistant Director Governance - Andrew Moulton

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

To inform Council and residents of the results of 6th May 2021 elections.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council notes the report of the Returning Officer.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

On 6 May 2021, elections were held in eighteen wards of the Borough Council, two by-elections in the town councils of Wokingham and Woodley, and Police & Crime Commissioner elections for the Thames Valley Area. These polls had been postponed from 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Government announced on 5 February 2021 that the elections would proceed. Consequently, the polls were delivered against a backdrop of public health restrictions which presented complex new challenges for all involved in the electoral process.

The count for the Borough and Town elections was held on Saturday 8 May, with the Police & Crime Commissioner count taking place on Monday 10 May.

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

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

Background

1. Introduction

- 1.1 On 6 May 2021, multiple elections were held for the Borough Council, Wokingham and Woodley Town Councils, and the Police & Crime Commissioner elections for the Thames Valley Area.
- 1.2 The total number of electors for Borough wards was 108,633.
- 1.3 64 candidates contested the 18 available seats on the Borough Council across 18 wards. Of those, the representation of the various parties was as follows:
 - 18 Conservative
 - 2 Freedom Alliance. No Lockdowns. No Curfews
 - 7 Green Party
 - 18 Labour
 - 18 Liberal Democrat
 - 1 Women's Equality

2. The Election Process

- 2.1 Planning for elections takes place many months in advance of election day. However, these set of elections were much more complex to administer given that notice was not given until 5 February that the elections were to go ahead and the many additional steps needed to ensure the various processes could be delivered safely but maintaining transparency and accuracy.
- 2.2 Whilst the Government amended the requirements for the nomination arrangements for candidates, the impact of Covid-19 made the process more complex with additional burdens on candidates and agents to deliver nomination papers safely and securely. However, the procedure ran smoothly overall with positive feedback.
- 2.3 On the day of the poll, 78 polling stations were in use during the polling hours of 7am to 10pm. All polling stations had been carefully risk-assessed in the lead-in to polling day to ensure health and safety provisions could be met. Visiting/inspecting officers attended all polling stations to ensure that all statutory procedures were adhered to under the Representation of the People Acts, and also that access arrangements were adequate for disabled voters and that health and safety aspects were covered. Feedback from this process will be used to help improve further the arrangements for future elections.
- 2.4 The verification of all ballot papers for the elections took place at Loddon Valley Leisure Centre on Friday 7th May. The Borough and Town counts took place on Saturday 8th May, and the Police & Crime Commissioner count on Monday 10th May. Again, all feedback received about the venue and count process is being taken into account to improve future processes.
- 2.5 At the elections in May 2021, over 725 casual election jobs were staffed and I would like to thank all Deputy Returning Officers, Presiding Officers, Poll Clerks, counting and postal vote opening staff, supervisors and the Democratic and

Electoral Services Team who carried out this important task in exceptionally difficult circumstances. I am also grateful to colleagues across the Council from public health, health and safety, IT, facilities, communications and customer services who made significant contributions to ensuring the successful administration of this important corporate event.

3. Election Results

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

4. Conclusion

4.1 The elections processes for May 2021 were complex, labour intensive, and delivered in accordance with public health restrictions. In the main, the various processes ran smoothly and in accordance with plans. Where any improvements are identified, these will be built into our processes for future elections.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

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)	There are no specific financial implications of this report.		
Next Financial Year (Year 2)			
Following Financial Year (Year 3)			

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

There are no other financial implications associated with this report.

Cross-Council Implications

Elections are a key corporate event that require a cross-Council approach to ensure their successful delivery.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty is taken in the planning and discharge of the election processes.

List of Background Papers

None

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ELECTION OF BOROUGH COUNCILLORS 6 MAY 2021

RETURN OF COUNCILLORS ELECTED

Ward	Turnout %	Name	Political Party	Retirement Date
Bulmershe & Whitegates	48.12	Shahid Younis	Conservative	2024
Charvil	52.16	Salman (Sam) Akhtar	Conservative	2024
Emmbrook	47.43	Joan (Morag) Malvern	Liberal Democrat	2024
Evendons	44.18	Ian Shenton	Liberal Democrat	2024
Finchampstead North	44.86	Charles Margetts	Conservative	2024
Finchampstead South	39.03	Rebecca Margetts	Conservative	2024
Hawkedon	37.82	Clive Jones	Liberal Democrat	2024
Hillside	49.13	Pauline Jorgensen	Conservative	2024
Hurst	49.96	Wayne Smith	Conservative	2024
Loddon	39.03	Anne Chadwick	Conservative	2024
Maiden Erlegh	44.73	Norman Jorgensen	Conservative	2024
Norreys	41.87	Philip Cunnington	Conservative	2024
Remenham, Wargrave & Ruscombe	42.15	John Halsall	Conservative	2024
Shinfield South	34.78	Jaqueline Rance	Conservative	2024
Twyford	53.81	Lindsay Ferris	Liberal Democrat	2024
Wescott	43.15	Peter Dennis	Liberal Democrat	2024
Winnersh	38.09	Rachelle Shepherd-Dubey	Liberal Democrat	2024
Wokingham Without	44.31	Pauline Helliars-Symons	Conservative	2024

TITLE	Housing Strategy 2020 - 24
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Council on Thursday, 20 May 2021
WARD	None Specific;
LEAD OFFICER	Director, Place and Growth
LEAD MEMBER	Executive Member for Finance and Housing - John Kaiser

PURPOSE OF REPORT (INC STRATEGIC OUTCOMES)

To obtain Council approval to adopt the proposed Housing Strategy 2020-2024 following agreement by the Executive at its meeting on 25 March 2021.

The strategy sets out the Council's vision for housing in Wokingham Borough from 2020 – 2024. It has four key strategic priorities:

- Address and understand our housing needs
- Support our vulnerable residents through a range of housing options
- Improve the quality, sustainability and management of the Borough's homes
- Enriching people's lives

These objectives reflect the Council's core role in relation to housing supply, housing need and demand, managing and influencing quality. Whilst the Council has a broad role as the strategic housing authority, we are placing special emphasis on the key priorities within the strategy.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council be recommended to approve the adoption of the proposed Housing Strategy 2020-2024.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Housing plays a huge role in the health, environmental and economic well-being of everyone who lives in the borough. Through this strategy, we will help to ensure that we address and understand our housing need, especially given the economic and social impacts following Covid-19. We will build the right homes in the right places, improve the quality, sustainability and design of the housing stock and support our residents by developing socially inclusive communities.

The Housing Strategy 2020 – 2024 will act as a framework strategy under which other housing strategies such as the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy will sit. As such the strategy format is different to other Council strategies, with this format being more accessible and user friendly so it can be used as a framework document.

The Council has a responsibility to address and understand the housing needs of all its residents and the strategy outlines the Council's role within the wider housing agenda. The housing strategy outlines how the Council will achieve its responsibilities. A detailed

action plan accompanies the strategy and this will be updated on an annual basis. The action plan gives more details on some of the key objectives to be delivered during the strategy period. The accompanying action plan details targets for 2021/22. The strategy is aligned to the Community Vision 2020 – 2024 of which housing plays a key integral role. Some of the key challenges outlined in the Community Vision are also referenced in the housing strategy.

The Housing Strategy 2020-2024 has four key priorities:

1. Address and understand our housing needs
2. Support our vulnerable residents through a range of housing options
3. Improve the quality, sustainability and management of the Borough's homes
4. Enriching people's lives

The expected outcomes of the strategy are:

- Understand and address our housing need, especially given the economic and social impacts following Covid-19.
- Delivery of more high quality sustainable homes in the right places through the Council's 'Housing 1-4-5 Challenge' – where the Council leads on the delivery of 1000 additional homes over the 4 year strategy period providing an average 5% return.
- In addition the enabling and/or delivery of c100 additional new homes, predominantly on brownfield sites, not currently identified in the current draft Local Plan Update but required to bridge the shortfall against the total annual number prescribed by Government
- Deliver a step change in the provision of new affordable homes through the Council's housing companies and Housing Revenue Account
- Delivery of a further 800 affordable homes to be delivered through the Council's
- More opportunities for low cost home ownership including an affordable self-build programme and exploring additional housing options for key workers and essential workers
- The Council helping to deliver the right homes in the right places, with housing policies informing and complementing the new local plan and making sure that infrastructure is delivered first in new housing developments
- Delivering housing and support tailored to meet identified need, by developing more specialist housing for vulnerable people based on need including those at risk of homelessness, adult social care clients, children in care and care leavers
- Improving information and guidance, by enhancing the digital advice and guidance available to residents via the Council's website and other sources
- Developing effective policies and strategies to ensure supported housing meets need through additional supporting policies such as the use of extra care for older people and move on accommodation for care leavers and vulnerable young people
- Improving the quality and management of homes both within the social housing stock and private rented sector, by maintaining Decent Homes Standard and improving customer satisfaction across all new homes and those owned by Housing Associations
- Ensuring the quality and sustainability of design of all homes through energy efficiency and exploring modern methods of construction for housing delivery
- Regenerating old housing stock such as Gorse Ride community in Finchampstead

- Developing more socially inclusive communities and helping to provide all tenants with a stable home for example through additional employment opportunities and skills development

Members, Officers, stakeholders and the public have had the opportunity to respond to the consultation on the draft strategy. The consultation was sent out across the Council, to all Members, the Parish and Town Councils, the RP Partnership, TLIP, MHCLG, Homes England, partners and agencies and local charities. It was also be publicised via a press release and our social media.

We received 37 responses in total, of which 27 were from residents. Between 77% - 80% either agreed or strongly agreed with each of the objectives set out in the strategy. 71% felt that the purpose of the Housing Strategy is clear and 61% agreed with the approach taken in the Housing Strategy.

BACKGROUND

The Council's previous Housing Strategy covers the period 2015-18. In 2015, we set out five key priorities:

1. Addressing our housing needs
2. Supporting vulnerable people
3. Tackling homelessness and housing need
4. Enhancing tenant services
5. Expanding opportunities for vulnerable residents

During the previous strategy period a number of key successes were achieved, these include:

- Completed 1182 affordable homes during 2015/16 – 2018/19
- Generated a future pipeline of over 2000 additional affordable homes
- Started work on our first affordable self-build scheme in the Borough
- Commissioned a GRT needs evidence based study to inform the new Local Plan
- Delivered housing schemes through our housing companies such as Phoenix Avenue and Fosters extra care scheme
- Delivered an affordable rented scheme for key workers in Wokingham town centre
- Completed two Extra Care schemes at Fosters and the Birches in Woodley
- Completed a supported housing scheme for young people in Reading Road, to replace supported housing at Seaford Court
- Developed temporary accommodation for vulnerable adults at Foxwood and Broadway House
- Delivered a range of support services to enable vulnerable adults to live more independently
- Maintained low levels of homeless acceptances and repeat homelessness by focusing on practical responses and prevention
- Helped people access private rented housing, through schemes such as the Rent in Advance/ Deposit Loan Scheme
- Assisted 315 young people through a joined-up housing and employment advice service at "Elevate Wokingham"
- Met and maintained the Decent Homes Standard on our own housing stock
Assisted 43 residents to set up their own business through the "Strive" enterprise programme

The Housing Strategy 2020 – 2024 will act as a framework strategy under which other housing strategies such as the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy will sit. As such the strategy format is different to other Council strategies, with this format being more accessible and user friendly so it can be used as a framework document.

The Council has a responsibility to address and understand the housing needs of all its residents and the strategy outlines the Council's role within the wider housing agenda. The draft housing strategy outlines how the Council will achieve its responsibilities. An action plan will accompany the strategy and this will be updated on an annual basis. The action plan gives more details on some of the key objectives to be delivered during the strategy period. The strategy is aligned to the Community Vision 2020 – 2024 of which housing plays a key integral role. Some of the key challenges outlined in the

Community Vision are also referenced in the housing strategy. These include protecting the quality of the environment and sustainability of existing communities with the need for new housing, ensuring the right infrastructure is in place and that we address and manage demand for those who are ageing or have long term health conditions. Tackling issues such as social isolation, pockets of deprivation and unemployment and climate change, are also referenced within the housing strategy. We also need to understand and address the immediate and longer term impact of Covid-19 on our housing needs.

The Housing Strategy 2020-2024 has four key priorities:

1. Address and understand our housing needs
2. Support our vulnerable residents through a range of housing options
3. Improve the quality, sustainability and management of the Borough's homes
4. Enriching people's lives

As part of the public consultation on the draft Housing Strategy, we received 37 responses in total, of which 27 were from residents. Between 77% - 80% either agreed or strongly agreed with each of the objectives set out in the strategy. 71% felt that the purpose of the Housing Strategy is clear and 61% agreed with the approach taken in the Housing Strategy.

There were a number of additional comments received during the strategy consultation, the majority of which have been addressed within the strategy's accompanying action plan. The main concerns have centred around wanting to know where new development is likely to be based and the importance of having an up to date Local Plan; impact of development on the environment and conservation of green spaces; ensuring the right infrastructure is in place to support new and existing communities, and addressing the economic and social impacts arising from Covid and Brexit. There were also comments around ensuring a more diverse and robust private rental sector especially for those who are unemployed or have poor credit history and ensuring there are more opportunities for young people to secure suitable and affordable housing given the high house prices and general unaffordability of the private rental sector within the Borough. There were also several comments about the mix of new housing within the Borough and a perceived over supply of flatted units, especially with the change in demand following the Covid pandemic for more outdoor space and adequate indoor space for home working.

BUSINESS CASE

The Housing Strategy 2020-2024 has four key priorities and their importance are outlined below:

1. Address and understand our housing needs

The population of our Borough is changing. More housing will need to be available to meet demand, with a diverse mix of homes to meet the changing needs of our growing population including a growing older population. There are currently 576 households (Jan 2021) on the Council's Housing Register identified as being in housing need. The Borough also needs to have a range of housing types and an environment and infrastructure that supports growth, helping to retain and attract a professional workforce and essential key workers. We also need to understand and address the housing, economic and social needs following Covid-19.

2. Support our vulnerable residents through a range of housing options

We want to support more people to live independently for longer by offering the right housing options to meet their needs, as well as high quality information and advice to help residents to make informed housing decisions. Investing in housing support for vulnerable people helps keep them healthy. Every £1 invested delivers nearly £2 of benefit through costs avoided to public services including care, health and crime costs, The Health Foundation.

3. Improve the quality, sustainability and management of the Borough's homes

Poor quality housing has a significant impact on residents' health and wellbeing. It is also linked to children's quality of life and educational attainment, due to higher rates of sickness and absence from school. A good choice of high quality and sustainable housing will help the Borough to achieve many of its ambitions, including its vision to be carbon neutral by 2030.

4. Enriching people's lives

As well as helping to provide our residents with sustainable homes, the Council, together with our partners, has a vital role to play in improving people's life chances and reducing worklessness and a reliance on benefits. By investing in programmes and initiatives to help residents and others in housing need, we can transform lives, as well as supporting the local economy and wider community.

The expected outcomes for year 1 of the strategy which are detailed in the accompanying action plan include:

- Delivery of more homes in the Borough – delivery of 140 homes as part of the Council's 1-4-5 housing delivery programme and a further 200 affordable homes to be delivered through the Council's partnership with housing associations. Work towards delivering the additional (c100) homes per annum (all tenures) not currently identified in the current draft Local Plan Update but required to bridge the shortfall against the total annual number prescribed by Government.
- More opportunities for low cost home ownership, such as the affordable self-build programme, achieving outline planning permission at Toutley East by the end of Q2 2021/22
- The Council helping to deliver the right homes in the right places, with housing policies informing and complementing the new local plan and making sure that infrastructure is delivered first in new housing developments, with a target of having a draft affordable housing policy and SPD agreed prior to Council adoption
- Delivering housing and support tailored to meet identified need, by developing more specialist housing for vulnerable people based on need including those at risk of homelessness, adult social care clients, children in care and care leavers. The target for 2021/22 is to deliver 11 units of accommodation for learning disabled clients, 10 units for mental health clients, 7 units for vulnerable young people and 5 units of accommodation for homelessness.
- Improving information and guidance, by enhancing the digital advice and guidance available to residents via the Council's website and other sources, with a user survey carried out to measure impact.

- Devising and implementing how the Council approaches the issues highlighted in the recent Housing White Paper including ensuring the quality and safety of homes, clear information on performance and a strong voice for residents and tenants
- Developing effective policies and strategies to ensure supported housing meets need through additional supporting policies such as the use of extra care for older people and move on accommodation for care leavers and vulnerable young people, developing an extra care policy ready for adoption during 2021/22.
- Improving the quality and management of homes both within the social housing stock and private rented sector, maintaining a target of 100% Decent Homes Standard on homes owned by the Council, Loddon Homes and other partner Housing Associations.
- Ensuring the quality and sustainability of design of all homes through energy efficiency and exploring modern methods of construction for housing delivery. The target for 2021/22 is to set up a programme of retrofitting the Council's housing stock to net zero standards and work with partners to help achieve net zero standards as well as developing a policy and SPD for inclusion in the new local plan.
- Regenerating old housing stock such as the Gorse Ride community in Finchampstead, delivering 46 new homes as part of phase 1 and to be onsite with 249 units as part of phase 2
- Developing more socially inclusive communities and helping to provide all tenants with a stable home for example through additional employment opportunities and skills development, identifying and planning activities around preventative measures and undertaking social value impact assessments on social and community activities

Next Steps

The Housing Strategy 2020-2024 received agreement from the Executive at its meeting held on 25 March 2021 and is now going to full Council for approval and adoption. If adoption is agreed then the Strategy will be published in early Summer.

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)	This strategy will be resourced through existing funding within the Council's MTFP and access to wider external funding such as Homes England grants programmes.		
Next Financial Year (Year 2)			
Following Financial Year (Year 3)			

Other Financial Information

The capital approvals needed to enact this strategy will be sought and contained within the annual budget setting process. In addition to meeting Housing needs, the 1-4-5 programme will also provide valuable Revenue resources for the Council.

Stakeholder Considerations and Consultation

Members, Officers, stakeholders and the public have had the opportunity to respond to the consultation on the draft strategy. The consultation has been made available via the Council's website, with associated press releases, invitations to respond and social media push.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty has been taken. An equality impact assessment has been carried out and is included as Enclosure 2.

Climate Emergency – *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*

The Housing Strategy will help towards achieving carbon neutrality by 2030 as one of the key priorities is around improving the quality, sustainability and management of the Borough's housing stock, ensuring that the Council helps to improve carbon efficiency, reduce carbon emissions and fuel poverty.

List of Background Papers

Housing Strategy 2020 – 2024 – Enclosure 1
Year 1 Action Plan – Enclosure 2
Equality Impact Assessment – Enclosure 3
Housing Facts and Figures – Enclosure 4

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Wokingham Borough Council Housing Strategy 2020-2024



“Right Homes, Right Places”

Housing plays a huge role in the health, environmental and economic well-being of everyone who lives in the borough. It is more than just bricks and mortar; everyone is affected by housing. Housing has become the defining economic and social issue of our times.

The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has stated its intention to fix the broken housing market and increase housing supply, unlocking homes in areas where need is greatest and encouraging best practice in delivering high quality design to underpin the creation of great places to live. Our residents and partners have told us they are most concerned about the impact of development upon communities and that some people find challenges in finding an affordable home. We want to improve the outcomes of our residents by delivering the strategic priorities outlined in our **Community Vision 2020 – 2024**, of which housing plays a key integral role. Through this strategy, we will help to ensure that we address and understand our housing need, especially given the economic and social impacts following Covid-19. We will build the right homes in the right places, improve the quality, sustainability and design of the housing stock and support our residents by developing socially inclusive communities.

The Council’s role includes:

- Working with developers and partners to deliver good quality sustainable homes in the right places.
- Investing in our own housing stock and delivering ambitious estate regeneration programmes.
- Working with landlords to improve standards of private rental sector properties.
- Working across different departments, agencies and other Berkshire authorities to ensure effective infrastructure delivery to mitigate against development and support new and existing communities.
- Prioritising people with additional support needs to access appropriate accommodation and support.
- Acting as the corporate parent and providing for children in care and young people leaving care.
- Improving the health and wellbeing of the Borough’s residents by helping to provide stable homes and develop well connected and socially inclusive communities.

Key facts and figures

- **167,979** people live in Wokingham Borough, and this is expected to grow by **5.4%** by **2030**, to **177,100** people (ONS, 2018)
- The average price of a home in the Borough is **£416,612** compared to a national average of **£234,853** (HM Land Registry, August 2019)
- Those on the Council’s Housing Register identified as being in **housing need** stands at **563 households** (October, 2020)

Our housing priorities – what we will do

Priority	Why is this important?
Address and understand our housing needs	The population of our Borough is changing. More housing will be needed to meet demand, with a diverse mix of homes to meet the changing needs of our growing population including a growing older population as well as helping to retain and attract a professional workforce including essential keyworkers. As part of this we will invest in our own housing stock and deliver a step change in the provision of new affordable homes through the Council’s housing companies and Housing Revenue Account. We also need to understand and address the immediate and longer impact of Covid-19 on our housing needs.
Support our vulnerable residents through a range of housing options	We want to support more people to live independently and keep healthy for longer by offering the right housing options to meet their needs. Following the impact of Covid-19 we will offer more support to those who are homeless, sleeping rough or at risk of homelessness. We prioritise those children in care and young people leaving care, ensuring that there are clear housing pathways to a stable home, helping young people in need by providing additional support to live independently.
Improve the quality, sustainability and management of the Borough’s homes	Poor quality housing has a significant impact on residents’ health and wellbeing. It is also linked to children’s quality of life and educational attainment, due to higher rates of sickness and absence from school. A good choice of high quality, sustainable and well managed housing will help the Borough to achieve many of its ambitions, including its vision to be carbon neutral by 2030.
Enriching people’s lives	The Council, together with our partners, has a vital role to play in creating vibrant inclusive communities, improving people’s life chances and reducing worklessness and a reliance on benefits. By investing in programmes and initiatives to help residents and others in housing need, we can transform lives, as well as supporting the local economy and wider community.

Our successes since the last Housing Strategy

- As a Local Authority we delivered one of the highest numbers of affordable homes in England, completing 1182 affordable homes during 2015/16 – 2018/19 and generating a future pipeline of over 2000 additional affordable homes
- Due to the large number of affordable homes delivered, compared to other Berkshire and Greater London authorities the number of people on our Housing Register remains static but low
- By securing external grant funding from Homes England, our housing companies delivered affordable housing schemes such as Phoenix Avenue, Fosters extra care scheme and a supported housing scheme for young people at risk of homelessness in Reading Road
- Delivered an affordable rented scheme for key workers in Wokingham town centre
- Completed 2 Extra Care schemes for older people at Fosters and the Birches in Woodley
- Developed temporary accommodation for adults at Foxwood and Broadway House
- Delivered a range of support services to enable vulnerable adults to live more independently
- Maintained low levels of homelessness by focusing on practical responses and prevention and enhancing housing pathways to help end rough sleeping
- Helped people access and secure private rented housing, through schemes such as the Rent in Advance/ Deposit Loan Scheme
- Assisted 315 young people through a joined-up housing and employment advice service at “Elevate Wokingham”
- Met and maintained the Decent Homes Standard target on our own housing stock
- Enabled 43 residents to set up their own business through the “Strive” enterprise programme

Our challenges going forward

- We have a challenge within the Borough to manage and balance need with requirement for new housing, whilst protecting the quality of our environment and the sustainability of our existing communities. Creating places and communities fit for the future that are inclusive to all and have the right infrastructure in place. Ensuring that our homes are affordable, sustainable and of good quality and supporting those with specialist needs or who are at risk of homelessness.
- We need to understand and address the impact of Covid-19 on our housing requirements, especially for our older and vulnerable residents.
- Wokingham Borough has a growing population with many thriving communities but with an increasing proportion of residents with long term health conditions, such as dementia, and people with learning disabilities or difficulties, it is important that we address and manage demand for long term care and maintain high quality services.
- Tackling health issues and social isolation is a challenge in the Borough, particularly in older people, those with mental health issues and carers. There are pockets of deprivation, unemployment and a risk of poverty within working families. There has been an increase in the number of children and young people seeking support for mental health issues.
- To tackle climate change, achieve carbon neutrality by 2030, while adapting for a growing population and seeking out value for money.

What do our residents say?

In the New Homes Survey 2020:

- **83%** of respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied with their new home
- **74%** of housing association tenants were satisfied with their new home
- **94%** agree that their house and area are attractive
- **83%** do not feel socially isolated with **74%** seeing their community as good or growing

What we are going to do - how we will address our priorities

Priority	Outcomes	What are we going to do?
Address and understand our housing needs	Delivery of more homes in the Borough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council to lead on the delivery of 1000 additional homes over the 4 year strategy period (Housing 1-4-5 Challenge*) with at least 50% being classified as affordable Work towards ensuring delivery of the number of homes per annum (all tenures) set out in the Local Plan Update and prescribed by Government and maintaining a robust 5 year housing land supply An additional 800 affordable homes to be delivered through the Council's partnership with housing associations
	More opportunities for low cost home ownership and private renting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver the Council's first affordable self-build scheme and develop other opportunities for community led housing Explore new tenures and opportunities to help those who want to get onto the home ownership ladder Work with private landlords to expand the private rented sector to increase the range of available housing options
	The Council helps to deliver the right homes in the right places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a strong evidence base of need and develop housing policies which will inform and complement the new Local Plan Ensure that any development with housing provision addresses local need and essential infrastructure is delivered up front Make the best use of Council-owned land setting the standard for high quality sustainable housing Continue to deliver high quality affordable and market homes for local people in Wokingham Borough by working with a range of partners and agencies Ensure we can meet the housing needs of the Borough's key workers Implement a new Allocations Policy to ensure best use of the Borough's affordable housing stock Address the housing needs of our Gypsy Roma Traveller and boat dweller communities
Supporting our vulnerable residents through a range of housing options	Delivering housing and support tailored to meet identified need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing more supported housing for vulnerable people based on need including rough sleepers, homeless or those at risk of homelessness, adult social care clients, children in care and care leavers Continue to provide a range of housing support services to help vulnerable people live independently Delivery of a new council owned care home Delivery of two additional semi-independent living schemes for young people and care leavers in Wokingham, providing housing pathways for those in need of support
	Improving guidance and information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to improve access to information, advice and guidance on housing, distributing information through a variety of partners including our town and parish councils, Citizens Advice Wokingham, voluntary and charity sector partners Enhance the digital advice and guidance available to residents via the Council's website and social media
	Developing effective policies and strategies to ensure supported housing meets need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing policies and strategies around the development and use of housing for vulnerable residents including a learning disability accommodation strategy, accommodation for those with mental health, the use of extra care for older people and move on accommodation for care leavers and vulnerable young people
Improving the quality, sustainability and management of the Borough's homes	Improving the quality and management of homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the quality and on-going management of homes and environment on all new developments Make best use of existing homes and assets to help tackle housing need as well as over-crowding and under-occupation Ensure all landlords in the Borough engage with and listen to their tenants and deliver the best possible housing management service Ensure that the Council continues to engage with and involve its tenants through the Tenant and Landlord Improvement Panel and ensure the core values of their Tenants Charter are reflected across all housing Support our Private Rented Sector (PRS) residents and work with PRS landlords to improve standards of properties Improve the temporary and emergency accommodation offer for rough sleepers and homeless residents Ensure that fire safety, health and safety remains the top priority in every home and housing scheme
	Ensuring quality and sustainability of design of all homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The adoption of a new Local Plan, Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document and Borough Design Guide Improve energy efficiency, reduce carbon emissions and fuel poverty, working towards net zero carbon by 2030 Explore more innovative ways of housing delivery including modern methods of construction
	Regenerating communities and housing stock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to deliver regeneration programmes of older, poor quality housing stock such as at Gorse Ride in Finchampstead Ensure any regeneration projects are led by the local community and address their needs and priorities
Enriching people's lives	Developing more socially inclusive communities through employment opportunities and skills development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote independence, health and wellbeing to all residents Work to provide all tenants with a stable home to increase life chances Create communities and homes, not housing and estates, ensuring that the impact on existing communities from new development is minimised during the development period and is positive in the longer term Continue to expand employment and training opportunities for all residents including exploring and implementing opportunities for vulnerable residents Improve day to day housing affordability through preventative projects to tackle challenges such as fuel poverty Work together with partner Housing Associations (RPs) on specific activities which contribute to social and community inclusion and reduce any stigma relating to social housing

How will we measure success? We will use the following example indicators to measure our progress against the high level outcomes:

Address and understand our housing needs	Supporting our vulnerable residents through a range of housing options	Improving the quality and sustainability of the Borough's housing stock	Enriching people's lives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of new homes delivered Number of affordable homes delivered Delivery of an affordable self-build project at Toutley Implementation of new Allocations Policy Delivery of additional GRT pitches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numbers of people accessing information, advice and guidance Number of care leavers and LD residents in suitable accommodation % of those presenting as homeless, homeless acceptances and use of B&B Delivery of supported housing projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of affordable housing stock which meets the Decent Homes Standard Ensure all new homes are carbon-neutral Adoption of a new Local Plan Affordable Housing SPD and Borough Design Guide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of households lifted out of fuel poverty Number of residents participating in business enterprise/skills development courses % satisfaction levels in the annual New Homes survey

An accompanying action plan has been developed which will be updated annually and will set out how the Council will deliver against the priorities set out above. Progress will be monitored by the Council, AHIG (member/officer group) and the Housing Delivery/RP Partnership.

Local housing data is collated, analysed and published every 6 months in the Housing Facts and Figures report available on the Council's website.

* The Council's housing development challenge that aims to deliver 1000 homes over a 4 year period generating a 5% return rate on investment

SUMMARY ACTION PLAN FOR HOUSING STRATEGY 2020-2024 – YEAR 1 ACTIONS & TARGETS					
	Priorities	Outcomes	Actions/Targets for 2021 - 2022	Lead Service Area	Progress/To Note
Objective j : Address and Understand our Housing Needs					
i	Understand and address the housing, economic and social needs following the Covid-19 pandemic	Mitigate where possible the social and economic impacts and ensure future strategies and housing provision reflect lessons learned and changes in requirements following Covid	Monitor housing data each quarter including number of evictions and mortgage defaults	Place Commissioning	On-going – Housing Facts and figures published quarterly and reviewed by Council's Affordable housing Implementation Group (AHIG)
			Work corporately and with partners to address housing-related social and economic impacts and support tenants and shared owners impacted by the pandemic	Place Commissioning / Commercial Property / Loddon Homes	On-going work
			Review affordable housing design to address any changes in requirements or demand following Covid – eg outside space, working/schooling from home etc	Place Commissioning / Commercial Property / Loddon Homes	
			Review Borough Design Guide to reflect changing requirements and demands post-Covid, incorporating the Government's proposals around green infrastructure standards in new developments to support health and wellbeing	Place Commissioning / Planning Policy	
ii	Wokingham Borough Council to complete 1,000 additional homes over the strategy period (to include at least 50% affordable)	A range of high quality affordable housing across the borough to meet housing needs, including new and innovative tenures	Work towards overall target of 1,000 Council led homes, over a 4 year period with a 5% return on investment (the 'Housing 1-4-5' challenge). 2021/22 target to deliver 140 homes.	Place Commissioning Team / Commercial Property	As at Jan 21, there were 46 housing completions during 2020/21, 149 new homes on site, 657 being progressed and 549 at early stages of investigation.
			Work towards delivering the additional (c100) homes per annum (all tenures) not currently identified in the current draft Local Plan Update but required to bridge the shortfall against the total annual number prescribed by Government. The additional homes to be provided where possible on brownfield sites	Commercial Property	C100 per annum - final number to be confirmed
			Explore additional housing options for key workers and essential workers in the Borough on low incomes such as Rent to Buy and First Homes	Place Commissioning Team	Plan for delivery to be confirmed
iii	An additional 800 affordable homes to be delivered through the council's partnership with housing associations	A range of high quality affordable housing across the borough to meet housing needs, predominantly through social rented and shared ownership affordable tenures	Over 200 affordable housing completions expected during 2020/21 and over 200 affordable housing completions are expected during 2021/22 (more will be added to the development programme as the RPs go into contract on other sites)	Place Commissioning Team	465 completions in 2019/20, 365 in 2018/19 and 482 in 2017/18. Current 2020/21 completions under target mainly due to Covid and future years targets reduced as nearing end of several major strategic developments

SUMMARY ACTION PLAN FOR HOUSING STRATEGY 2020-2024 – YEAR 1 ACTIONS & TARGETS

	Priorities	Outcomes	Actions/Targets for 2021 - 2022	Lead Service Area	Progress/To Note
iv	Develop opportunities for community led housing schemes	Affordable housing provision through self-build schemes and community led housing initiatives	Outline planning permission for affordable self-build homes at Toutley East (by end of Q2 2021/22)	Place Commissioning Team/ Commercial Property	Stage 2 design of overall Toutley East proposals underway
			Explore opportunities for joint working with Community Council Berkshire on a rural housing enabler post	Place Commissioning Team	
			Deliver community led housing training and awareness raising events	Place Commissioning Team	
v	Develop a strong evidence base of need and develop new housing policies which will inform and complement the new Local Plan	Ensure planning and delivery of the right affordable homes and specialist accommodation delivered in the right places through clear robust evidence of affordable housing need and specialist housing need, updated affordable housing policies within the new local plan, a refreshed Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and a new Specialist Housing SPD	Affordable housing and specialist housing need evidence report produced	Place Commissioning / Planning Policy	A draft affordable housing policy has been produced which will be used in the Draft Local Plan consultation. Work has commenced
			Draft affordable housing policy produced for consultation as part of the draft local plan	Place Commissioning/ Planning Policy	
			Draft Affordable Housing SPD agreed prior to Council adoption	Place Commissioning/Planning Policy	
			Draft Specialist Housing SPD agreed prior to Council adoption	Place Commissioning/Planning Policy	
vi	Address the accommodation needs of our gypsy and traveller communities and boat dweller communities	Address unmet need and identify potentially suitable Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) sites	Explore opportunities to expand existing GRT provision across the Borough	Place Commissioning/ Commercial Property	Initial paper highlighting potential options for
			Improve the quality and safety of GRT site provision across the Borough	Place Commissioning/ Commercial Property	increasing GRT provision has been produced
		Address unmet need and identify potentially suitable mooring pitches for boat dwellers	Boat Dwellers needs assessment completed	Place Commissioning/Planning Policy	
vii	Implement a new Allocations Policy	Delivery of a new Allocations Policy to ensure best use of the affordable housing stock	New Allocations Policy agreed and implemented	Place Commissioning/ Operational Housing	Work on a new Allocations Policy has already commenced
viii	Work with Private Landlords to increase and improve accommodation in the private rental sector	Investigate potential for a new Landlord Forum	Options appraisal for new Landlord Forum completed	Place Commissioning/Operational Housing	Work on a new Landlords Forum has commenced
Objective ii : Supporting our vulnerable residents through a range of housing options					
i	Continue to improve access to information, advice and guidance on housing	Improved access to information, advice and guidance on housing for vulnerable groups such as care leavers and children on the edge of care, those with disabilities and mental health issues	Advice and guidance distributed through a variety of partners including our town and parish councils, Citizens Advice Wokingham, voluntary and charity sector partners Improved digital advice and guidance to residents through the Council's website and social media, through "Housing Online". User survey to be carried out to measure impact.	Operational Housing	

SUMMARY ACTION PLAN FOR HOUSING STRATEGY 2020-2024 – YEAR 1 ACTIONS & TARGETS					
	Priorities	Outcomes	Actions/Targets for 2021 - 2022	Lead Service Area	Progress/To Note
ii	Develop more supported housing for vulnerable people based on need	Provision of supported housing will meet the needs of vulnerable groups	To continue with the programme of provision of council-owned accommodation for clients with mental health requirements and learning disabled (LD) requirements, delivering 11 units of LD specific accommodation during 2021/22. To secure accommodation for those at risk of homelessness utilising NSAP (Next Step Accommodation Programme), delivering 5 units of accommodation during 2021/22.	People & Place Commissioning/Operational Housing	Provision of Council-owned properties currently being refurbished to meet the needs of learning disabled clients. Additional properties being purchased at Hatch Farm Dairies in Winnersh will also meet the needs of mental health clients.
iii	Continue to provide a range of housing support services to help vulnerable people live independently	Reduce the numbers of people going into residential care	Ongoing housing support services, providing savings to the Council of X during 2021/22.	Operational Housing/People Commissioning	
iv	Develop policies around the development and use of housing for vulnerable residents	Housing pathways for all vulnerable groups identified and place	Learning Disabled accommodation strategy drafted Draft Extra Care Policy produced and agreed prior to adoption Move on accommodation for care leavers and vulnerable young people identified	People & Place Commissioning	
v	Delivery of a council owned care scheme	Delivery of council owned care scheme in order to produce savings for adult social care budgets	Outline planning permission for care home at Toutley East (by end of Q2 2021/22)	People Commissioning/Adult Social Care	Business case developed for care home on Toutley & Stage 2 design proposals on overall Toutley East Underway
vi	Delivery of additional supported housing for young people	Delivery of schemes at London Road and Seaford Court providing different levels of support/housing pathways for young people in need	London Road (7 units) scheme complete end Q2 2021/22 Seaford Court (c.10 units) on site and progressing to completion	People Commissioning / Place Commissioning / Property	London Road scheme expected to complete Summer 2021. Purchase of Seaford Court currently being progressed
vii	Supporting residents facing domestic abuse	Delivery of a strategic approach to supporting domestic abuse survivors	Complete a housing needs assessment of provision, identifying gaps and areas requiring strengthened support	Community Safety Team	Initial workshops have commenced to look at the requirements of the new Domestic Abuse Bill and required housing pathways for domestic abuse survivors
Objective iii: Improving the quality, sustainability and management of the Borough's housing stock					
i	Respond to the Government's Housing White Paper	Delivery of a robust action plan to address the aspirations set out in the Housing White Paper	Develop and start to deliver an action to meet the aspirations raised in the White Paper - to improve quality and safety of homes, improve the standard of service from landlords and increase the voice of tenants and residents	Operational Housing/ Place Commissioning	Initial work has commenced and being discussed the Tenant and Landlord Improvement Panel (TLIP)
ii	Make best use of existing homes and assets	Rationalisation of stock where necessary. Increase the number of homes owned by the Council and its Housing Companies.	Delivery of the HRA business plan to utilise capacity for additional borrowing and development of new Business Plan for Loddon Homes	Operational Housing /Loddon Homes	New HRA Business Plan agreed, Loddon Homes Business Plan in development

SUMMARY ACTION PLAN FOR HOUSING STRATEGY 2020-2024 – YEAR 1 ACTIONS & TARGETS

	Priorities	Outcomes	Actions/Targets for 2021 - 2022	Lead Service Area	Progress/To Note
iii	Improve the quality and management of homes owned by the Council and Housing Associations	A range of high quality affordable housing to meet housing needs	Maintain target of 100% Decent Homes Standard on homes owned by the Council, Loddon Homes and other partner housing associations	Operational Housing / Loddon Homes/ Place Commissioning	
iv	Engagement with tenants	Council continues to engage with and involve its tenants through the Tenant and Landlord Improvement Panel (TLIP)	Continued engagement through TLIP	Operational Housing / Loddon Homes / Place Commissioning	
		Improved customer satisfaction across all social housing providers	Overall customer satisfaction target x% (tbc) for HRA Housing, Loddon Homes and partner housing association		
v	Explore more innovative ways of housing delivery including modern methods of construction	Strong pipeline of housing delivery across the Borough utilising different methods of construction, with MMC options to be built into site appraisals	First Modern Methods of Construction scheme to be on site by end of 2021/22	Commercial Property / Place Commissioning	Site identified and pre-planning discussions underway
vi	Adoption of planning policies governing housing	Adoption of a new local plan and Affordable Housing SPD incorporating standards on lifetime homes, space and design	Draft Affordable Housing SPD ready for wider consultation	Place Commissioning / Planning Policy	Both subject to progress with Local Plan Update
			Review of the Council's design guide underway		
vii	Delivery of housing regeneration projects	Regeneration of old housing stock such as at Gorse Ride in Finchampstead	Delivery of 46 new homes as part of phase 1 of the Gorse Ride regeneration	Place Commissioning / Commercial Property / Loddon Homes	Phase 1 nearing completion & Phase 2 Planning agreed and initial contractor partner appointment underway
			Phase 2 (249 units) of the Gorse Ride regeneration to be onsite		
viii	Supporting Private Rented Sector (PRS) residents	Support of PRS residents and work with PRS landlords to prevent homelessness and increase standards and quality of private sector housing	Explore the possibility of setting up a Landlord Forum in the Borough	Operational Housing / Place Commissioning	Work on establishing a Landlord Forum has commenced
			Continue to provide a Rent in Advance/Deposit Loan scheme, with homes to be inspected before agreement		
ix	Reduce rough sleeping and homelessness and improve the temporary and emergency accommodation offer	Providing good quality local accommodation where possible to those with a local connection to Wokingham Borough	Replacement of existing temporary accommodation at Foxwood, Wokingham	Operational Housing	Continuation of the 'Everyone In' approach introduced during 2020
			Delivery of Grovelands additional temporary accommodation by end of Q4 2021/22		
			Targets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No rough sleepers No-one in temporary accommodation for longer than 12 weeks No care leavers to be housed in temporary accommodation No families in Bed & Breakfast 		
x	Maintaining a balance of tenure types	Maintain a balance of tenure types across existing homes and ensure that new provision meets demand	Implementation of the Affordable Housing planning policy ensuring a minimum of 35% provision of affordable housing across all new development	Place Commissioning / Planning	In line with current targets
xi	Improve energy efficiency, reduce carbon emissions and fuel poverty, working towards net zero carbon by 2030	Improve energy performance of the housing stock	Set up a programme of retrofitting our the Council's housing stock to net zero standards and work with partners to help achieve net zero standards	Place Commissioning / Planning Policy	Retrofit programme to be developed based on EPC ratings of the Council's housing stock and available budgets
		Major residential developments to achieve carbon neutrality and to be designed and built to achieve BREEAM excellent standard from 2022	Policy and SPD to be developed for inclusion in the new Local Plan		

SUMMARY ACTION PLAN FOR HOUSING STRATEGY 2020-2024 – YEAR 1 ACTIONS & TARGETS

	Priorities	Outcomes	Actions/Targets for 2021 - 2022	Lead Service Area	Progress/To Note
<u>Objective iv: Enriching people’s lives</u>					
i.	Develop a social value calculator	Enable the social housing value of any new housing scheme, project or investment to be calculated	Social Value Calculator developed and adopted	Place Commissioning	Initial training completed an model for assessment identified
ii.	Promote independence, health and wellbeing to all residents	Enable people to develop the skills required to secure of maintain their home with a strong emphasis on preventative activities	Identify and plan activities around preventative measures	Place Commissioning	
iii.	Provide all tenants with a stable home	Provide all tenants with a stable home will increase life chances	Ensure a joined up approach to understanding and tackling the root causes of housing crises	Place Commissioning/Operational Housing	
iv.	Expanding employment and training opportunities	Continue to expand employment and training opportunities for all residents	Run more business enterprise programmes to help residents establish new businesses	Place Commissioning	Linking in with wider Covid Recovery Plan skills and employment stream
v.	Partnership working	Working with partners to explore and implement opportunities for vulnerable residents	Identify specific activities and programmes working with our Registered Provider partners	Place Commissioning	
		Working with partners on specific activities which contribute to social and community inclusion	Agree a calculator for assessing social value on social and community activities		
vi.	Living Cost Affordability	Taking advantage of funding opportunities to deliver preventative projects to reduce living costs and improve affordability such as fuel poverty	Identify and apply for relevant funding programmes	Place Commissioning	

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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:	19/02/20
Service:	Place Commissioning
Project, policy or service EQIA relates to:	Housing Strategy 2020 – 2024
Completed by:	Frances Haywood, Senior Strategy Officer
Has the EQIA been discussed at services team meeting:	
Signed off by:	
Sign off date:	

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:

Affordable housing and economic prosperity are key themes within the Council plan. The new Housing Strategy 2020 – 24 will act as a framework underneath which more specialist housing strategies and policies will be aligned (such as the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, Learning Disabled accommodation strategy, etc). The aim of the Housing Strategy is to ensure that all residents can access well-designed, affordable and sustainable homes and effective support services in the Borough. There are 4 key objectives within the strategy:

- Addressing our housing needs
- Supporting vulnerable residents through a range of housing options

- Improving the quality, sustainability and management of the Borough's housing stock
- Enhancing people's lives

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:

As part of development of the strategy there will be both consultation with internal officers and well as more widely with the general public and partner agencies such as the Registered Provider partnership, Homes England and local charities. The strategy will be discussed at leadership teams to ensure input from across a range of service areas.

An action plan will be developed and updated annually setting out how we will deliver against the priorities within the strategy. Progress will be monitored by the Council (via leadership teams as appropriate), the Affordable Housing Implementation Group (member/officer group) and the Registered Provider partnership, all of whom meet frequently throughout the year.

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

The strategy will ensure that all residents can access well-designed, affordable and sustainable homes and effective support services in the Borough. A good choice of high quality housing will help the Borough achieve many of its ambitions. For instance, good quality settled homes can improve a child's life chances by providing the right environment for educational attainment. They can also help to improve the health and wellbeing of the Borough's residents. As part of the wider Thames Valley Berkshire functional economic area, the Council has committed to growing the local economy, which will also benefit from a healthy and competitive housing market.

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

The key objectives set out in the strategy are:

- Addressing our housing needs
- Supporting our vulnerable residents through a range of housing options
- Improving the quality, sustainability and management of the Borough's housing stock
- Enhancing people's lives

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	No specific impact relating to race has been identified. Adoption of the Housing Strategy is likely to have a positive impact on residents and service users from ethnic backgrounds by helping to address housing needs and ensuring good quality and well designed homes for all. Whilst some may not have a local connection and therefore not entitled to access some services provided in the borough, the council will continue to provide an individualistic approach to vulnerable groups such as rough sleepers and will provide access to the appropriate services where wanted and required.

Gender:	Positive	No specific impact relating to gender has been identified. In terms of housing need, single males are less likely to be accepted as unintentionally homeless and in priority need and therefore at greater risk of becoming homeless and sleeping rough. However, there is good practice and joint working between different agencies, e.g., health and homelessness services, outreach services, with regular meetings taking place. The council needs to ensure that this joined up working continues and we work more closely with charities such as Wokingham In Need to examine where there can be additional support provided during “pinch points”.
Disabilities:	Positive	Those in urgent housing need are likely to have complex needs and in addition to physical health issues can have any combination of additional needs such as severe mental illness, learning disability and/or problems with substance misuse/addiction. One of the priorities of the strategy is to support vulnerable residents through a range of housing options which includes continuing to provide access to information, advice and guidance and developing more supported housing in relation to need.
Age:	Positive	It is likely that the housing strategy will have a positive impact on all age groups including children (by aiming to provide a stable home for all residents), young people (delivering more supported housing for vulnerable young people and providing a range of affordable homes), as well as older people (enabling them to live independently where possible but also providing a range of specific older persons accommodation).
Sexual orientation:	Positive	It is considered that the Housing Strategy will benefit all types of people. No specific impact relating to sexual orientation has been identified. Support is provided where appropriate through a multi-agency approach.
Religion/belief:	Positive	It is considered that the Housing Strategy will benefit all types of people. No specific impact relating to religion or belief has been identified. Support is provided where appropriate through a multi-agency approach.
Gender re-assignment:	Positive	It is considered that the Housing Strategy will benefit all types of people. No specific impact relating to gender reassignment has been identified. Support is provided where appropriate through a multi-agency approach.
Pregnancy and Maternity:	Positive	No specific impact relating to pregnancy or maternity has been identified. The priorities in the strategy are to address housing needs and support vulnerable residents through a range of housing options.
Marriage and civil partnership:	Positive	No specific impact relating to marriage or civil partnership has been identified. It is considered that the Housing Strategy will benefit all types of people.

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 or 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**

Housing Facts and Figures Report April 2020 to September 2020

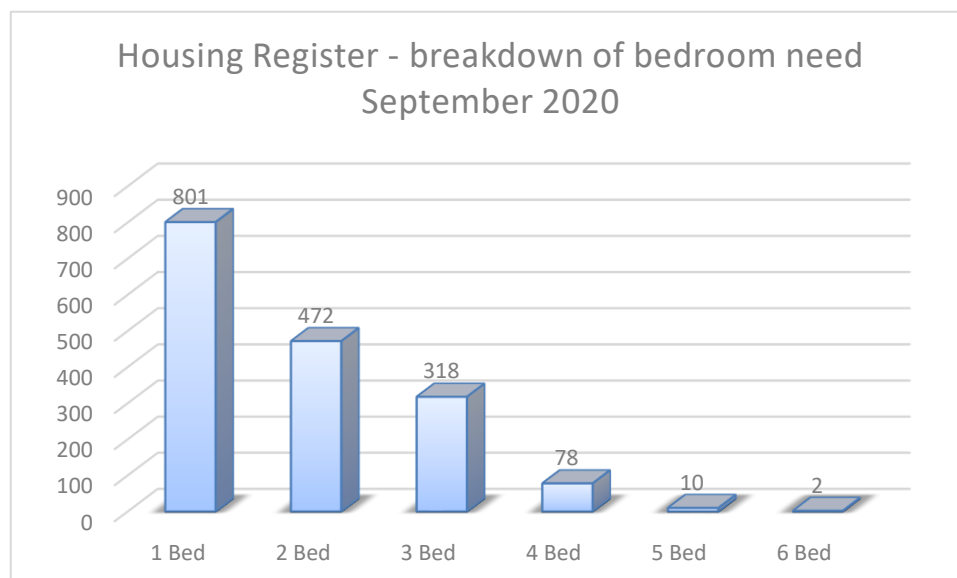
This document has been produced to provide stakeholders and colleagues with information about key housing issues in Wokingham Borough, and to underpin our Housing Strategy.

1. Housing Need

1.1 Housing Register

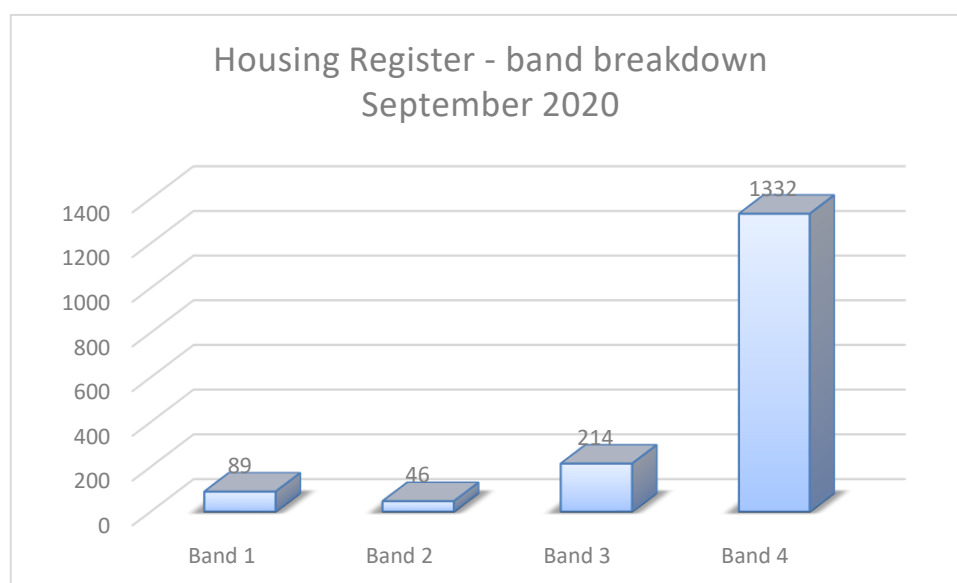
As of the end of September 2020, there were 1,681 households on the council's housing register for social housing in the borough. This is a significant increase from the same time last year, when 1,493 households were on the register. The graph below shows that the majority of households on the register are in need of one and two bedroom properties.

Figure 1: Breakdown of the housing register in Wokingham Borough by bedroom need (September 2020).



In relation to the Bands applicant were placed in, from Band 1 to Band 4, with Band 1 being the highest priority and Band 4 the lowest, the vast majority of those on the register are in Band 4 as shown in the graph below:

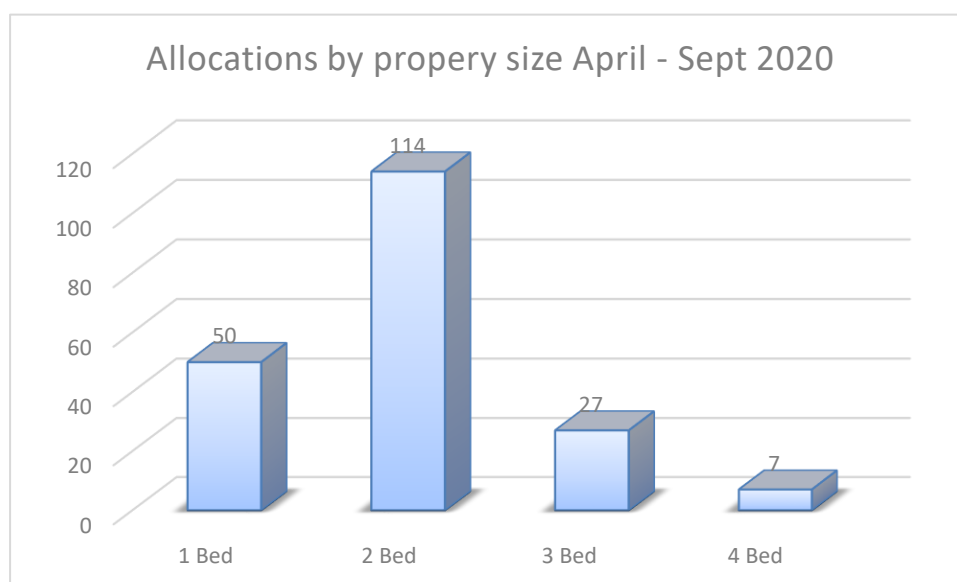
Figure 2: Breakdown of the housing register in Wokingham Borough by band (September 2020).



1.2 Allocations

Between April 2020 and September 2020, 198 allocations were completed, slightly fewer than the same time last year when 212 allocations were completed. Of these allocations, the highest proportion were for two bedroom properties, as shown in the graph below:

Figure 3: Allocations by property size April 2020 to September 2020.

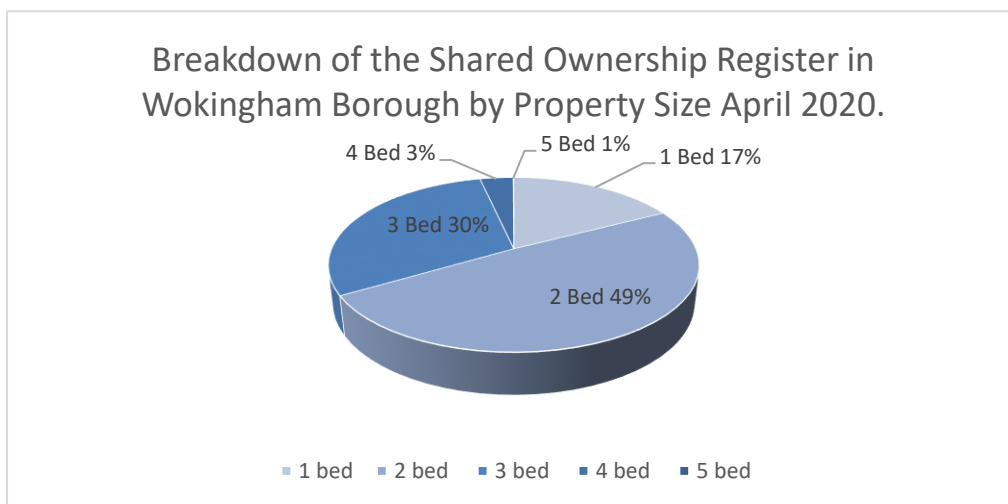


1.3 Shared Ownership Register

Applicants on the shared ownership register have a different level of need to the council's housing register; however applicants need to meet eligibility criteria including a cap on total household income of less than £80,000. Priority is given to existing social tenants and those with a local

connection. In April 2020, there were 1595 households who had registered their interest in a shared ownership property within Wokingham Borough, of these 629 currently live in the local area. Of the 1595 households currently on the register, just under half (49%) have requested 2 bed accommodation. Updated figures are not yet available. A breakdown of need by bedroom size is shown in the graph below.

Figure 4: Breakdown of the shared ownership register in Wokingham Borough by property size April 2020.

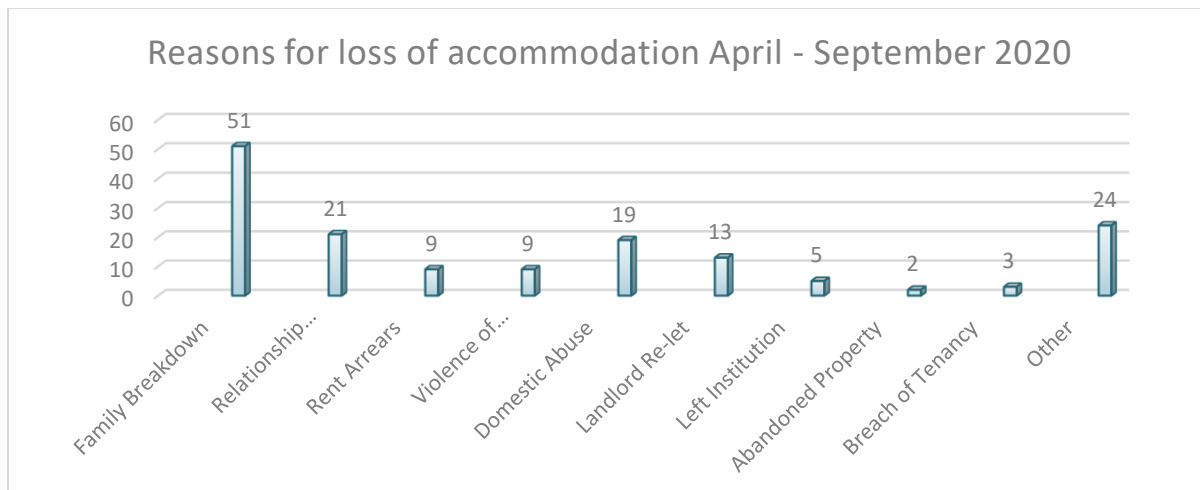


1.3 Homelessness Presentations

Between April 2020 and the end of September 2020, the council received 156 homelessness presentations. This is 18 more than the first two quarters of the previous financial year, when 138 presentations were recorded. In the 2019/20 financial year, there were 252 presentations in total. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic was one of the main factors for the increase in presentations. We expect the number of presentations this year to be higher than the previous financial year.

The graph below shows the main reasons why applicants have presented themselves as homeless between April 2020 and September 2020. Family or friends no longer being able to accommodate them is the biggest reason, as shown in the graphs below.

Figure 5: Reason for loss of previous accommodation April to September 2020.

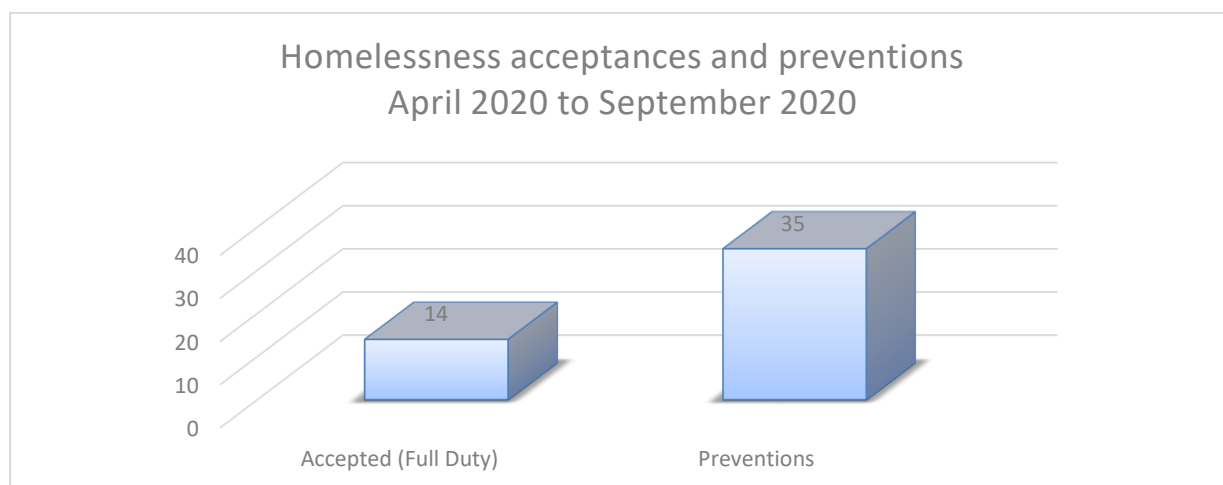


1.5 Homelessness Acceptances and Preventions

There were 14 homelessness acceptances in the first two quarters of the 2020/21 financial year, a decrease from the same time last year when 42 were accepted. There are still a high number of cases going through the required processes and we would expect to see a rise in the number of full acceptances in the next quarter.

The number of preventions in the first and second quarter of the 20/21 financial year was 35, a slight increase on from the same time last year when 33 preventions were recorded. The graph below shows the number of homelessness acceptances and preventions from April 2020 to September 2020:

Figure 6: Homelessness acceptances and preventions April 2020 to September 2020.



2. Affordable Housing Supply

The charts below show how many new affordable homes have been completed through our partnership with Registered Providers. During 2019/20, we had 465 completions, which consisted of 217 social rented properties, 220 shared ownership and 28 intermediate/affordable rent. We are anticipating over 300 completions in 2020/21, although we are anticipating some slippage with the economic uncertainty following Covid-19. There were 92 affordable homes completed during quarters 1 & 2 of 2020/21, which consisted of 40 social rented properties and 52 shared ownership properties.

Figure 7: Affordable housing completions 2009/10 – 2020/21.

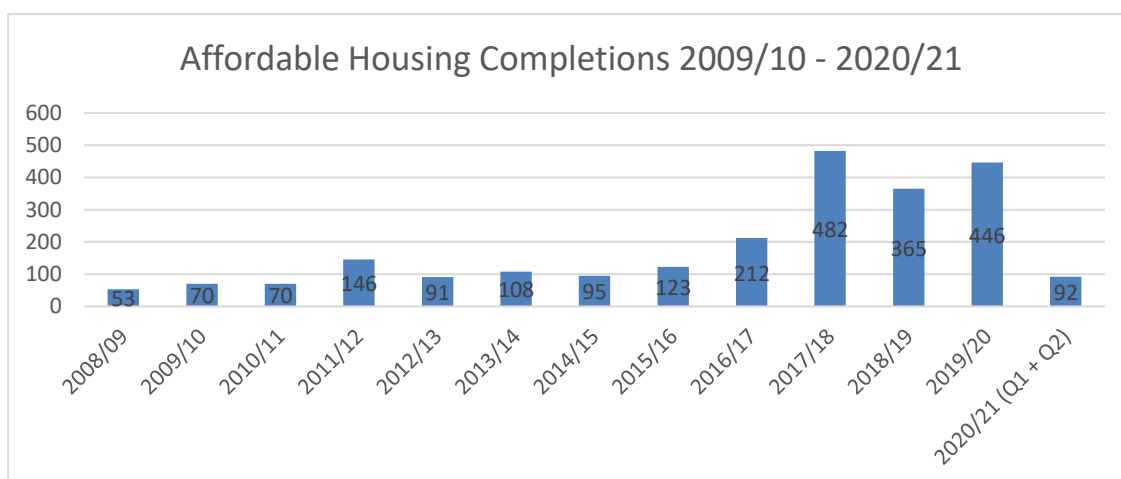


Figure 8: Affordable housing completions by tenure April 2020 to September 2020.



The Wokingham Equity Loan Scheme was launched in October 2010; the scheme enabled applicants to purchase a property on the open market with additional financial assistance in the form of an equity loan, jointly funded by the Council and Catalyst Housing Group. A maximum loan of £50,000 was available to applicants. The scheme has now closed, but overall the scheme assisted 22 households into home ownership. Eighteen of the loans have now been redeemed. All have made a small profit, which is being recycled into funds for affordable housing. We would like to run the scheme again in the future subject to funding.

3. Buying a Home

3.1 House Prices

National

The government has extended the Help to Buy equity loan deadline for new homes to be finished from the end of December to February 28th. The government has introduced a Stamp Duty Holiday, which will see reduced rates of Stamp Duty Land Tax (SDLT) applied for residential properties purchased from 8 July 2020 until 31 March 2021 inclusive. This only applies to properties valued up to £500,000.

Rightmove's Housing Price Index for September 2020 states that the price of property coming to market was up 0.2% in September, just £269 below the record set in July 2020:

- Second-stepper sector of three-or four-bedroom homes hits new record of £291,618, as more buyers seek larger homes.
- Northern regions strongest for price jumps, with Yorkshire & the Humber, East Midlands, West Midlands, North East, North West and Scotland all at new records
- Sales agreed compared to this time last year stronger for larger homes –more than doubling in the largest 'top of the ladder' homes sector (+104%), and growing strongly in the second-stepper sector (+55%)
- National sales agreed for the whole year to date are down just 5% on the same period in 2019, with East of England (+4%) and South East (+1%) already ahead, while Scotland (-21%) and Wales (-16%) still lag behind due to their later reopening
- Rightmove estimates that there are nearly 40% more sales currently going through the buying and selling process compared to this time last year, leading to congestion of sales in progress.

The up-sizing trend has continued at pace over the past month, leading to record asking prices for three – four bedroom houses. This price record has been fuelled by buyers looking for more space, including both those who need extra space for their families and those looking for room to work from home. Overall prices have remained steady since they hit a record in July.

Nationally, sales agreed for the whole year to date are now down by only 5% on the same period last year. Two regions –the East of England (+4%) and the South East (+1%) –have already overtaken the number of sales agreed for the same period last year, helped by higher average prices causing the stamp duty holiday to have more of an impact for buyers and sellers in these areas.

In London, sales agreed for the year to date are down by just 3%, with a two-speed market in play. There is strong sales activity in Outer London, especially for top-of-the-ladder homes, while areas like Zone 1 are finding it more challenging, where sales are down by 14% for the whole year to date compared to the same period last year.

Savills have reported that house prices rose by 2.3% in August, the strongest single month of growth since February 2004. Single monthly growth should be viewed with caution, however this brings annual growth for 2020 to 3.7%, which is the fastest growth in over three years.

Growth over the past two months more than reverses the price falls seen earlier in the summer. The supply/demand mismatch has increased competition in the mainstream market, supporting the current value growth. The stamp duty holiday has also contributed to greater buyer demand.

Data shows that there were 50% more sales agreed subject to contract in the first week of September than the same time in 2019. The market has been boosted by pent-up demand until now, but it seems this demand is starting to return to normal.

Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) continue to point to a strong upturn in activity across the market, as indicators on enquiries, agreed sales and new listings all remain strongly positive. Nevertheless, respondents still foresee sales weakening further ahead amid the challenging macro-economic environment, evidenced by the twelve-month expectations series moving deeper into negative territory in the latest returns.

For the fourth consecutive month there has been an increase in new buyer enquires, new instructions, agreed sales and house prices. The rate of growth has slightly slowed however the near term outlook still looks positive with the upturn in sales expected to continue for the next three months.

The longer term view is still one that will see a slow down across the market in line with the end of the stamp duty holiday, job losses and the end of the furlough scheme.

In the lettings market, tenant demand reportedly rose for the fourth month in succession (non seasonally adjusted monthly series). That said, while respondents saw a pick-up in tenant demand across all parts of the UK last month, London now stands out as the only area in which a negative trend in tenant demand was cited in September.

Local

Latest available data from HM Land Registry shows that average price of a house (regardless of type or size) in June 2020 was £429,389. This is an increase of £27,641 (6.88%) from June 2019 when the average price was £401,748.

The average price paid for a house in Wokingham is significantly higher than the national average across England. The average for Wokingham in June 2020 was £429,389 compared against the average price in England, which was £254,423. This is an increase of 68.76% against the national average.

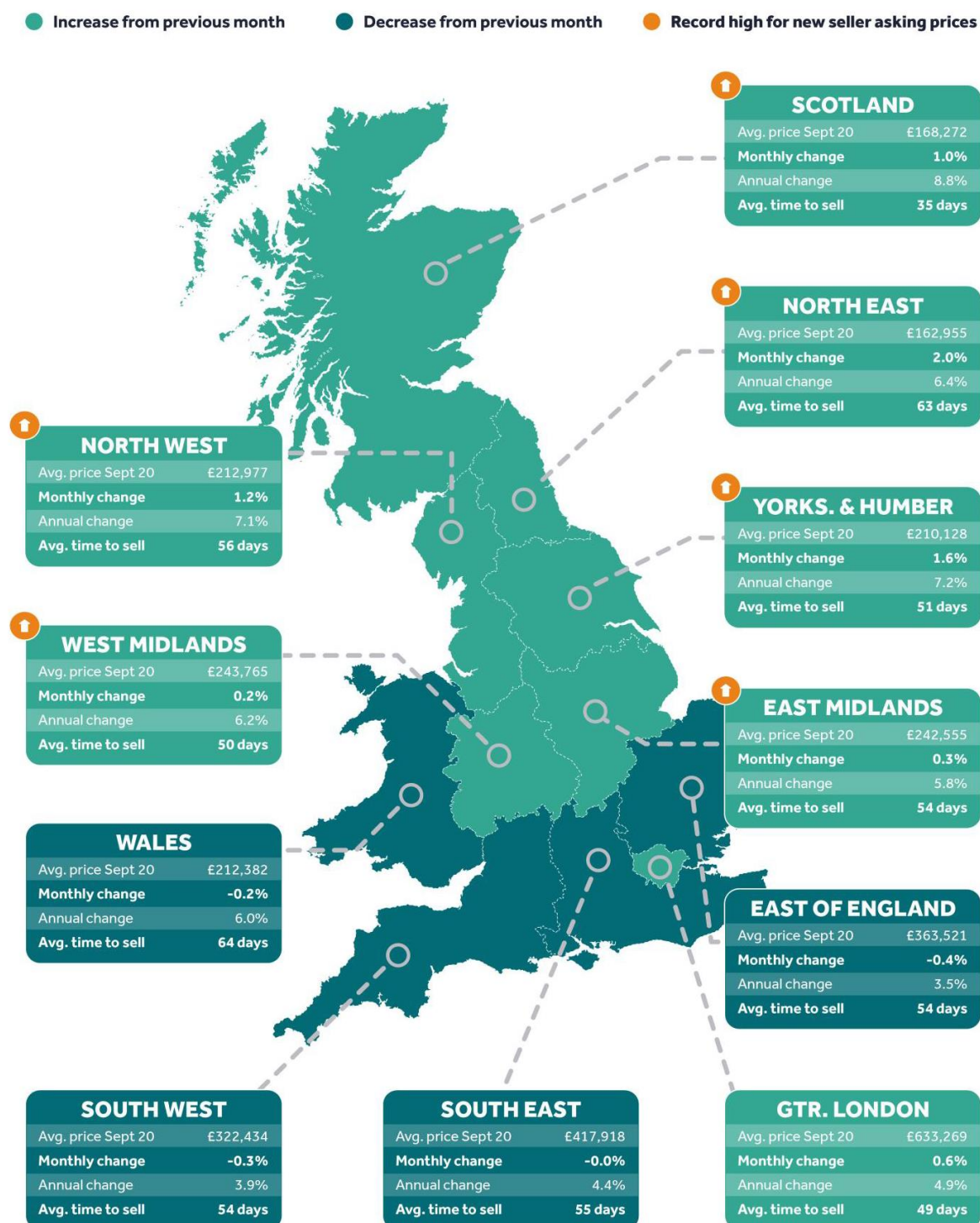
The table below shows the average asking prices for different property types since July 2016 in Wokingham Borough.

Table 1: Average asking prices in Wokingham Borough July 2016 – June 2020.

Month	Average price All property types	Average price Detached houses	Average price Semi-detached houses	Average price Terraced houses	Average price Flats and maisonettes
July 2016	£421,143	£627,274	£399,208	£315,401	£231,786
Jan 2017	£418,666	£626,513	£394,637	£311,217	£232,237
July 2017	£416,838	£621,954	£393,886	£309,259	£232,577
Jan 2018	£421,910	£630,923	£399,809	£312,388	£233,520
July 2018	£413,433	£620,235	£390,261	£306,780	£228,105
Jan 2019	£399,842	£601,993	£378,401	£295,430	£218,993
Feb 2019	£404,665	£608,508	£383,204	£298,804	£222,113
Mar 2019	£402,724	£605,585	£381,608	£297,806	£220,283
Apr 2019	£408,101	£612,392	£387,050	£302,971	£222,866
May 2019	£403,165	£604,657	£382,822	£300,130	£219,319
Jun 2019	£408,287	£612,329	£387,864	£303,952	£221,941
Jul 2019	£413,723	£621,270	£393,115	£307,755	£224,437
Aug 2019	£416,612	£627,204	£396,207	£310,106	£224,375
Jan 2020	£406,721	£611,883	£388,786	£302,505	£217,765
Jun 2020	£429,389	£636,778	£402,328	£313,592	£225,126

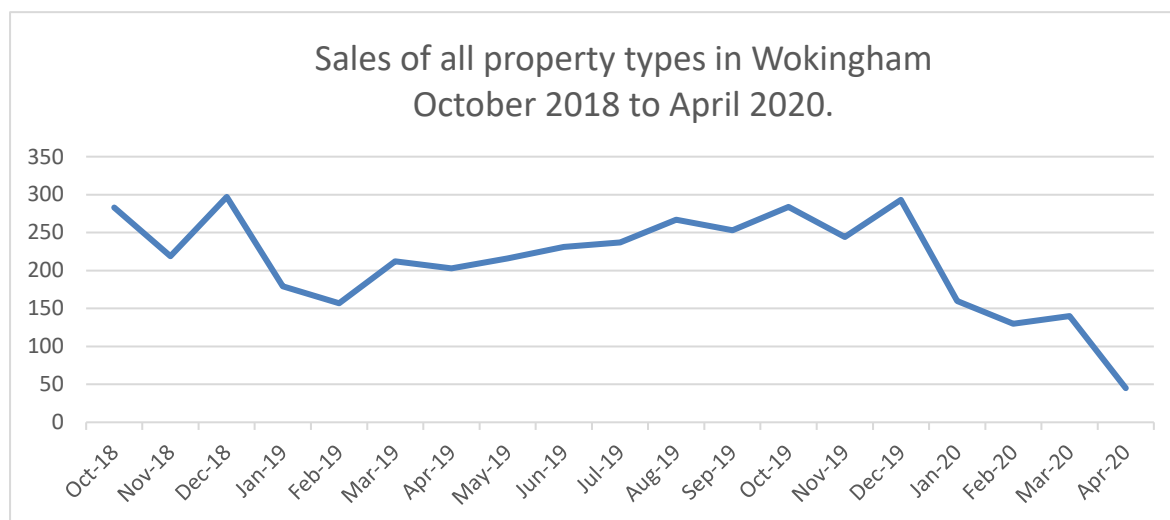
According to Rightmove, as of September 2020, the South East had the second highest average price paid for a home within the United Kingdom. The average price in the South East is £417,918, which is only second behind the prices seen in London. There was no increase or decrease in average price between August and September 2020. However, this is a 0.2% decrease from July 2020. The South East housing market appears to have plateaued.

Figure 9: Map showing regional change in housing market



Property sales within Wokingham have been in decline from December 2018 where a high of 297 sales were recorded by the Land Registry. Sales figures dropped as low as 157 in February 2019, which can be closely linked to the political uncertainty at the time surrounding Brexit. The last record of sales at April 2020 saw 45 sales within the area; this very low figure can be linked to the initial impacts of Covid-19.

Figure 10: Sales of all property types in Wokingham October 2018 to April 2020



Construction workers were encouraged to return to work in May 2020 and sites across the borough are now fully operational. The short term strength of the housing market will give house builders confidence in building out sites, however a number of house builders within the borough have noted that they have experienced a 3 – 4 month delay to their construction programme following the lockdown earlier in the year. Even though sites are now fully operational again, it can be expected that the previous projected delivery rates across sites within the borough will not be achieved in the current year.

Within the RICS August 2020 UK Residential Market Survey, a number of contributors within the surrounding areas have given a short commentary on their view of the current housing market. Even though there is no commentary for Wokingham itself, it is interesting nonetheless to understand how surrounding areas are responding to the current situation:

Tim Green, MRICS, South Oxfordshire, Green & Co. (Oxford) Ltd., tim.green@greenand.co.uk - *The initial resurgence soon caught up, maybe as a result of summer holidays now being taken. Everyone hoping for a positive September.*

Perry Stock, Fellow, Nr Leatherhead, Perry Stock FRICS, perry@perrystock.co.uk - *A tidal flow from Urban to Suburban and rural locations.*

A Bro Tremellen, MRICS, Southampton, Chris Tremellen, chris.tremellen@outlook.com - *Very active market with prices rising.*

Tony Jamieson, MRICS, Guildford, Clarke Gammon Wellers, tony.jamieson@clarkegammon.co.uk - *Market still very active with the correctly priced properties getting multiple interest.*

Paul Lynch, AssocRICS, Guildford, Romans, plynch@romans.co.uk - *Smaller 1 and 2 bedroom flats/apartments struggling as demand from investors and first time buyers dwindling. Mid/upper market family homes ranging from £500k - £900k performing well and achieving close to or at asking prices.*

Matt Ward, Reading, mattward@haslams.co.uk - *Pent-up demand, lifestyle change and stamp duty holiday.*

3.2 Help to Buy

The Help to Buy mortgage guarantee scheme helps people buy a newly built home or an existing property with a deposit of only 5% of the purchase price. Up to 20% of the purchase price is available to the buyer through an equity loan (the maximum loan outside London is £120,000). The scheme closed for new applicants in December 2016, however the equity loan and Help to Buy ISA are still running. The loans are available on new and existing houses with a value of up to £600,000. The scheme is not available for those wishing to purchase a second home or buy-to-let property and only repayment mortgages are offered under the scheme. The guarantee protects the lender rather than the borrower against losses. Borrowers remain fully responsible for their mortgage payments and any shortfall in the normal way.

The first phase of Help to Buy was launched in April 2013, but only provided help to first-time buyers buying new-build homes. The extended scheme introduced in October 2013 applied to all buyers and all types of homes, up to a value of £600,000. The table below shows Help to Buy sales in Wokingham Borough from January 2014 to September 2020.

Table 2: Help to Buy sales in Wokingham Borough January 2014 to September 2020.

Scheme	Developer	Number of 'Help to Buy' properties sold
Montague Park, Wokingham	David Wilson	39
Montague Park, Wokingham	Barrett	65
Foundry Court, Wokingham	Bellway	6
44 Finchampstead Road, Wokingham	First Alliance Properties	5
Sibley Park, Earley	Charles Church	29
Mulberry Grove, Wokingham	Crest Nicholson	31
Loddon Park, Woodley	Taylor Wimpey	70
Ladbroke Mews, Woodley	Hicks	1
Arborfield Garrison site	Crest Nicholson	1
Market Place Mews, Wokingham	Kirkby Homes	1
Shinfield Meadows, Shinfield	Bovis Homes	3
Shinfield Meadows, Shinfield	Bloor Homes	15
Hatchwood Mill, Winnersh	Bovis Homes	3
Emmbrook Place, Wokingham	Bovis Homes	1
Oakham Park, Crowthorne	Bewley Homes	3
Mulberry Place, Woodley	Antler Homes	2
Eldridge Park, Wokingham	Berkley Homes	2
Barkham Place, Arborfield	Crest Nicholson	1
Brook House, Wokingham	Edgewater (Wokingham) Ltd	3
Copsewood, Wokingham	Linden Homes	3

Shinfield Meadows, Shinfield	Linden Homes	2
Mulberry House, Wokingham	Paradigm	2
Brookers Hill, Shinfield	TA Fisher (Holdings) Ltd	6
Kingsley Park at Arborfield	Redrow	3
Riseley Place, Basingstoke Road	Riseley Holdings	6
Aston Gate, Wargrave	RJ and L Edwards	3
Hillborn, Arborfield Green	Millgate Developments	3
Finchwood Park, Finchampstead	Legal & General	115
Total		424

3.3 Affordability

Open Property Group found that UK property prices in 2020 need to fall by an average of 37%, to make owning a home affordable for a single person earning an average wage. Table 3 below is an illustration of purchaser affordability for property types within the borough.

Table 3: Purchaser affordability by property type in Wokingham Borough September 2020.

Property type	Average selling price in the Borough	Deposit required (assuming 80% mortgage)	Minimal annual income required (assuming 3.5 times annual salary)	Average monthly mortgage payment (assuming 5% interest rate over 25 years)
All	£429,389	£85,879	£98,146	£2,031
Detached	£636,778	£127,356	£145,549	£3,012
Semi-detached	£402,328	£80,466	£91,961	£1,903
Terraced	£313,592	£62,718	£71,678	£1,483
Flat/Maisonette	£225,126	£45,025	£51,457	£1,064

3.4 Mortgage repossessions

The Ministry of Justice publishes quarterly statistics on mortgage possession actions in county courts. However, it is worth noting that the figures do not indicate how many properties have actually been repossessed. Repossessions can occur without a court order being made and not all court orders will result in repossession.

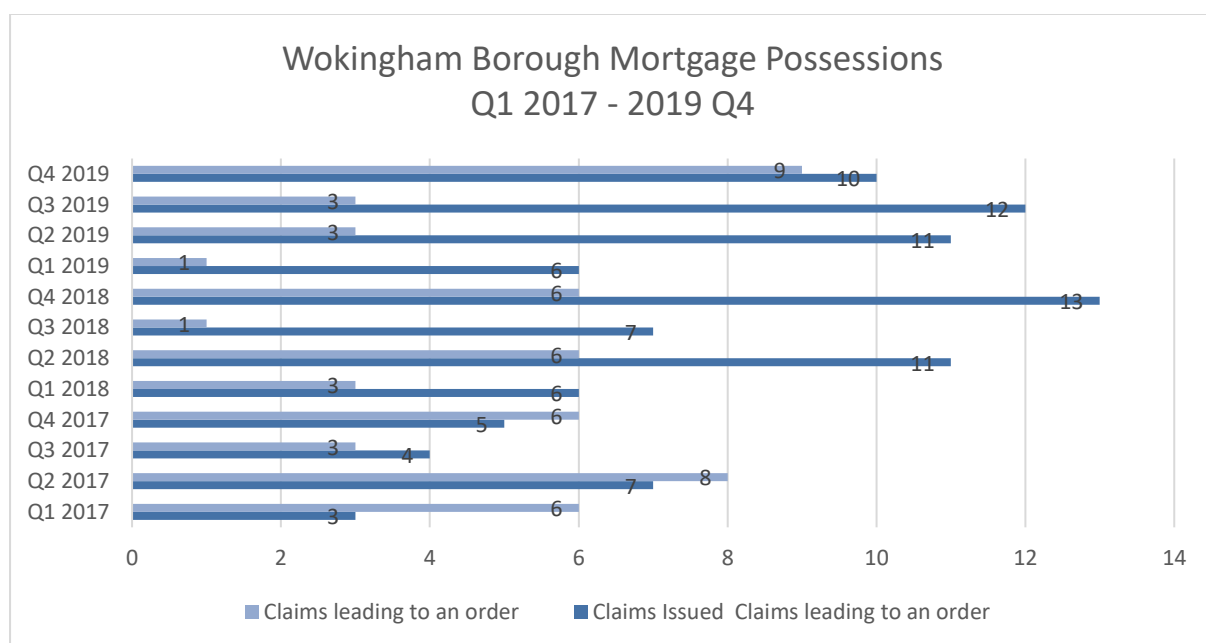
Claims are issued when a claimant (lender) begins an action. The court may grant an order for possession entitling the claimant to apply for a warrant of eviction, but parties are still able to

negotiate to prevent the evictions taking place. The 'orders made' figures also include suspended orders. These are made when the court grants possession, but suspends the order provided the defendant complies with terms, which usually involves payment of the mortgage plus some towards the arrears.

As a result of FCA announcements and the passing of the Coronavirus Act in March 2020, possession actions of all types have dropped to unprecedentedly low levels. As a result, the data is unlikely to be representative of general trends in possession actions. Caution should therefore be used when interpreting and applying these figures. Mortgage claims, orders, warrants and repossessions have decreased significantly. Compared to the same quarter last year, mortgage possession claims, orders and warrants have decreased by 97%, 96% and almost 100% respectively. No repossessions by county court bailiffs have been recorded for this quarter.

The MoJ have not yet updated the data tables for 2020/21 due to capacity issues as a result of Covid-19. In the fourth quarter of 2019, the number of claims issued was 10 and the number of orders was 9. Further detail is shown in Figure 11.

Figure 11: Wokingham Borough mortgage possessions (Quarter 4, 2019).



4. Renting a home privately

The latest HomeLet Rental Index shows that average rents across the UK in September 2020 had risen by 2.1% to £987 compared to September 2019 (an increase of 0.2% on last August 2020). Commenting on this data, Martin Totty Chief Executive at HomeLet said: *“whilst it’s undoubtedly the case many landlords are being supportive of their tenants and agreeing temporary reductions or deferrals, it will be encouraging for them to see rents agreed on new tenancies, in almost all parts of the country, are continuing to hold up and generally edge forward. This is likely because tenant demand remains strong whilst supply may be a little more constrained if some landlords are selling into a stronger sales market, even if that could be a short term phenomenon. It also doesn’t help tenants much if, for them, the prospect of securing first time mortgage finance remains as elusive as ever. So, those landlords*

committed to the sector for the long term and having shown their willingness to confront the multiple headwinds of: taxation change; new regulatory requirements; and, in certain circumstances, longer notice periods to gain possession of their properties, may still be rewarded for their flexibility and their perseverance with reasonable returns on their investment risk.”

Data from Zoopla shows that the average asking rent in Wokingham is £1,021 per calendar month. Table 4 gives a breakdown of asking rents for privately rented homes as of October 2020, together with the applicable Local Housing Allowance (LHA) and the potential shortfall between these figures.

Table 4: Average asking rents in Wokingham Borough October 2020.

Property Type	LHA April 2020 (pcm)	Average Asking Rent (pcm)	Potential Shortfall (pcm)
1 Bed Flat	£795	£744	-
2 Bed Flat	£950	£1,088	£138
2 Bed House	£950	£1,117	£167
3 Bed House	£1,150.01	£1,425	£275
4 Bed House	£1,549.99	£2,249	£700

4.2 Landlord Possession

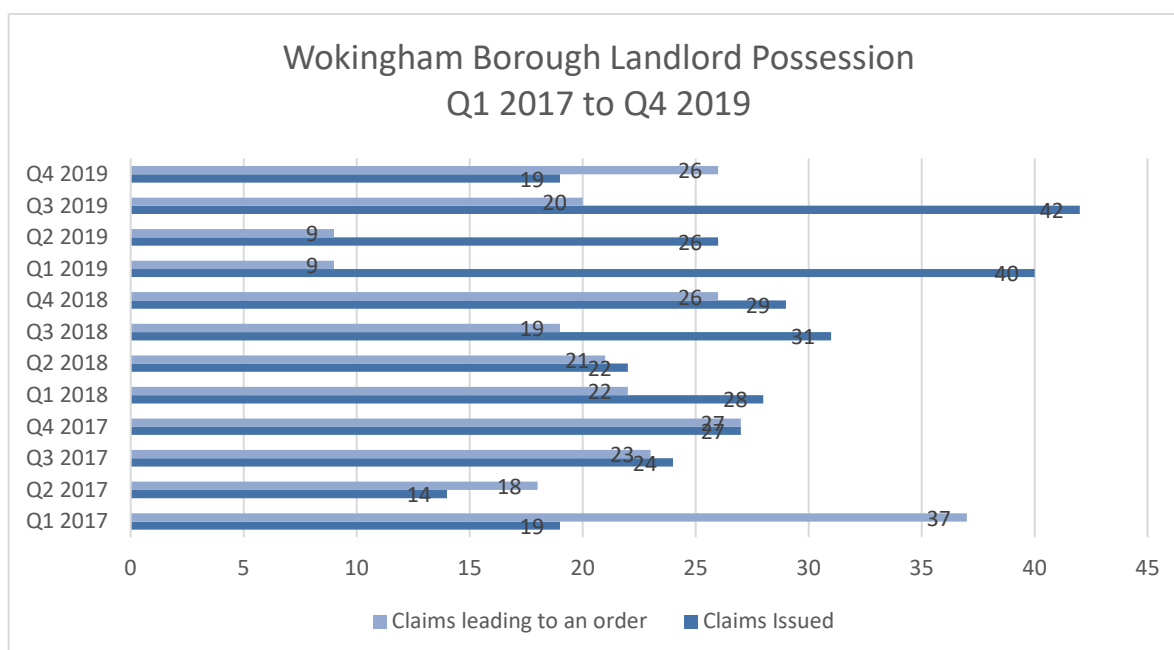
As with mortgage repossessions, the Ministry of Justice publishes quarterly statistics on landlord possession actions in county court. When a claimant (landlord) brings possession proceedings, the order is considered issued. At the subsequent hearing, the court may grant an order for possession entitling the claimant to apply for a warrant of eviction, but the parties are still able to negotiate to prevent the eviction actually taking place.

As a result of FCA announcements and the passing of the Coronavirus Act in March 2020, possession actions of all types have dropped to unprecedentedly low levels. As a result, the data is unlikely to be representative of general trends in possession actions. Caution should therefore be used when interpreting and applying these figures.

Landlord possession claims, orders and warrants decreased by 89%, 97% and 98% respectively (compared to the same quarter last year). No repossessions by county court bailiffs have been recorded for this quarter.

The MoJ have not yet updated the data tables for 2020/21 due to capacity issues because of Covid-19. Figures for suspended possession orders are included in the data for Figure 12. Claims issued decreased in quarter 2 of 2019 on the previous quarter, but claims leading to an order remained the same.

Figure 12: Landlord possessions in Wokingham Borough Quarter 4, 2019.



5. Wokingham Borough Council Housing Management Information

5.1 Welfare Reform

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)

The Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) values stated in this report relate to paid sums between 1st April 2020 and 30th September 2020 in line with Department for Work and Pensions reporting guidelines. The total DHP fund available for the year is £239,158. It is important to note that DHP payments are utilised by both private tenants and local authority tenants.

The DHP spend in detail can be seen in the table below:

Table 5: DHP spend April 2020 to September 2020

Month	UCDHP-PTEN	UCDHP-LAHRA	Total UC pmt	Housing Benefit	Total DHP paid	Cumulative total	Fund Remaining
April	£2,786.31	£1,419.17	£4,205.48	£2,576.74	£6,782.22	£6,782.22	£232,375.78
May	£4,275.20	£5,295.11	£9,570.31	£4,378.74	£13,949.05	£20,731.27	£218,426.73
June	£11,007.46	£4,245.89	£15,253.35	£8,303.82	£23,557.17	£44,288.44	£194,869.56
July	£8,166.47	£3,574.22	£11,740.69	£2,633.74	£14,374.43	£58,662.87	£180,495.13
Aug	£11,215.00	£4,406.11	£15,621.11	£3,674.76	£19,295.87	£77,958.74	£161,199.26
Sept	£7,307.08	£4,075.51	£11,382.59	£5,834.46	£17,217.05	£95,175.79	£143,982.21
Oct							
Nov							
Dec							
Jan							

Feb							
Mar							

*UCDHP-PTEN (Universal Credit DHP payments to private sector tenants)

*UCDHP – LAHRA (Universal Credit DHP payments to Local Authority tenants)

*HB (Housing Benefit DHP payments)

DHP spend has never overspent other than within allowable amounts. Last year we underspent. There is an increase in overall spend but well within profile (£19k pm). There has not been a significant rise in DHP applications during the pandemic, although the award amounts have been larger due to the impact of Covid-19.

Local Welfare Provision (LWP)

In total, the Council has received 26 applications for help via the LWP in this financial year so far, as shown in the table below:

Table 6: LWP applications in 2020/21

Applications Received		Applications Refused	Withdrawn
April	1	0	
May	3	1	
June	3	0	
Jul	4	1	
Aug	3	1	
Sept	4	1	
Oct			
Nov			
Dec			
Jan			
Feb			
Mar			
Total	18		

The amounts paid each month can be seen in the table below:

Table 7: LWP spend in 2020/21.

Amounts paid	
April	£0
May	£399.98
June	£277.96
Jul	£727.63
Aug	£751.96

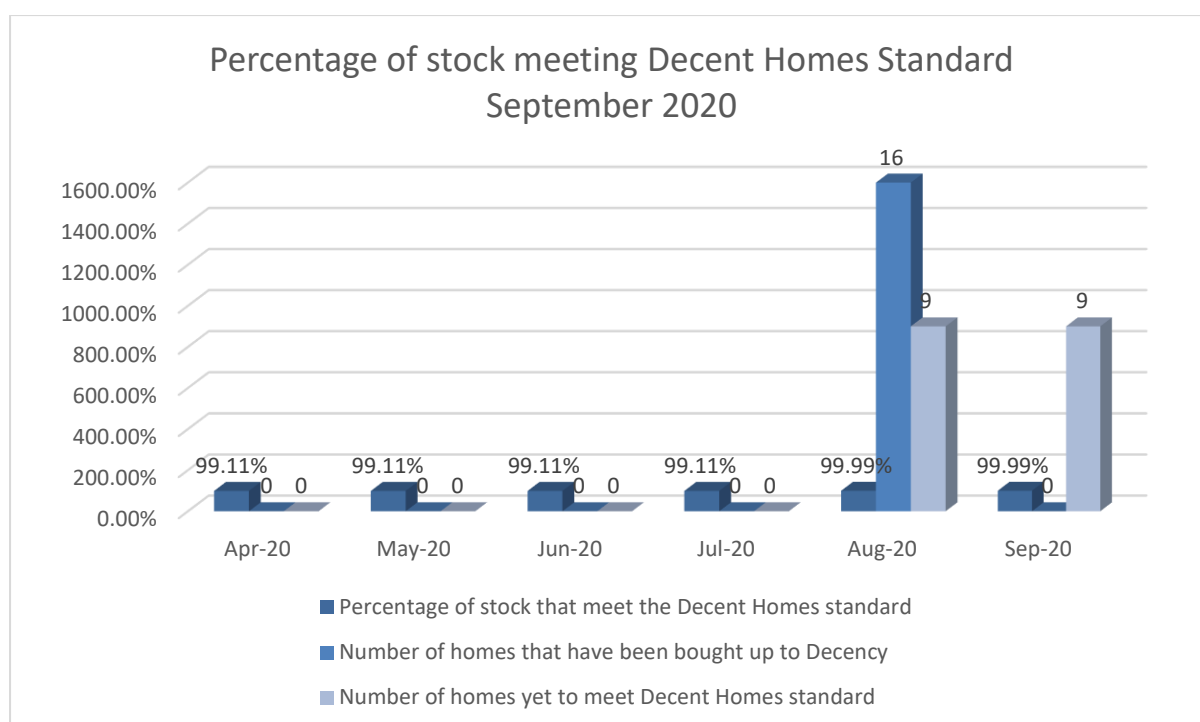
Sept	£1,710.69
Oct	
Nov	
Dec	
Jan	
Feb	
Mar	
Total for year	£3,868.22

LWP spend is always low and has never overspent. There is a slight increase in spend overall in 20/21 but well with the monthly profile (approx. £1.9k pm). There has not been a sharp rise in claims to LWP during COVID and this is mainly due to the number of other forms of support that have been made available to our residents, either from DWP, utility companies or other responses from WBC.

5.2 Decent Homes

At the end of September 2020, the percentage of stock that meets the Decent Homes Standard remained at 99.99% (9 homes, a reduction from 25 at the beginning of the year):

Figure 13: Percentage of stock meeting Decent Homes Standard September 2020.



At the beginning of the financial year, our reporting system indicated 25 properties fell out of the Decent Homes Standard. By the end of the second quarter all 25 properties were inspected by the teams surveyors and 16 of the 25 properties did not fail the standard, meaning there are 9 properties that are yet to meet the standard. It is anticipated that these 9 properties will have works completed by the end of the calendar year, although this is dependent on covid restrictions.

5.3 Voids

The average re-let time for a void (empty) property in the first two quarters of the 2020/21 financial year was 39 days, 9 days higher than the target set of 30 days. Please note that this re-let time does not include exception properties. Typically, a high number of nominations and refusals are the main reason for exception properties. Exception properties are long-term lets and are defined by:

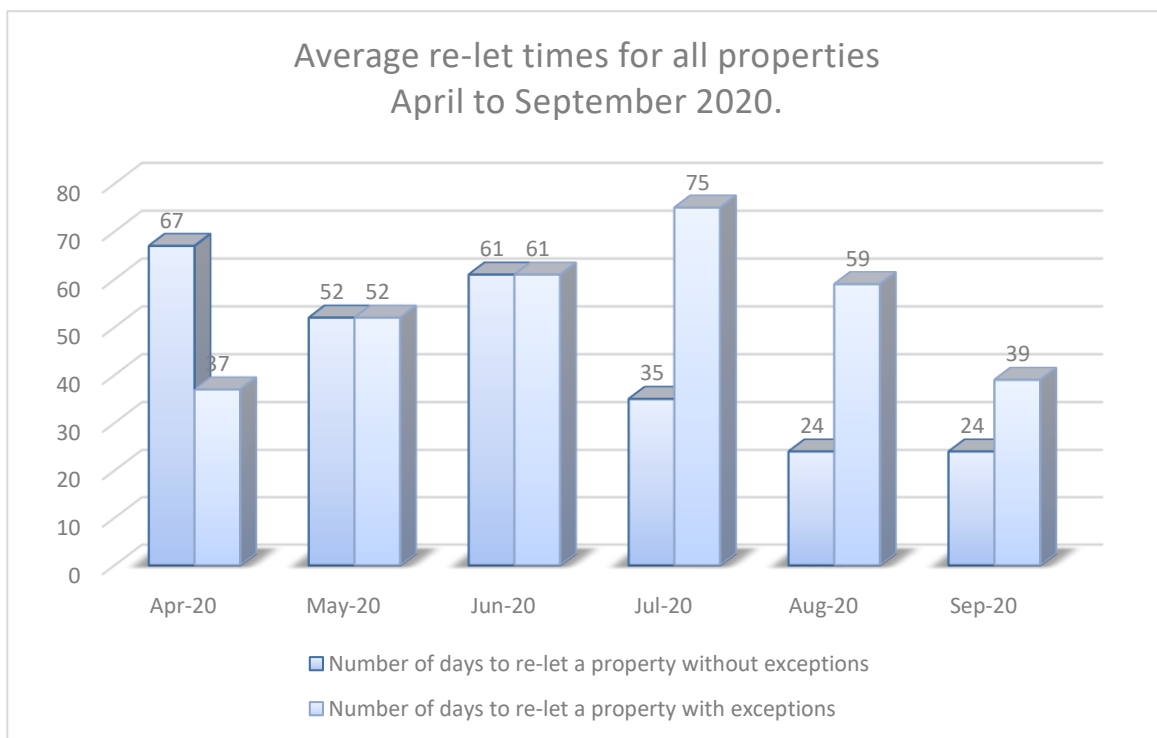
- A re-let that had more than three nominations to the property (meaning three refusals).
- A property has been put on hold from another team. For example, the Housing Needs Team may ask for a property to be put on hold as it may be suitable for a vulnerable nominee.

If including exception properties, the average re-let times for properties was 59 days.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the service had a lot of exception properties. A high number of properties that were available for letting were put on hold to ensure tenant, staff and contractor safety and whilst the voids team amended processes to enable the letting of properties safely and within government guidelines.

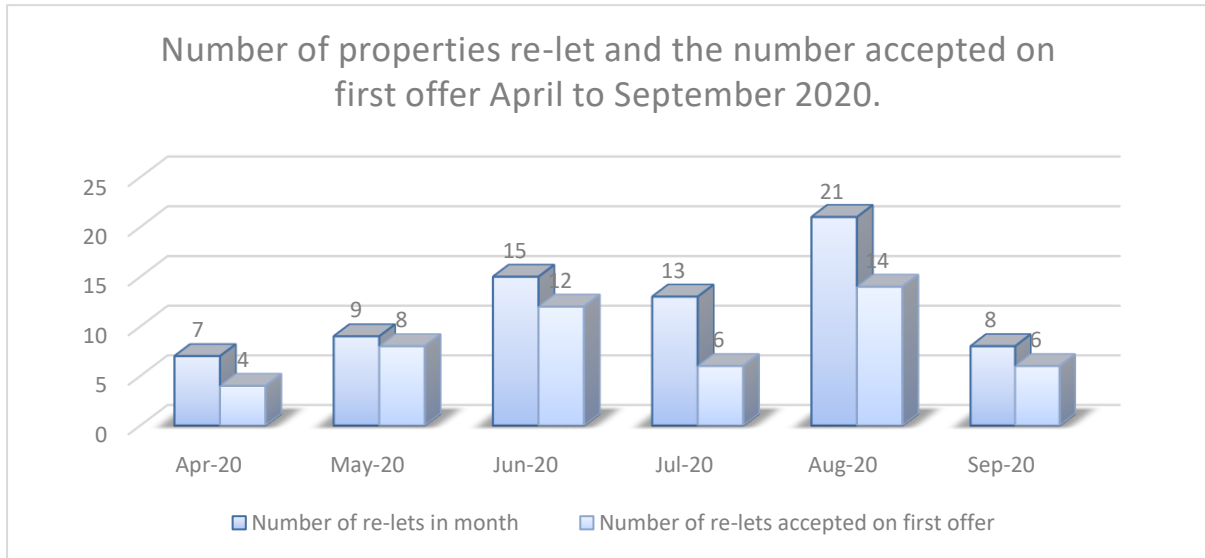
The average re-let times for all properties can be seen in the graph below:

Figure 14: Average re-let times for all properties April to September 2020.



The graph below highlights the number of properties re-let and the number accepted on the first offer.

Figure 15: Number of properties re-let and the number accepted on first offer April to September 2020.

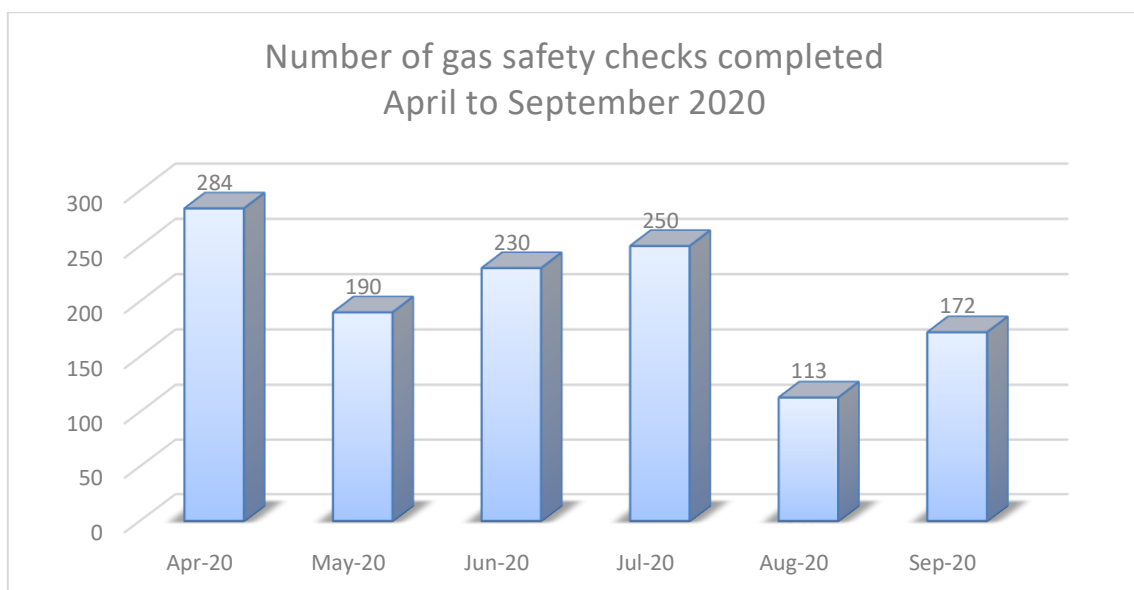


As shown above, 88% of properties re-let were accepted on the first offer. This high percentage of accepted properties are a factor in ensuring re-let times were within target.

5.4 Gas Servicing

We completed 1,239 gas services between April 2020 and September 2020. The graph below shows the number of gas services completed in this financial year so far:

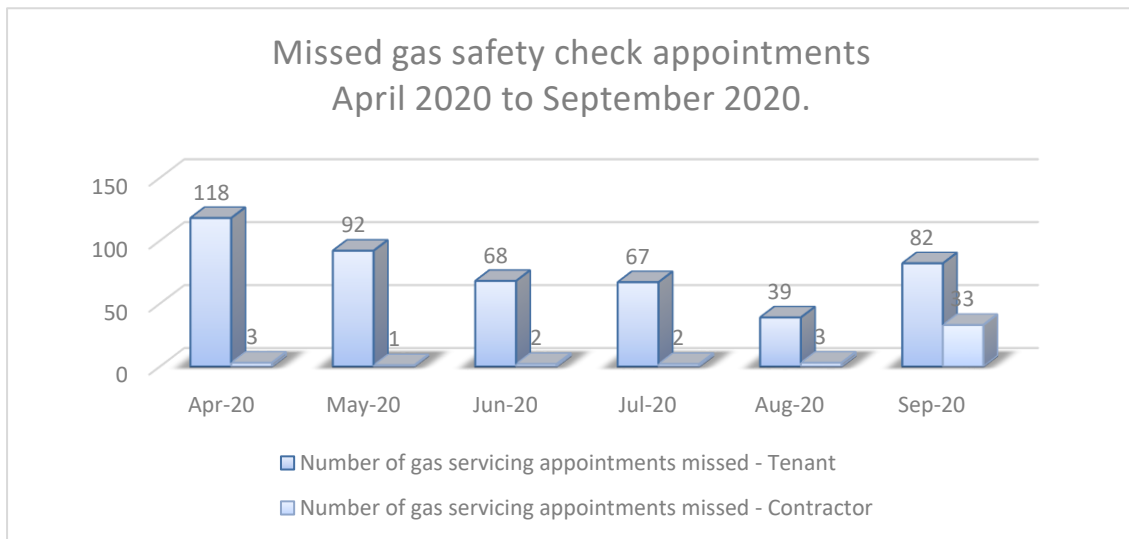
Figure 16: Number of gas safety checks completed April to September 2020.



The service has achieved a 100% compliance rate throughout the year so far. In the last three years, the service has achieved a 100% compliance rate except for one month when the service had a difficult case to resolve.

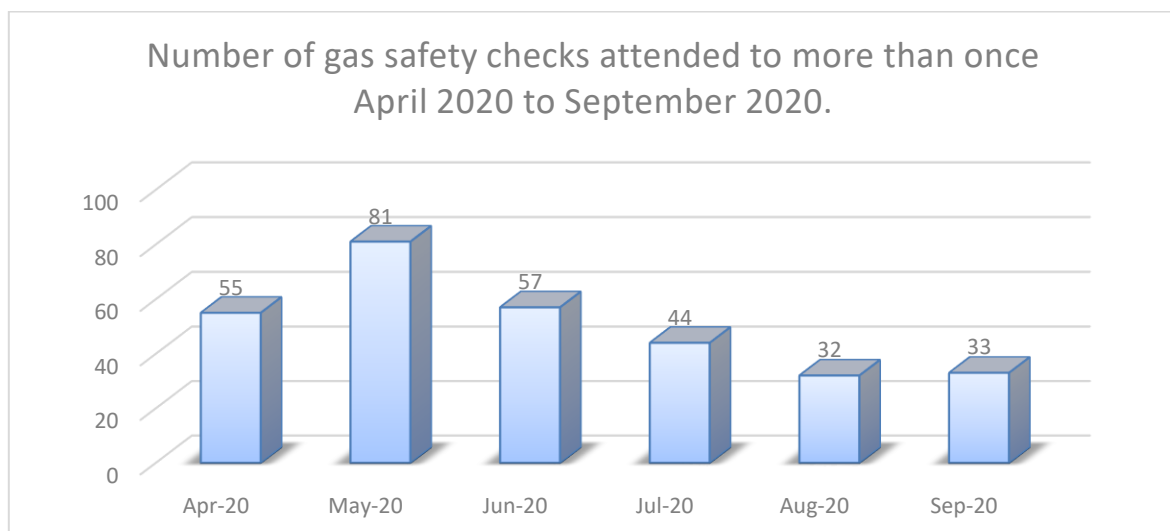
One issue that has continued in this financial year from the last, is the number of missed appointments. In this financial year so far, there have been 510 missed appointments. Looking at the historical data, there appears to be a correlation with the number of gas services and missed appointments; the higher the number of safety checks, the more missed appointments:

Figure 17: Missed gas safety check appointments April 2020 to September 2020.



Efforts have been made to reduce the number of missed appointments, including advice in Housing Matters and the latest Annual Report also provides similar advice. By the end of the second quarter of this year there were 302 occasions when a property had to be attended more than once, as highlighted below:

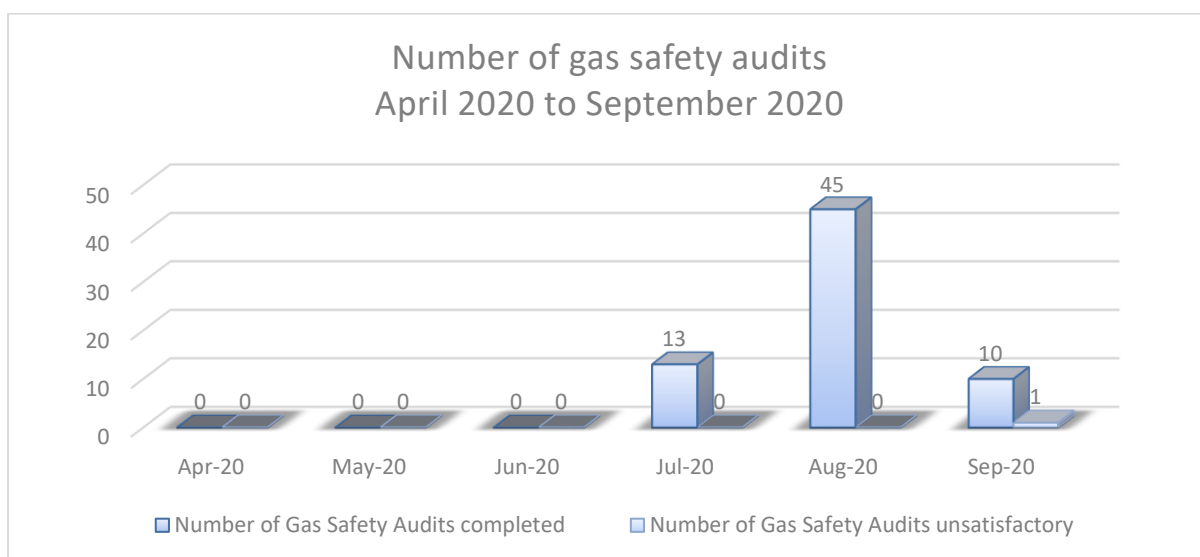
Figure 18: Number of gas safety checks attended to more than once April 2020 to September 2020.



In each month of the quarter there were instances of tenants being visited four or more times before the contractor was able to gain access. Please note this figure does not include cold calls made by the contractor. As cold calls are not official appointments made by the service they are not recorded as a missed appointment. It is important to note that the gas engineers contracted by the service do not receive payment if a service is not completed, so any missed appointments do not cost the service any additional fees. In light of the high number of missed appointments, it is still very positive to see a 100% compliance rate so far in this financial year.

Throughout the first quarter of the financial year, gas safety audits were not being undertaken due to restrictions around Covid 19 and ensuring tenant and contractor safety. Audits resumed in the second quarter of the year, when 68 audits were completed. August saw 45 audits undertaken due to the backlog of the first quarter:

Figure 19: Number of gas safety audits April 2020 to September 2020.



As shown above, there was one audit failed in September 2020. However, this was due to an issue with the LGSR (the gas safety certificate) being completed incorrectly and did not constitute a health and safety risk at the property in question.

6. Private Sector Housing

6.1 Housing Related Service Requests

A total of 846 housing related service requests were received from April 2020 to September 2020 by the Public Protection Partnership. These are broken down by complaint type in Table 8 overleaf.

Table 8: Housing related service requests by complaint April to September 2020.

Type of Complaint	Number of Complaints
Drainage	16
Accumulations	45
Bonfire/Smoke	248
Filthy & Verminous	2
Immigration Inspections	1
Empty Properties	6
Pest Related	107
Noise	262
Asbestos	7
Light	8
Animal Advice	7
Other	137

A total of 43 complaints were received specifically related to poor housing condition between April 2020 and September 2020. A breakdown of the tenure type of complainants is below in Table 9.

Table 9: Housing related service requests by tenure April to September 2020.

Type of Tenure	Number of Complaints
Owner Occupied	7
Private Rented	28
LA	1
Housing Association	0
Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)	3
Mobile Home	4

6.2 Formal Action Taken Under the Housing Act 2004 & Associated Legislation

No housing improvement notices were served between April 2020 and September 2020.

6.3 House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Mandatory Licensing

A total of 110 HMO applications were received during this period. 12 are being processed, 61 have been issued, 17 are pending issue, 1 refused, 3 new applications yet to be processed, 8 subsequently withdrawn, 2 licenses revoked, 4 out for consultation and 2 licences have been superseded.

6.4 Housing General

6.4.1 Landlord Accreditation

This scheme is currently suspended.

6.4.2 Park Homes and Caravan Sites

As at September 2020, there were 56 site licences in place.

6.4.3 Immigration Inspections

One immigration inspection was completed during this period.

6.5 Flexible Home Improvement Loan Scheme

Between April 2020 and September 2020, six enquiries were received.

Contributions provided by:

Section 1 Housing Needs – Baljinder Reyatt, Policy and Performance Specialist.

Section 2 Affordable Housing Supply – Frances Haywood, Senior Strategy Officer.

Section 3 Buying a Home – Victoria Higgins, Housing Policy Officer and Simon Taylor, Specialist Planning Monitoring Officer.

Section 4 Renting a Home Privately – Victoria Higgins, Housing Policy Officer.

Section 5 Housing Management Information – Baljinder Reyatt, Policy and Performance Specialist.

Section 6 Private Sector Housing – George Lawrence – Strategic Manager PPP.

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

FOR CONSIDERATION BY Council on 20 May 2021

WARD None Specific;

CHIEF EXECUTIVE Susan Parsonage

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

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

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1) having reviewed the representation of the political groups on the Council, confirms that it has 31 Conservative Group Members, 18 Liberal Democrat Group Members, 3 Labour Group Members, and 2 Independent Group Members;
- 2) approves the appointment and composition of Committees and Boards as set out in Para 2.1;
- 3) approves the allocation of seats on Committees and Boards on the basis that, of the 89 seats (as set out in Para 3.6), 53 be allocated to the Conservative Group 28 be allocated to the Liberal Democrat Group, 5 be allocated to the Labour Group and 3 be allocated to the Independent Group;
- 4) approves the proposals submitted by the respective Group Leaders and that those Members be appointed to the Committees and Boards as set out in Appendix 1 (to follow);
- 5) agrees that the second part of procedure rule 4.2.1.1r) and procedure rule 4.2.26 continues to be suspended and for the 2021/22 Municipal Year enabling the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of those Council Committees etc, set out in Appendix 1A to be appointed as stated;
- 6) agrees that the principles of proportionality be applied when Members are appointed to Sub Committees, Panels or Working Groups;
- 7) notes the appointment of the Independent Persons to assist the work of the Standards Committee and the co-opted Parish/Town Council Representatives as set out in Appendix 1;
- 8) notes the elected Member representatives on the Wokingham Borough Wellbeing Board, as set out in Appendix 1, as nominated by the Leader of Council in accordance with Section 194 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

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

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

Members are therefore asked to note the political balance of the Council and consider the allocation of and appointment to seats on Committees and Boards for the 2021/22 Municipal Year.

Background

1. Political Groups

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

Conservative Political Group	Liberal Democrat Political Group
Sam Akhtar	Rachel Bishop-Firth
Keith Baker	Prue Bray
Parry Batth	Stephen Conway
Laura Blumenthal	Peter Dennis
Chris Bowring	Lindsay Ferris
Anne Chadwick	Paul Fishwick
Jenny Cheng	Maria Gee
Phil Cunnington	David Hare
Michael Firmager	Clive Jones
Guy Grandison	Sarah Kerr
John Halsall	Tahir Maher
Pauline Helliard-Symons	Morag Malvern
Graham Howe	Adrian Mather
Norman Jorgensen	Andrew Mickleburgh
Pauline Jorgensen	Ian Shenton
John Kaiser	Imogen Shepherd-DuBey
Abdul Loyes	Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey
Charles Margetts	Caroline Smith 18/53
Rebecca Margetts	
Stuart Munro	
Gregor Murray	
Barrie Patman	Labour Political Group
Jackie Rance	Shirley Boyt
Angus Ross	Rachel Burgess
Daniel Sargeant	Carl Doran 3/53
Chris Smith	
Wayne Smith	
Bill Soane	
Alison Swaddle	Independent Group
Simon Weeks	Gary Cowan
Shahid Younis 31/53	Jim Frewin 2/53

2. Appointment and Composition of Committees

2.1 In accordance with Rule 4.1.3e) of the Constitution the Council is required to decide on the composition of Committees and make appointments to them. It is therefore proposed that Council appoint the following Committees and Boards. In relation to the number of seats the following rules have been applied:

- Where the Constitution expressly states a set number of seats available then this is recommended;
- Where the Constitution does not state a set number of seats available then the number of seats are the same as for the previous municipal year; or

- Where the number of seats has changed then the reason for the change.

Committees/ Boards	Number of Seats	Reason
Audit Committee	7	Not set in Constitution. Same as 20/21
Licensing and Appeals Committee	14	Paragraph 8.4.1 of Constitution
Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee	12	Paragraph 6.1.2 of Constitution
Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee	8	Paragraph 6.2.1 of Constitution
Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee	8	Paragraph 6.2.1 of Constitution
Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee	10	Paragraph 6.2.1 of Constitution
Personnel Board	7	Paragraph 8.6.1 of Constitution
Planning Committee	11	Not set in Constitution. Same as 20/21
Special Council Executive Committee	6	Paragraph 8.6.1 of Constitution
Standards Committee	6	Paragraph 9.1.1 of Constitution
Total number of seats where Political Balance applies	89	
Wokingham Borough Wellbeing Board	4	Para 4.4.2 of Constitution
Schools Transport Appeals Panel	6	Para 8.7.1 of Constitution. Pool of 6 appointed from Licensing and Appeals Committee

2.2 The total number of seats on Committees and Boards is therefore 89 given that the Wokingham Borough Wellbeing Board falls outside the provisions of Section 15(5) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. Please note that elected Member representatives on the Board are the Leader, the Executive Member with responsibility for Childrens Services, Executive Member with responsibility for Health and Wellbeing and one further Opposition Member.

2.3 The Schools Transport Appeals Panel is a 3 member panel selected from a 6 member pool. The members of the pool are selected from and by the members of the Licensing and Appeals Panel.

3. Allocation of Seats

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

	Number of Members	Political Composition %
Conservative Group	31	57%
Liberal Democrat Group	18	33%
Labour Group	3	6%
Independent Group	2	4%
	53	100%

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

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

3.3 In accordance with 3.2d) above the number of seats on ordinary Committees will be allocated in the same proportion as the political Groups' representation on full Council as set out in Para 3.1 above. This is subject to the application of rules a) and b) in Para 3.1 above. This means the principle rule is that not all seats are allocated to the same group and that the majority of seats on a committee are allocated to the majority group.

3.4 Therefore In accordance with Section 15(5) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, and taking account of the fact that not all seats on any Committee can be allocated to the same political group, it is suggested that the 89 seats set out in Para 2.1 be allocated to each Group as follows:

Committee/Panels/ Board	No of Seats	Conservative Group (Majority Group)	Liberal Democrat Group	Labour Group	Independent Group
Audit Committee	7	4	3	0	0
Licensing and Appeals Committee	14	8	4	1	1
Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee	12	7	3	1	1
Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee	8	5	2	0	1
Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee	8	5	2	1	0

Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee	10	6	3	1	0
Personnel Board	7	4	3	0	0
Planning Committee	11	6	4	1	0
Special Council Executive Committee	6	4	2	0	0
Standards Committee	6	4	2	0	0
Total	89	53	28	5	3

3.5 In relation to certain committees that have an even number of members, the requirement in section 15(5)(b) of the 1989 Act to give a majority of seats to the majority group on each committee, results in political balance when considered by allocation of seats to be:

	Number of Seats Allocated	Political Composition % by Seats on Committees
Conservative Group	53	60%
Liberal Democrat Group	28	31%
Labour Group	5	6%
Independent Members	3	3%
Total Seats	89	100%

4. Appointment to Committees

4.1 Attached at Appendix 1 is a list of Committees and Boards to which Members will be appointed for the 2021/22 Municipal Year. Any further information relating to nominations by the respective Group Leaders will be circulated before or at the meeting.

4.2 Previously the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the above Committees were appointed at Annual Council however in May 2019. However, due to the expiry of ability to hold virtual meetings, it is important to have Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen in place as soon as possible so that these roles would be appointed by the relevant Committee in meetings that would be held immediately after the Annual Council meeting. In the current circumstances it would not be practical to organise a series of meetings after Annual Council, just to elect a Chairman and Vice-Chairman for all of the above Committees.

4.3 It is further proposed that the second part of procedure rule 4.2.1.1r) and procedure rule 4.2.26 be suspended and for the 2021/22 Municipal Year enabling the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of those Council Committees etc, set out in Appendix 1A be appointed as stated. This enables these appointments to take effect without the need for the physical attendance of Members of those Committees immediately following Annual Council. In addition, this choice enables the full membership of O&S Management Committee to be appointed.

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

Analysis of Issues

There are no other issues associated with this decision.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	£0	Yes	Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£0	Yes	Revenue
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£0	Yes	Revenue

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

Cross-Council Implications
None

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

Contact Sean O'Connor	Service Legal Service
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APPOINTMENT TO COMMITTEES AND BOARDS

PART 1 – ORDINARY COMMITTEES

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

Licensing and Appeals Committee – 14 Seats			
Conservative Group (8)	Liberal Democrat Group (4)	Labour Group (1)	Independent Group (1)
1	1	1.	1.
2	2		
3	3		
4	4		
5			
6			
7			
8			

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee – 12 Seats			
1) <i>Members of the O&S Management Committee cannot sit on the Audit Committee.</i> 2) <i>The O&S Management Committee must include the Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of the three O&S Committees</i> 3) <i>No Executive Members</i>			
Conservative Group (7)	Liberal Democrat Group (3)	Labour Group (1)	Independent Group (1)
1	1	1.	1.
2	2		
3	3		
4			
5			
6			
7			

Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 8 Seats			
1) <i>Members of this Committee cannot sit on the Audit Committee.</i>			
2) <i>No Executive Members</i>			
Conservative Group (5)	Liberal Democrat Group (2)	Labour Group (0)	Independent Group (1)
1	1		1.
2	2		
3			
4			
5			

Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 8 Seats			
1) <i>Members of this Committee cannot sit on the Audit Committee.</i>			
2) <i>No Executive Members</i>			
Conservative Group (5)	Liberal Democrat Group (2)	Labour Group (1)	Independent Group (0)
1	1	1.	
2	2		
3			
4			
5			

Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 10 Seats			
1) <i>Members of this Committee cannot sit on the Audit Committee.</i>			
2) <i>No Executive Members</i>			
Conservative Group (6)	Liberal Democrat Group (3)	Labour Group (1)	Independent Group (0)
1	1	1.	
2	2		
3	3		
4			
5			
6			

Personnel Board - 7 Seats			
Conservative Group (4)	Liberal Democrat Group (2)	Labour Group (0)	Independent Group (0)
1	1		
2	2		
3	3		
4			

Planning Committee – 11 Seats

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

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

Special Council Executive Committee – 6 Seats

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

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

Standards Committee – 6 Seats

The Leader cannot be on Standards Committee. Maximum 1 Executive Member.

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

PART 2 - Substitute Members

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee – Substitute Members			
Conservative Group (7)	Liberal Democrat Group (3)	Labour Group (1)	Independent Group (1)
1	1	1	1
2	2		
3	3		
4			
5			
6			
7			

Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Substitute Members			
Conservative Group (5)	Liberal Democrat Group (2)	Labour Group (0)	Independent Group (1)
1	1		1
2	2		
3			
4			
5			

Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Substitute Members			
Conservative Group (5)	Liberal Democrat Group (2)	Labour Group (1)	Independent Group (0)
1	1	1	
2	2		
3			
4			
5			

Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Substitute Members			
Conservative Group (6)	Liberal Democrat Group (3)	Labour Group (1)	Independent Group (0)
1	1	1	
2	2		
3	3		
4			
5			
6			

Personnel Board - Substitute Members			
<i>(to substitute for members of the Personnel Board in relation to the appointment or dismissal of or disciplinary action in respect of 1st and 2nd tier Officers)</i>			
Conservative Group (8)	Liberal Democrat Group ()	Labour Group ()	Independent Group ()
1	1		
2	2		
3	3		
4	4		
5	5		
6	6		
7	7		
8	8		

Special Council Executive Committee – Substitute Members			
Conservative Group (1)	Liberal Democrat Group (1)	Labour Group ()	Independent Group ()
1	1		

PART 3 - Standing subcommittees

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

School Transport Appeals Panel – 6 Members			
<i>(must be members of the Licensing and Appeals Committee)</i>			
Conservative Group (4)	Liberal Democrat Group (2)	Labour Group (0)	Independent Group (0)
1	1		
2	2		
3			
4			

NB as a subcommittee of Licensing and Appeals Committee, Schools Transport Appeals is not considered as part of the overall political balance calculation. However, it still must be politically balanced.

PART 4 - Co-Opted Membership & Independent Persons

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

Independent Persons	
1	David Comben
2	Paddy Haycocks
3	Nicholas Oxborough

**APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMEN AND VICE-CHAIRMEN OF
COUNCIL COMMITTEES AND BOARDS**

Audit Committee	
Chairman	
Vice-Chairman	

Licensing and Appeals Committee	
Chairman	
Vice-Chairman	

Personnel Board	
Chairman	
Vice-Chairman	

Planning Committee	
Chairman	
Vice-Chairman	

Special Council Executive Committee	
Chairman	Mayor
Vice-Chairman	Deputy Mayor

Standards Committee	
Chairman	
Vice-Chairman	

Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee	
Chairman	
Vice-Chairman	

Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
Chairman	
Vice-Chairman	

Community and Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee	
Chairman	
Vice-Chairman	

Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee	
Chairman	
Vice-Chairman	

**APPOINTMENT TO PANELS / WORKING GROUPS /
JOINT COMMITTEES AND VARIOUS BODIES**

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

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

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

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

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

Community Safety Partnership – 2 Members	
<i>1 Member from Conservative Group and 1 Member from Liberal Democrat Group</i>	
Conservative Group (1)	Liberal Democrat Group (1)
1	1

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

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

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

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

Joint Public Protection Committee – 2 Members	
<i>Must be Executive Member with responsibility for Public Protection</i>	
Conservative Group	
1	
2	
Substitute	

Joint Waste Disposal Board – 2 Members <i>Must be Executive Members</i> <i>Appointment is for four years to 30 June 2022</i>			
Conservative Group			
1			
2			

Schools Forum – 1 Member <i>1 representative of the Local Education Authority. Under Regulations the Executive Member with responsibility for Education and the Mayor are not eligible for appointment to the forum. (Note: They may attend as non-voting observers)</i>			
Conservative Group	Liberal Democrat Group	Labour Group	Independent Group
1	1	1	1

Secure Accommodation Panel – 1 Member and Substitutes			
Conservative Group	Liberal Democrat Group	Labour Group	Independent Group
1	1	1	1

Substitutes Any Member of the Corporate Parenting Board			
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Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education – 2 Members <i>1 Member from Conservative Group and 1 Member from Liberal Democrat Group</i>	
Conservative Group (1)	Liberal Democrat Group (1)
1	1

Tenant and Landlord Improvement Panel – 4 Members <i>1 Member from each Political Group</i>			
Conservative Group (1)	Liberal Democrat Group (1)	Labour Group (1)	Independent Group (1)
1	1	1	1

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

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

REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

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

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

Organisation	Conservative Nomination	Liberal Democrat Nomination	Labour Member Nomination	Ind Member Nomination
Keep Mobile				
Local Government Association (LGA) General Assembly (4 Members)	1. 2. 3.	1.		
Mid & West Berks Local Countryside Access Forum <i>(Note: appointment is for 3 years)</i>	For Information Only: Angus Ross appointed until June 2023			
Readibus Management Committee				
Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (4 Members) <i>(Note appointments must be in accordance with the Council's political balance)</i>	1. 2. 3.	1.		
Royal Berkshire Hospital Foundation Trust - Board of Governors				
Sonning & District Welfare & Educational Trust				

Organisation	Conservative Nomination	Liberal Democrat Nomination	Labour Member Nomination	Ind Member Nomination
South East Employers (SEE) Full Committee (2 Members)	1. 2.	1. 2.	1. 2.	1. 2.
<i>Substitutes</i>	1.	1.	1	1
South East Reserve Forces and Cadets Association (<i>and Armed Forces Champion</i>)				
Standing Conference on Archives				
Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group of the Local Government Association (SASIG)				
Thames Basin Heaths Joint Strategic Partnership (<i>1 Member, 1 Substitute</i>)				
<i>Substitute</i>				
The Piggott Trust				
The Polehampton Charity				

Organisation	Conservative Nomination	Liberal Democrat Nomination	Labour Member Nomination	Ind Member Nomination
The Poores Land Charity <i>(Note: appointment is for 4 years)</i>	For Information only: Abdul Loyes appointed until May 2023			
White Waltham Airfield Consultative Committee				
Wokingham and District Association for the Elderly <i>(Observer only)</i>				
Wokingham Borough Sports Council				
Wokingham Borough Sports Sponsorship Fund				
Wokingham Job Support Centre Management Committee				
Wokingham Volunteer Centre				
Wokingham Waterside Centre				
Wokingham Youth Counselling & Information Service (ARC)				

Organisation	Conservative Nomination	Liberal Democrat Nomination	Labour Member Nomination	Ind Member Nomination
Woodley Town Centre Management Initiative (2 Members, 1 Substitute)	1. 2.	1. 2.	1. 2.	1. 2.
<i>Substitute</i>				
Woodley Volunteer Centre				

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