



# WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

A Meeting of the **EXECUTIVE** will be held virtually on  
**THURSDAY 29 OCTOBER 2020 AT 7.00 PM**

Susan Parsonage  
Chief Executive  
Published on 21 October 2020

**Note:** The Council has made arrangements under the Coronavirus Act 2020 to hold this meeting virtually via Microsoft Teams. The meeting can be watched live using the following link: <https://youtu.be/P5qrKTjegMg>

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.

## MEMBERSHIP OF THE EXECUTIVE

John Halsall	Leader of the Council
John Kaiser	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Finance and Housing
Parry Bath	Environment and Leisure
UllaKarin Clark	Children's Services
Charlotte Haitham Taylor	Regeneration
Pauline Jorgensen	Highways and Transport
Charles Margetts	Health, Wellbeing and Adult Services
Stuart Munro	Business and Economic Development
Gregor Murray	Resident Services, Communications and Emissions
Wayne Smith	Planning and Enforcement

ITEM NO.	WARD	SUBJECT	PAGE NO.
33.		<b>APOLOGIES</b> To receive any apologies for absence	
34.		<b>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS</b> To confirm the Minutes of the Executive Meeting and the Extraordinary Executive Meeting held on 24 September 2020.	9 - 30
35.		<b>DECLARATION OF INTEREST</b> To receive any declarations of interest	
36.		<b>PUBLIC QUESTION TIME</b> 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 Executive  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 <a href="http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/publicquestions">www.wokingham.gov.uk/publicquestions</a>	
36.1	None Specific	Keith Kerr has asked the Leader of the Council the following question:  <b>Question</b> The Equalities Act 2010 subsection 149 Public Sector Equality Duty [in particular sub paragraphs 1,3,5,6 & 7], must be complied with;	

1. A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
  - A. eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
  - B. advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
  - C. foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

As the Leader of a Public Authority you have recently made postings and statements on Black Lives Matter (BLM), do you believe you have complied with the letter or the spirit of the law?

36.2 None Specific

Ian Shenton has asked the Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Services the following question:

**Question**

What specific challenges does the provision of mental health services in our Borough face so that they can respond to the outcomes of Covid-19 and all of its consequences, and what new and additional actions is WBC taking to bolster mental health provision to tackle these Covid-related challenges?

36.3 None Specific

Mike Smith has asked the Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Services the following question:

**Question**

Prevention and treatment services for non-communicable diseases have been severely disrupted during the pandemic. In addition, many people have been skipping tests and check-ups as well as not contacting health services from fear of infection.

Are there any groups that WBC has identified that appear to be particularly 'hard to reach' with public health messaging about the importance of getting tests and treatments and, if so, what additional action could be taken to reach out to these vulnerable groups?

36.4 None Specific Philip Cunnington has asked the Executive Member for Resident Services, Communications and Emissions the following question:

**Question**

Recommendation 7 of the Climate Emergency Task and Finish Group calls on the Council to include progress of measures aimed at reducing Consumption Emissions coming into the Borough. Other than asking residents to buy less, what can be done to reduce emissions that seem to me to sit outside of the Council's control?

36.5 None Specific Anne Chadwick has asked the Executive Member for Resident Services, Communications and Emissions the following question:

**Question**

As part of the Council's commitment to planting 250,000 new trees, has Wokingham Borough Council considered applying for Tree Cities of the World status and cementing the roll of tree planting and maintenance in the Council's annual activities?

37.

**MEMBER QUESTION TIME**

To answer any member questions

A period of 20 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

37.1 None Specific Gary Cowan has asked the Executive Member for Finance and Housing the following question:

**Question**

I note that the forward plan for WBC's Executive calls for discussion on the Housing Strategy 2020-2024: and the notice of proposed decision was first published: 27<sup>th</sup> August 2019.

The reason for consideration: To approve the Council's Housing Strategy for the next 3 years.

I also notice that the decision was deferred from November Executive in order that additional data regarding specialist housing can be accommodated and the decision is now due on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2020 by Executive. Reference Number: WBC1087.

The document in question is the Housing Strategy 2019 - 2022 and although there are many references to previous housing strategies on the Councils website it would appear that the key document Housing Strategy 2019 - 2022 is not mentioned.

My question is as a three year housing strategy, 2019-2022 is a crucial document that will require considerable thought and deliberation by Members and the public at large. Why has the Council not put it on the Council website so one can have proper sight of it?

37.2 None Specific

Andrew Mickleburgh has asked the Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Services the following question:

**Question**

Mental health issues do not discriminate. We are all potentially vulnerable. Yet, mental health issues remain a taboo subject for many people. There is the potential for this 'taboo' to become even more so as people cope with increasing and varied forms of hardship resulting from the pandemic. I applaud the initiatives taken by WBC with Citizens Advice to expand mental health supports. However, I am concerned that the cultural diversity, which is so important to our Borough, creates challenges when it comes to responding effectively to culturally specific mental health needs. Are there any specific concerns that WBC is particularly worried about regarding this matter and if so, how is WBC responding?

37.3 None Specific

Tahir Maher has asked the Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Services the following question:

**Question**

A number of cities and towns, including Glasgow, Leeds and Cheshire, for example, have established 'Poverty Truth Commission'. Primarily, it empowers people living in poverty to work with local leaders to tackle poverty.

Ordinary people struggling with poverty are given a chance to relate their personal experiences by creating safe spaces for people to tell their stories and opportunities for those making and influencing decisions to listen.

With rising numbers of individuals and families in our Borough facing significant hardships as a consequence of the pandemic, which in some cases

has the potential to do irreversible harm, the need to examine all potentially helpful courses of action becomes all the more urgent.

Is Wokingham Borough Council prepared to participate in the Poverty Truth Commission to build on a principle of collective decision-making to create meaningful and longer-term solutions and tackle poverty between those people with lived experience of poverty and those in positions of influence?

37.4 None Specific

Caroline Smith has asked the Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Services the following question:

**Question**

Covid-19 is unquestionably having widespread and significant impacts on mental health everywhere, through increased exposure to stressors, loss of coping mechanisms for many, and reduced access to supports.

Awful 'vicious circles' and downward spirals are all too evident. For instance, issues such as unemployment, unexpected financial hardship, housing concerns and for those in work changing work practices to cope with, are contributing to poor mental health.

In turn, practical issues such as these make it harder to improve mental health and can prevent those who need support from seeking help. This include people of all ages.

What age specific strategies and actions does WBC have in place to identify and support the pandemic related mental health needs of rising numbers of our residents?

37.5 None Specific

Chris Bowring has asked the Executive Member Highways and Transport the following question:

**Question**

Could the Executive Member for Highways and Transport give a brief summary of how the programme of road resurfacing in the Borough is progressing?

**38.**

**TO CONSIDER ANY REPORTS FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

38.1 None Specific

**Officer Response to the Recommendations from the Climate Emergency Task and Finish Group**

## **Matters for Consideration**

<b>39.</b>	None Specific	<b>REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT FY2020/21 - QUARTER 2</b>	<b>67 - 78</b>
<b>40.</b>	None Specific	<b>CAPITAL MONITORING 2020/21 - END OF SEPTEMBER 2020</b>	<b>79 - 88</b>
<b>41.</b>	None Specific	<b>DRAFT HOUSING STRATEGY 2020-2024</b>	<b>89 - 126</b>
<b>42.</b>	None Specific	<b>WBC CARERS STRATEGY 2020-2025</b>	<b>127 - 200</b>

A decision sheet will be available for inspection at the Council's offices (in Democratic Services and the General Office) and on the web site no later than two working days after the meeting.

### **CONTACT OFFICER**

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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF  
THE EXECUTIVE  
HELD ON 24 SEPTEMBER 2020 FROM 7.00 PM TO 8.09 PM**

**Committee Members Present**

Councillors: John Halsall (Chairman), John Kaiser, Parry Batth, UllaKarin Clark, Charlotte Haitham Taylor, Pauline Jorgensen, Charles Margetts, Gregor Murray and Wayne Smith

**Other Councillors Present**

Prue Bray  
Gary Cowan  
Andy Croy  
Richard Dolinski  
Lindsay Ferris  
Sarah Kerr  
Andrew Mickleburgh  
Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey

**19. APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was submitted from Councillor Stuart Munro.

**20. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 30 July 2020 and the Extraordinary Executive held on 11 September 2020 were confirmed as correct records and will be signed by the Leader of Council at a later date.

**21. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received.

**22. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

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

**22.1 Jennifer Lissaman asked the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure the following question:**

**Question**

I am asking this question on behalf of the Wokingham Waterside Centre (WWC) Board of which I am a member.

Since April this year there has been tremendous use of the beautiful open space between WWC and Thames Valley Park Nature Reserve, the majority of people spending the whole day there and sometimes overnight as well. Soon, the Park and Ride, to the rear of WWC will be open.

As agreed with this Council earlier this year WWC has one toilet on the outside of the building for use only with a RADAR key. The outcome of this is, unfortunately, that people are using land adjacent to the campsite at WWC, and possibly the Nature Reserve, to relieve themselves. WWC trustees/board members find this unacceptable and ask that

you find a way to provide properly working public toilets in a location appropriate to this sensitive location by the River Thames National Path.

### **Answer**

I must admit I have used that location myself during very sunny days and it is very pleasant out there.

Going back to 2009, in line with many other authorities throughout the country, the Council took the decision to stop providing standalone public toilet facilities and instead established a Local Loo Scheme where local businesses and other facilities (such as Council offices) make their toilets available for public use. This decision was taken because these toilets were costly to maintain due to regular incidents of vandalism and graffiti. The toilets also attracted anti-social behaviour and were often closed to the public for repairs.

This approach has worked well for many years and has proved a more efficient way of ensuring access to toilets across the Borough.

Due to the size and semi-rural nature of our Borough, it is not practical for the Council to provide public toilet facilities in every location where residents may want to use them. We urge everyone who lives in and visits our Borough to adhere to the laws around public decency and to report any instances where this isn't happening to the police.

### **Supplementary Question**

We were part of the Local Loo Scheme but that is the reason that there was a discussion with the Council earlier this year, and one of the toilets was closed because it could not cope with the usage and was broken. That is why there is only one toilet for use with a RADAR key. There were local loos available there. The Waterside Centre was paid to run them, but now there is only one for those with disabilities. You are not quite up-to-date with the latest usage of these things and I wondered if we could perhaps have some progress on this with a meeting with either yourself or the relevant Officer to discuss a way forwards, otherwise the situation can only get worse? It is not acceptable to have people using the Waterside Centre grounds as a public toilet.

### **Supplementary Answer**

I totally agree Jenny. There is a need for everybody to be responsible for their own behaviour, especially at this this time when resources are spread so thin, for us as an authority, and the Police. Essentially the point is why should the Council spend more money responding to the behaviour of a few people who spoil the experience for the vast majority visiting the area near the Thames. I am very happy to meet you offline with the appropriate Officer to discuss this further.

## **22.2 Arya Babollah had asked the Leader of the Council the following question and in his absence the following answer was provided:**

### **Question**

Knowing what you have said about Black Lives Matter, what were you thinking when you tried to commandeer a Black Lives Matter banner for your photo ops at the BLM protest against for what you said and stand for in Elms Field in August?

## **Answer**

Thank you very much for your question. I am really pleased as it allows me to articulate the Council's and therefore my approach to these issues.

As the Leader of the Council, I have a duty to all residents, to understand their views, and do everything in my power to ensure the Council upholds its equalities duties.

My previous comments about Black Lives Matter have been misconstrued, although I accept, they may have been open to an interpretation that I did not intend. I also wish to acknowledge that there is always space for all of us, including myself, to educate ourselves and grow in our understanding of each other.

Firstly, and most importantly, we are an organisation committed to antiracism, promoting equality and celebrating diversity. The staff and all the Members of the Council wish to be at the forefront of best practise. If there is an area, in which we are deficient in these aims, we wish to know it, to address it if we can and create a better quality of life for all our residents. I believe I speak for all Councillors.

I came to England as a boy speaking little English and suffered prejudice and abuse because of my origins and speech. In the fifties, those prejudices were very real.

Black Lives Matter is an idea, a philosophy, a moral code and a movement. The idea, philosophy and moral code are central to what we believe we are and I am.

The Black Lives Matter rally in Elms Field was a public meeting held on Borough Council land managed by the Town Council. It was advertised as a peaceful and welcoming meeting. The organisers knew that the Deputy Chief Executive and I had accepted their invitation and would be there. Indeed, they had welcomed us and came to greet us. The first speaker acknowledged my presence by mischaracterising me as having associated the murders in Forbury Gardens with the BLM march that day in Reading. At the time, I explicitly, publicly and frequently said that there was no association between those two events and have repeated this regularly. Indeed, the Police have also expressed that assertion. I have apologised freely and openly to anyone who misconstrued what I have said and have thereby taken offence.

I did not commandeer the flag as you suggest, in fact, I was invited to join my Council colleagues who were holding the flag, when an individual in a mask snatched their flag from them and ran away. I was saddened to witness that as it lowered the tone of what was otherwise a peaceful and powerful event. And so, I fear that you have been misinformed about the incident.

Please join me in striving to make the quality of life in all our community better.

Our mission as a Borough Council and mine as an individual is committed to antiracism, promoting equality and celebrating diversity and improving where we can the quality of life of all our residents and helping residents in their pursuit of happiness.

Please Arya join us as part of the solution and many thanks again for raising this question.

### **22.3 Tracey Stone had asked the Leader of the Council the following question and in her absence the following answer was provided:**

#### **Question**

You have made statements on national television and made postings on your Facebook page which could appear racist and has spread fear, alarm and distress to many people of all ethnicities, but particularly black residents, living in Wokingham and Districts. As the leader of a public body, why did you do this?

#### **Answer**

Again, I welcome the question.

It is really great to have the opportunity to restate the Council's and my position.

In my answer to the previous question, and at the Council meeting on 23 July, I have sought to clarify my position, but I am happy to re-iterate this as this is a very important issue for our community.

I completely support the message, principles and the aims of Black Lives Matter in the UK.

I have always been opposed to discrimination in all its forms. I understand the need to have a clear focus on tackling racism where it is found.

If any comments that I have made have been offensive to anybody then, once again, I apologise unreservedly. That was never my intention; rather by reaching out we had hoped to bring residents together.

Firstly, and most importantly, we are an organisation committed to antiracism, promoting equality and celebrating diversity. The staff and all the Members of the Council wish to be at the forefront of best practice. If there is an area in which we are deficient in these aims we wish to know it, to address it if we can and create a better quality of life for all our residents.

I have never made statements on national television. There was a piece which was selectively extracted from an Executive meeting mixed in a feature on South Today. My postings on Facebook were not racist and indeed I have gone to great lengths to clarify any possibility of misunderstanding or misinterpretation. I have also apologised if I have inadvertently caused offence amongst any community; I would never knowingly do so.

Unfortunately, your question is phrased in a way which is incorrect and mischaracterises my words and actions.

The diverse nature of the British population is a beautiful thing and something we can and should be proud of. We can experience incredible cultures from the far reaches of the world with greater clarity and depth than any generation before us. We live together with people who have stories drastically different to ours. These are all aspects of diversity worth encouraging, enjoying and celebrating, because we are lucky to be able to do so.

Our mission as a Borough Council and mine as an individual is committed to antiracism, promoting equality and celebrating diversity and improving where we can the quality of life of all our residents and helping residents in their pursuit of happiness.

Please Tracey join us as part of the solution and many thanks for raising this question.

**22.4 Daniel Hinton asked the Executive Member for Resident Services, Communications and Emissions the following question:**

**Question**

The paper you are presenting tonight seeks to help alleviate the effects of fuel poverty on some of the most vulnerable, at risk and lowest income households across our Borough. Please can you confirm how recipient households will be identified and what criteria will be used when deciding how to prioritise households?

**Answer**

As you mentioned, this scheme has been developed to help those in most need, and seeks to help alleviate fuel poverty and improve energy efficiency of households locally. Wokingham Council has 949 properties (HRA properties) in the E, F and G bands. These are the three least energy efficient bands. In addition, from the database we can identify those older private properties that could benefit from this scheme; together there is a combined figure of 1,809 properties. These homes form the target group, which we will review against the eligibility criteria for this scheme.

Our local knowledge and experience is essential in identifying those with the greatest need from across the Borough, and we will focus on these households first. These properties will receive a letter to invite those who meet the eligibility criteria to contact us. We will liaise with our housing departments to target those on benefits or council tax benefits who could also benefit from this. To be eligible, households must receive one or more of the benefits listed in the Home Heating Cost Reduction Obligation; also known as the "the Affordable Warmth Obligation".

The Council will use directly targeted letters to invite residents to respond and are currently using this system, which is tried and tested. Upon the response we will confirm eligibility criteria and arrange a visit and survey to establish costings and customers approval.

We want to achieve as widespread an uptake as possible to ensure that energy efficiency measures are installed in as many eligible households as possible. The Energy Company Obligations Grants are paid directly to the eco installers rather than the household or HRA company. This guarantees that residents will benefit from the efficiency upgrades without either themselves or the Council having to contribute financially. As a Council we have set aside £30,000 of pre-budgeted money to meet funding gaps should for any reason an identified household not be eligible for 100% grant of works.

**Supplementary Question**

Could you please confirm if this is the same or if it is a different scheme to the Government's Green Homes Grant Scheme?

**Supplementary Answer**

I am really pleased to say that this is actually very separate to the Government's Green Homes Grant Scheme, although many of the same houses would be eligible for both. I actively advise any resident in the Borough who is a homeowner to check out the [www.simpleenergyadvice.org.uk](http://www.simpleenergyadvice.org.uk) website to see whether they would or would not be eligible for a Green Homes grant, which is money paid by the Government in order to make environmental upgrades to your home. I have applied myself for grant money to put solar panels on the roof of my house, which will help fund my heating bill, and should help

bring it down by about 25% hopefully. I actively encourage any householder across the Borough to apply for this, completely separate scheme.

**22.5 Judith Clark had submitted a question which was withdrawn prior to the meeting.**

**23. MEMBER QUESTION TIME**

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

**23.1 Gary Cowan asked the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement the following question:**

**Question**

The Government has introduced new Regulations some of which came into force on 22 July. One in particular gives CIL charging authorities a discretion for a limited time to defer CIL payments, to dis-apply late payment interest and surcharge payments; and to credit interest already charged to developers.

What impact will this have on existing planning applications along with the Council's ability to deliver on infrastructure and climate emergency programmes?

**Answer**

Following the Covid-19 pandemic, the Community Infrastructure Levy (Coronavirus) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020 are now in force. These temporary regulations will remain in force until 31 July 2021. They are aimed at helping small and medium sized developers with an annual turnover of less than £45 million who are experiencing financial difficulties because of the effects of Covid-19. The regulations enable charging authorities to defer payments for up to 6 months, to temporarily dis-apply late payment interest and to provide discretion to return interest already charged where they consider it appropriate to do so.

The regulations can apply to any payment that fell due after 21 March 2020. The request should be made in writing no earlier than 14 days before the CIL payment is due. The Council can request further information which should be provided within 14 days of the request. The Council can grant or refuse the request. A deferral is for up to 6 months from the date the request was received. If the request is refused, the developer has 7 days from date of refusal to make the CIL payment. There is no right of appeal against a refusal.

We have published an FAQ and application form for those seeking deferred CIL payment on our website. I will send the link to you Gary. Any applications for deferrals will be required to demonstrate that their need for a deferral is as a direct result of Covid-19, including by submission of 2 years audited accounts and a written financial impact assessment.

To date we have not had received any applications for deferral of payment through this route. For the most part developers operating in Wokingham Borough are national house builders who do not qualify for deferral under this scheme so it is not anticipated it will have any impact on our major development proposals.

There is likely to be some deferred payments in relation to smaller developments, but it is important to note it is a deferral, not non-payment. Surcharges are discretionary in any case and we would be unlikely to apply them where a small business' financial difficulties were clearly related to Covid-19. The scheme waives late payment interest, which would be mandatory under normal circumstances, for a deferred period. On the whole it is not anticipated that this particular scheme will impede delivery of the Council's capital programme or climate emergency programme and is in line with the Council's other measures to help support small businesses to survive the pandemic.

### **Supplementary Question**

Thanks very much for that. It really is helpful. It really should have said what impact has on ability, not what impact will. From your answer, it is fairly clear that to date it has no impact. I would be interested in being kept up-to-date should you end up in the situation where we do get into problems with the developers but thank you for the answer.

### **Supplementary Answer**

I will send it over to you Gary.

## **23.2 Andrew Mickleburgh asked the Leader of the Council the following question:**

### **Question**

Individuals and families living in poverty are not identified as one of the nine protected characteristics under the Equalities Act of 2010. However, Council decisions and actions often impact on individuals and families – frequently offering vital practical support, but sometimes in ways that could potentially cause harms and unintended consequences. Is there a process, perhaps something similar to the our Borough Equalities Impact Assessments, that WBC can apply to ensure that impacts of WBC policy proposals and actions on the poorest in our community will be explicitly considered, documented and given a significant weighting in the policy making process?

### **Answer**

Poverty is a terrible blight and it is vital that it remains in the forefront of our thinking, in particular as the impact of Covid-19 continues to be felt on all our economy, and so I am grateful to you for this question.

There is a fundamental difference between the protected characteristics you mention and poverty, which is that we will always aim to eradicate poverty. To prevent it and help people out of it. Whereas the nine characteristics are to be protected at the least and, in many ways, to be cherished and celebrated. This means the two things are in different categories and must be considered differently.

But, in other ways, your point is valid. In particular, we recognise the need to understand poverty better so as to guide our policies appropriately. We need to know of its causes so that we can: prevent it; its impacts so that we can mitigate them; and its escape routes so that we can support people through them.

That is why we are developing our bank of local insight and knowledge to understand the complexity of poverty in the Borough so that this understanding can drive more informed decision and policy making and reinforce our approach to this complex issue.

We are not starting from scratch with this; the Council's Community Engagement Team (previously the Community Development Workers) have for many years operated in our

more deprived areas, building up invaluable local contacts and understanding as well as supporting people and neighbourhoods to become stronger and more self-sufficient. And we have also always sought to prevent, mitigate and tackle poverty in practical ways. For example through the work of the Early Help Team with targeted families, by providing food bank vouchers and by back-to-work and employment advice and support.

So our work on poverty will be guided by this combination of on-the-ground knowledge, data analysis and existing good practice in order to better respond to what we know will be a growing issue due to the impact of Covid-19 already mentioned.

### **Supplementary Question**

Unfortunately, as you stated the pandemic means that it is likely that poverty is going to rise further in our Borough. You have mentioned the Community Engagement Team and the Early Help Team but where within the WBC organisational chart does monitoring of poverty levels and the impacts of WBC's policies and action on poverty, currently sit? If possible, can you please provide the name of a specific Officer and/or role with primary responsibility for this activity?

### **Supplementary Answer**

I think within the arrangements that we are now just about to put in place again for the second wave, I think that the Officer who would be responsible for poverty would be the Chief Executive and the Councillor would be myself.

We are very alive to the issue that as we go into the second wave, there will be parts of the community which will suffer more than others, and we have to be on that case all the time. So Andrew it is a very pertinent question and which we are considering all the time now that we are in the second wave.

### **23.3 Prue Bray asked the Executive Member for Finance and Housing the following question:**

#### **Question**

The ban on private landlords evicting tenants facing financial hardship because of the pandemic is likely to come to an end soon. Has WBC done any modelling of what the impact would be in terms of numbers of people the Borough would need to re-home in order to fulfil our statutory requirements to the homeless?

#### **Answer**

The ban on evictions was extended to 20 September from when the courts were able to start considering claims made by landlords and the process towards eviction could start.

Although the ban has come to an end landlords now have to give their tenants a minimum 6 month notice period to leave their properties after an eviction notice is issued. However if there are serious mitigating factors, such as anti-social behaviour, fraud or domestic abuse then the notice period would be only 4 weeks (or in the case of domestic abuse 2 weeks). I am sure you would agree that if a woman is living with a man, or the other way round, you would not want them living together for more than 2 weeks.

During the Covid pandemic the team, our team, you have obviously been in the meeting today with TLIP, have continued to work with landlords and tenants to try and support both parties to resolve any issues threatening those tenancies and will continue to assist those who are at threat of homelessness as our statutory duty asks.

From our work with landlords and tenants over the past few months we are not aware of any significant number of pending eviction cases however the Homeless Reduction Act specialist will continue to monitor the situation and carry out some more detailed modelling in October.

That intelligence and modelling will be reported through to our multi-agency and cross-directorate, and will no doubt turn up and be spoken about at our Tenants' meeting, the Local Homelessness Co-ordination Cell for consideration. That Group has overseen our successful approach to tackling rough sleepers and homelessness during the pandemic. Again, it was at the meeting today, I think when they did the last count. We had four people in the Borough who are homeless; which is probably what most Boroughs can only dream of.

### **Supplementary Question**

It was pleasing to hear today that since we have been able to get Government funding in April we have managed to make some progress, particularly on rough sleepers. But, given where we are and the modelling that is being done to see how we can take this forward both short term and long term, I wondered what analysis is being done as part of that modelling, of the people who may be presenting as homeless as to whether there may be any groups that are particularly at risk of losing their homes or becoming rough sleepers? I am particularly, but not solely, thinking about this in the context of Black Lives Matter and whether we are actually looking at the ethnicity of people as well as disability, sexual orientation and so on, to check that there is not a problem anywhere in the system, or there is not something we could do better to help particular groups?

### **Supplementary Answer**

My response to that Prue, is as you would expect, housing allocation is colour blind, and anyone who applies for a home is treated in the same way. If we were to find that there were an ethnic aspect to seeing disproportionate people from cultural backgrounds or ethnicity, we would actually have to start to record that. I think that is a very good idea and when I see Simon I will be asking if he can just make a point of making sure we are understanding this going forward.

## **23.4 Lindsay Ferris asked the Executive Member for Finance and Housing the following question:**

### **Question**

Can you advise what the reserves of the Council are at this time (i.e. week commencing 21<sup>st</sup> September 2020)?

### **Answer**

Although we monitor the general balance at least monthly and adjust for supplementary estimates and known pressures, the Council does not keep a running balance of all reserves throughout the year, but as part of our monitoring we produce forecasts of the position at year end to assist with future budget setting. That I bring to the Council and the Executive when we talk about monitoring.

Balances on reserves as at 31st March 2020 I can tell you are on page 18 of our draft accounts, which are available on the Council's website. These show a General Fund reserve of £12.43 million, which is in the General reserve, and Earmarked Reserves of £91.52 million.

The forecast General Fund reserve balance at the end of this financial year (31 March 2021) as reported in Quarter 1 to Executive was £5.01 million. The main reasons for the drop was the approved carry forwards of £2.7 million and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. A revised estimate at Quarter 2 will be reported to Executive in October which should see an improved position due to additional funding from Government for Covid-19 costs and a better understanding of the financial pressures. The 2020/21 annual budget includes a net contribution to the Earmarked Reserves of £1.5 million, so they are actually going up.

### **Supplementary Question**

John said he said another answer; could I have the other answer please?

### **Supplementary Answer**

The other answer is basically Lindsay that, it was only one paragraph where we were different, but basically where we are at the moment is that we feel that we are well placed compared with other councils. But I think that you have heard it many times before that when we were looked at, a report was issued by Maidenhead Borough which showed us having the tenth best reserves of any unitary in the country

### **23.5 Sarah Kerr asked the Executive Member for Finance and Housing the following question:**

#### **Question**

There still appears to be a lack of clarity and commitment from the Government to long-term funding for Council Covid-related expenditures. Some of these vital activities that the Council has funded from its own resources are particularly important for less economically well-off members of our Borough. Does the Council share this concern and if so, what practical actions can be taken to address this issue and particularly to avoid cuts that could disproportionately harm the poorest, forced upon the Council by insufficient Government support?

#### **Answer**

In March of this year, the Government pledged to support local authorities through the Covid-19 pandemic. They have made available £4.3 billion to local authorities and Wokingham Borough Council has received support in the form of a direct grant of £8.3 million. In addition to this the Government have announced a variety of other measures, some offering financial support, such as the '75p in the £' compensation for loss of income, to passported grants to local businesses and care providers, and also deferring payments to assist with cashflow issues.

That said, the Council has had to front fund a significant amount of support to residents, suppliers, partners (such as Places for Leisure) and care providers, and this will impact on the Council's General Fund Balance, hence why we are forecasting £5.1million for the end of the year. The money it holds to cover such crises, which is the reserves obviously, where every effort is being made by the Council's Officers to secure funding to cover these pressures and manage down costs, it is still anticipated that the Council's general balances will be depleted at year end. Furthermore, the impact of Covid-19 does not fall neatly into one year and as such its impact will be felt strongly as we formulate our budgets for 2021/22 and beyond.

I can assure the Councillors and the residents of the Borough that we will continue to make representations to Government for the funding we need in both this year and future years. In addition, we will need to continue with our diligent measures of financial management: to target expenditure where it is most needed (which are those that are suffering most financially); seek value for money in all we do; be efficient' be innovative; and work with our partners to create the most effective service delivery options.

Work is already underway on setting the Medium Term Financial Plan, which will be coming to Overview and Scrutiny in the not too distant future, for the next three years and Officers are working to maintain a financially sustainable Council with a balanced budget whilst minimising the impact on residents. Inevitably this, as with all Councils at this time, will mean having to make some difficult decisions, which will make the targeting of resources to those most in need an even greater imperative. As stated, a second wave of the virus will only make matters worse, and of course, what we have seen in the last couple of days, we are nowhere near out of the woods. I think it is very important that people understand that if we as a Council do not control our costs and maintain our costs, we will be broke, and if we are broke then we are no good to anybody.

### **Supplementary Question**

By way of trying to replenish our reserves in due course, is it likely that Council related services are to see an increase in cost to people using those services, and if so are there any measures in place, or could be put in place, that would help those that are from poorer backgrounds?

### **Supplementary Answer**

There are a number of ways that the Council raises money. One of them is via investments and another one is via fees and from council tax. Council tax is capped and so there is only so much we can raise with that. A number of the services we provide, we are only allowed to cover the cost of those services, especially if they are statutory, so we can only raise those in line probably with inflation or what we are experiencing. There are opportunities to raise some of our other fees where we offer pretty good value for money, but we understand during this time everybody is going to be in the same situation.

Wherever we possibly can we will make concessions as we are looking to do at this current moment. There is a consultation going out with the Council Tax Discount Scheme and that will be coming forward shortly to show you what we are doing with that.

## **23.6 Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey asked the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement the following question:**

### **Question**

Why are there 100 unrelated houses added into a plan for the badly needed special needs school in Winnersh?

### **Answer**

The Council has been working very closely with the Department for Education and our colleagues at Reading Borough Council to identify a suitable location for a much-needed new SEND school.

Having reviewed the Council's land holdings it is proposed to site the school on land at Winnersh Farm adjacent to Wheatfield Primary School. It is anticipated that a detailed planning application for the SEND school will be submitted in the next year. The

application will be for the SEND school only and will not include any housing proposals, and I am sure you will be on the Planning Committee when that one comes through.

However, as you are very aware, the consultation draft of the Local Plan Update, which was earlier in the year in February, proposes the allocation of land at Winnersh Farm for around 250 new homes across both Council and privately owned land in that area. The proposed number of new homes was adjusted downwards to account for the potential new SEND school, as I have just mentioned.

A separate application, outline application for housing on the remaining Council-owned land is likely to be submitted in the early part of next year, for consideration, which will obviously mean both of them going to the Planning Committee.

### **Supplementary Question**

When is the Local Plan Update Committee going to be meeting next to consider all these problems that we have, including all the extra 100 houses?

### **Supplementary Answer**

That is an absolute brilliant question because I was with Nigel and Ian last week and I have asked them to put a timetable out over the next week to get a plan, and get some dates in the diary to start that, so that we can go back to where we were, look at what has happened and look at the options. So, diary dates should be coming out, where are we now, potentially tomorrow or Monday. You will obviously be included in that, along with Lindsay and the rest of the working group.

### **23.7 Richard Dolinski asked the Executive Member for Children's Services the following question:**

#### **Question**

My question is to the Lead Member for Children's Services regarding the proposals for a new Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) school in Winnersh.

There is much clinical evidence published that shows that major highways have an adverse effect on the health and wellbeing of children who live near or attend schools adjacent to major highways, both from the failing air quality and from the noise pollution. I have no doubt that any new building design will mitigate against noise, but children are not just confined to just four walls. As a SEND teacher I became acutely aware of how sensitive some children can be and how debilitating this can be for them. Worryingly the Council is proposing to build a school next to one of the busiest and expanding motorways in the UK, which again research has shown has the greatest impact on the health of our residents because of the poor air quality. Anything about 100 on the boundaries between index points for each pollutant is harmful. Therefore, will the Council conduct extensive air monitoring exercises and publish its results before any planning approval is considered? I'm sure you will agree, safeguarding our children is paramount.

#### **Answer**

First of all, it is great news that we are able to work with the Department for Education and Reading Borough in bringing forward a much-needed and welcomed facility in Wokingham Borough.

We are very conscious of the potential air quality and noise issues surrounding the site and our technical teams have already carried out initial impact assessments on these matters and it demonstrated that the noise and air quality levels were acceptable.

These assessments have helped us identify the best location for the school to the western end of the site which is furthest from the motorway and adjacent to the existing Wheatfield Primary School.

All of these studies have been carried out in association with the Department for Education and they are also satisfied that the levels are acceptable.

Further, more detailed studies will be carried out by the Department for Education as part of the Planning Application process and will then be considered by the Local Planning Authority, which of course is us.

### **Supplementary Question**

Obviously, I am pleased that some monitoring is already taking place. However, this is not the first time that a similar concern has been raised. The Executive Member for Environment on 23 February 2017 replied to a resident's questions regarding pollutants associated with the M4 motorway at Winnersh. The Executive Member quoted the Government's warning of the uncertainties, including increased traffic, and in order to monitor concentrations of pollution from the M4. In light of those uncertainties and the possibility of pollution levels exceeding the Air Quality Index of 100, that is the safe level, anything above that and children with special educational needs will suffer, and noise levels rising about 50Db, again children with special educational needs will suffer with anything above that. Can we really be confident that Warren Farm and the area that you have identified next to the other primary school is a safe location now and into the future as a site for children with learning disabilities and co-morbid conditions? Once built there is no turning back.

### **Supplementary Answer**

As I have already explained, we have done assessments already. The Department for Education is involved and I am certain that they will ensure that this school will be put in a place where no child will be put in any danger in any shape or form.

### **23.8 Andy Croy asked the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement the following question:**

#### **Question**

What sort of Local Authority builds a SEND school next to one of the busiest motorways in the country?

#### **Answer**

The development of the SEND school in Winnersh is a welcome one, and will provide a valuable contribution to both the education for children with SEND within the Borough, but also in terms of the reduction of out of Borough placements that can be both disruptive to the family and cost the Council money.

We are very conscious of the potential air quality and noise issues surrounding the site and I can advise that our technical teams have already carried out initial impact assessments as UllaKarin has already mentioned. During the master-planning process, which demonstrate the noise and air levels are acceptable, these assessments have

helped us identify the best location for the school at the western end of the site which is furthest from the motorway and adjacent to the existing Wheatfield Primary school.

All of these studies have been carried out in association with the Department of Education who are similarly satisfied that the levels are acceptable.

Furthermore, detailed studies will be carried out by the Department for Education as part of the Planning Application process and considered by the local authority early next year.

### **Supplementary Question**

This school is going to be there for a hundred years and whatever the studies say people are not going to understand why a school has been built there. You have spoken about the best location for the school, but that is the best location on the site. We should be looking at the best location in the Borough because I cannot think of any worse location then next to a motorway, can you?

### **Supplementary Answer**

This was not the only site that was considered and it was obviously considered with the Department of Education and with our colleagues at Reading Borough Council. It was not just that we said this is the only site available so this is where it is going to go. In answer to your question it was not the only site considered.

## **24. SUBSTANCE MISUSE SERVICE**

The Executive considered a report relating to the re-commissioning of the Council's substance misuse service in order to have a new contract in place by June 2021.

When introducing the report the Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Services advised that the current provider of the Council's drug and alcohol substance misuse service, which was a statutory requirement, had served notice and advised that they had been subsidising the service from their charitable reserves for some time but could no longer sustain this position. An agreement was reached to support the provider temporarily whilst a benchmarking exercise was undertaken prior to going out to tender for a new provider. The Council wants to ensure that any new provider would provide the service at an appropriate level with the funding in place to provide the service needed. Therefore having undertaken the benchmarking exercise an increase in funding was being requested.

### **RESOLVED that:**

- 1) the current substance misuse annual contract value of £492k be increased for the incumbent to allow for a sustained delivery of a mandatory\* (\*required by law or mandate; compulsory) service until 30th June 2021 whilst a new procurement exercise is completed (as allowable within PCR2015);
- 2) re-commissioning of the Wokingham substance misuse service be agreed. This will start with publishing a Prior Information Notice for early market engagement and awareness of the upcoming re-procurement of the substance misuse service relevant to a contract of estimated £4.5 million. (£642k per annum);
- 3) the contract value in the tender be increased to meet the anticipated demand and cost of the service.

## **25. WOKINGHAM SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS SCHOOL**

The Executive considered a report relating to a proposal for the provision of a new Special Education Needs School within the Borough and setting out proposed terms of the lease of the site for 125 years to the Department for Education.

The Executive Member for Children's Services introduced the report and advised that the school, which would be a free school, would have 150 pupils; 75 pupils from Wokingham Borough Council area and 75 from Reading Borough Council area. The Department for Education would fund the building of the school which would be run by the Maiden Erlegh Trust.

In response to a query by Councillor Kaiser, Councillor Clark confirmed that the proposed site in Winnersh was the site favoured by the Department for Education.

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) support for the development and provision of a new Special Education Needs school at Winnersh Farm be supported;
- 2) the lease of the site at Winnersh Farm to the Department for Education for use as a Special Education Needs school on their model Heads of Terms be approved and the Director of Resources and Assets be delegated powers, in conjunction with the Lead Member for Business and Economic Development, to complete the lease.

## **26. PROCUREMENT OF COMMERCIAL PROPERTY OWNER'S INSURANCE COVER**

The Executive considered a report setting out a proposal to retender the Council Commercial Property Owner's Insurance.

The Executive Member for Finance and Housing advised that currently the Council's insurance cover was placed with a number of insurers and the intention was to seek to utilise the size and variety of the whole portfolio of assets that the Council owns in order to secure high quality cover at a competitive price with a single insurer.

In relation to the properties bought utilising the Councillor Murray queried that as the insurance applied to many buildings that the Council had bought as part of its investment fund asked how much borrowing the Council has and how much income it generates? Councillor Kaiser confirmed that the Council's net general fund external debt was at March 21<sup>st</sup> was £121m. The Council also had £84m which was money borrowed to buy social housing which actually generates £15m worth of rental income per year. In addition we have £134m of internal debt, which was money that the Council lent to itself, and there was also £180m on deposit, some of which was with other councils and invested in secure bonds. All this equates to net borrowing of £121m. The cost of financing debt falling on the taxpayer for 2020/2021 would actually be around about £7.50 per band D property which was 0.4 of a percent. The total assets of the Council was about £1,000m which more than covers the borrowing.

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) the procurement (by way of open competitive tender) of the insurance cover be approved;

- 2) the design of the contract specification be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive;
- 3) the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance and Housing, be delegated authority to award the contract(s) to the successful bidder(s) following completion of the evaluation process.

## **27. HELP TO HEAT AND ECO SCHEME**

The Executive considered a report setting out a proposal for a Help to Heat and ECO Scheme; the aim of which was to facilitate a widespread uptake of Energy Company Obligation (ECO) funding to ensure that energy efficiency measures were installed in as many eligible households within the Borough as possible.

The Executive Member for Resident Services, Communications and Emissions advised the meeting that improving the energy efficiency of some of the Council's least efficient homes would help reduce carbon and waste energy usage. Councillor Murray also drew the meeting's attention to the fact that one in ten households in the UK were affected by fuel poverty and this programme aimed to help alleviate the effect of this. Funding home upgrades would improve the energy efficiency of homes and consequently dramatically cut home energy costs.

Members were informed that across the Borough there were approximately 18,000 houses with an energy rating of E, F and G; the three lowest EPC energy efficiency ratings. The difference between heating identically sized three bedroomed houses rated G versus D was £516 per year i.e. £43 per month and a 27% saving. Unfortunately many of these E, F and G houses were currently part of the HRA stock and were occupied by some of the lowest income, most vulnerable, eldest or most at risk in the community.

Councillor Murray confirmed that the intention was to access the Energy Companies Obligation Fund and use that money to pay for energy saving upgrades to properties. There would be no cost to the resident and they would keep all of the savings generated by the upgrades. As part of the scheme areas where it was known that fuel poverty existed would be specifically targeted with hand delivered letters advertising the scheme and inviting them to apply. There would also be an extensive media and PR campaign. Using the Energy Companies Obligation Fund could potentially help up to 400 houses across the Borough this year with potential to help more homes in the future.

Members thanked the Officers who had investigated this proposal and who had worked diligently in order to bring the proposal forward.

### **RESOLVED that:**

- 1) the Help to Heat Scheme be approved in order that the Chief Executive can sign-off Wokingham Borough Council's 'ECO FLEX Statement of Intent'. This will enable the Statement of Intent to be published on the Council's website;
- 2) the use of the wider national ECO scheme, including the advertisement to residents of their ability to access ECO grant funds, be approved.

**MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF  
THE EXECUTIVE  
HELD ON 24 SEPTEMBER 2020 FROM 8.10 PM TO 8.36 PM**

**Committee Members Present**

Councillors: John Halsall (Chairman), John Kaiser, Parry Batth, UllaKarin Clark, Charlotte Haitham Taylor, Pauline Jorgensen, Charles Margetts, Gregor Murray and Wayne Smith

**Other Councillors Present**

Prue Bray  
Gary Cowan  
Richard Dolinski  
Lindsay Ferris  
Sarah Kerr  
Andrew Mickleburgh  
Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey

**28. APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was submitted from Councillor Stuart Munro.

**29. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received.

**30. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

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

**30.1 Wesley Budd asked the Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Services the following question:**

**Question**

I thank the Executive for discussing tonight the possibility of purchasing a limited number of Covid-19 tests. I believe that one figure that has been mooted is that each test could cost around £100. If the kits are purchased, as I hope they will be, will WBC pursue all avenues possible to try to recover all of these costs from the Government?

**Answer**

An important point to make here is that the price includes the whole testing service and not just the test kit. So that means the tech, the kit, the courier to the lab, the lab processing and public health having access to the test results. It is very important that for any potential test the data is fed into the NHS Track and Trace system.

We are only looking here to secure a backup supply should we have a significant situation, such as an outbreak, where there is a problem basically with the government testing routes. To answer your question directly though we will pursue all avenues for Government funding as we are doing for all the costs incurred directly or indirectly around Covid. Unfortunately, as you may know, the extra funding from central Government is currently not enough to cover all these costs and it is imperative that we target our resources to where they are most needed, which is we believe to be the case with this critical testing initiative. I would say on top of that myself, the Leader, and the Deputy

Leader are continuing to lobby our MPs and put as much pressure on them to address this situation and resolve basically some of these funding issues.

**30.2 Al Neal asked the Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Services the following question:**

**Question**

I welcome the proposals under discussion tonight regarding the purchase of Covid-19 test kits. To be effective in stopping the spread of the virus, selecting those to be tested, carrying out the tests and communicating the results are time critical tasks.

Is WBC confident that it has, or can create rapidly, the capacity to perform these tasks effectively?

**Answer**

As I stated in my first reply we are only investigating the option of purchasing a small amount of our own kits should we have an emergency situation, such as an outbreak, in Wokingham and the national system cannot support us adequately. So it is a back up to mitigate the risks that we have all seen in the media. We do not know how long the national system will take to recover enough capacity so this seems to me like a sensible step. At the moment cases of Covid in Wokingham are relatively low so between the national system and the local system and this back up provision we are trying to do all we can basically to make sure that we are prepared and we are ready for whatever may come and we are doing what we can to protect our residents.

In terms of speed, provision we are looking at securing if we have to use it, is a 48 hour response. It can get to 24 hours in urgent situations so we are confident that it will be timely and critical, and as I said before, all the data, one of the key things for us, is any data via this that is collected is fed into the NHS system basically, so that any evidence that was accrued can be used generally in the fight against Covid.

**30.3 Mike Smith asked the Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Services the following question:**

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**Question**

This report accompanying the agenda refers to residents of Wokingham, yet many of our key workers are not Wokingham residents. Will these tests be available for both residents and non-residents who are key-workers in our Borough?

**Answer**

The national testing system run by the Government is available to all who need it. This includes anyone who develops symptoms of Covid 19 and also includes targeted asymptomatic testing of NHS and social care staff and care home residents. In addition, essential workers can apply for priority testing through the Government website and a small amount of testing kits have been supplied to each local school. We are not aiming to replace this system. As anyone who reads the paper or listens to the TV knows, this system is having well publicised capacity problems. What we are doing is purchasing additional spare capacity to deploy in an emergency situation, such as an outbreak, as directed by our Public Health Consultant, for hopefully what would be a short period of time until the national system recovers. It would be wrong of me to rule specific groups in or out of this, as we do not know what those situations will be. This situation is so fluid and fast moving. I would love to be able to tell you where we will be in two weeks' time but we

cannot. So therefore these tests will be managed in situations in Wokingham if we cannot secure enough capacity via the national route first. If there were residents outside of Wokingham that could not get tested and it was critical that they did for the management and health for the people of Wokingham then yes, we would consider it.

What I would say at the moment is that the rate of Covid in Wokingham, the rate per thousand, is around a third of the UK national average. Now the central Government provision, whilst it is limited, is obviously being directed to areas of higher risk, so at the moment basically, if there was an outbreak in an area of higher risk, it is more likely that the Government system is going to be stronger there than it currently is in Wokingham; which is currently a very low risk area. We obviously hope it stays that way.

### **Supplementary Question:**

It is much appreciated that WBC are trying to chart a path through the chaos created by the confusing messages and ineffective action from central Government. I understand that the initial tranche is going to be 500 tests. This does not seem to me to be a very high number. For example, I am a volunteer at the RBH and I live in Wokingham. Would I be eligible for one of these tests should I need one? Or a refuse collector? Looking wider, what roles are you defining as key workers?

### **Supplementary Answer:**

The figure of 500 and the figure of 1,000 from the original commitment was done following quite a bit of study into what we thought consumption would be or could be. But, as I have already said basically, it is very difficult to anticipate the situation, which is fluid and ever changing. We will continue to review going forward where we are and what is going on. All the potential tests, should Executive approve, that we are looking to move forward with, have got a 12 month shelf life so there is plenty of time to get through them, and we hope obviously that we will get near to that level.

In terms of your specific question as to who would be eligible and who would not, what I would say to that at the moment is that is impossible for me to give a strict definition on that right now because the situation is every changing. The judgement would be made basically on:

- a) Can the national system cope? Obviously, if it can cope and an appropriate response is being provided, then none of this applies.
- b) If it cannot cope, what would any steps that we take for that situation to lower the risk of an outbreak spreading, and control it basically in Wokingham.

Obviously, that is going to depend on the scenario at the time. Now we can all make educated guesses about how we think this is going to play out over the next few months and where the greatest elements of risk are, but no disrespect intended they are educated guesses. We have set up a system in the Council where each situation would be judged by the Public Health Consultant, the Director of Adult Services, senior leadership for the Council, with me and the Leader obviously having oversight of it. So I cannot give you specific criteria today but I hope you understand the reasons why.

## **31. MEMBER QUESTION TIME**

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

**31.1 Lindsay Ferris asked the Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Services the following question:**

**Question**

What criteria/protocol is going to be used to decide who receives a WBC funded test, particularly if there are a number of people/areas who may need such a test?

**Answer**

The purchase of tests for WBC is being proposed within the context of significant capacity problems within the national Test and Trace system. WBC tests will be reserved for emergency situations, for example, where there is a significant outbreak and the national testing cannot be rapidly deployed or where a lack of national testing poses a risk to the capacity of local authority services; which we all know are vital to deal with some of the aged and vulnerable in the community, etc. People who really need our support.

The decision about when to use WBC testing will be made by WBC Public Health Lead Ingrid Slade and Director of Adult Social Care Matt Pope, in consultation with WBC senior management team and the Lead Member for Wellbeing and Adult Services, which is obviously me, and obviously the Leader. I think in terms of criteria, for the reasons I have just said to Mike Smith it is hard for me to give you anything. I can make an educated guess of where we will be in two weeks, four weeks, but I have no way of knowing that. All the evidence from part 1 of Covid taught us, basically, that what we expected to happen did not happen, and a lot of things we did not expect, did happen. I think the key here is just to keep watching, talking, meeting regularly and planning as we go. I am more than happy to keep you, your Group and the Independents informed of any significant changes going forwards.

**Supplementary Question**

When will these be available?

**Supplementary Answer**

We should Executive approve tonight, what we did at the end of last week is to reserve some capacity because we had to, to secure an early date. Obviously if we had left it a week, I think two days after we had enquired, strangely enough the NHS were on the phone to this company, so I will leave that to you as to what you may think of that. We were very anxious that we did not wait a week or two and end up going back a month on delivery date.

The answer to your question is, we are hopeful that if Executive approve tonight, they will be available from very early October.

**31.2 Andy Croy had asked the Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Services the following question but in his absence the following answer was provided I:**

**Question**

The initial lockdown saw large numbers of people finally recognised as keyworkers.

While NHS and caring staff were clearly always in this category, the lockdown made us realise that shop workers, refuse collection, postal workers and many others were also key workers. The paper is not clear on exactly which key workers (and which schools - maintained schools, fee paying private schools?) will be eligible for testing.

Can the Executive Member outline the range of 'other key workers' and schools for who it is anticipated testing will be made available?

**Answer**

The Government national testing system scheme is available to all who need it. This includes anyone who develops symptoms of Covid-19 and also includes targeted asymptomatic testing of NHS and social care staff and care home residents. In addition, essential workers can apply for priority testing through the Government website. As part of this all schools have a small supply of kits already. We are not replacing this system but we know that that system is having well publicised problems. What we are hoping to purchase is additional spare capacity to deploy in emergency situations, such as an outbreak, as directed by our Public Health Consultant for a hopefully short period of time until the national system recovers. It would be wrong to rule specific groups in or out of that at this stage, as we just cannot anticipate what those potential situations will be.

**32. COVID-19 TESTING**

The Executive considered a report relating to a proposal to purchase a Covid-19 swab test service for emergency provision.

The Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Services outlined the proposal which was to purchase an amount of Covid testing kits to provide the ability to test educational key workers, where there was a risk to schools capacity, and other key workers should they be unable to access testing through the NHS track and trace system. Based on initial data provided by schools, and considering the possible size of local outbreaks, it was estimated that around 500 tests, with the capacity to increase to 1,000 tests at a future point if necessary, were required.

Councillor Margetts advised that the selected supplier would be able to deliver the required number of test kits, which had a shelf life of 12 months, at a lead time of a week. The tests once completed would be sent to the lab and would be turned around within 48 hours, seven days a week. All positive results would be notified to Public Health England; thereby linking into the track and trace system.

Councillor Kaiser commented that he believed that spending money on Covid tests was completely justified as the proposal would support those in care homes and in schools.

Councillor Haitham Taylor also provided her support to the scheme and particularly how important it was to access tests over the weekend. She cited a recent case of a small primary school who was unable to access enough tests or advice over a weekend which led to the school having to close because one teacher had tested positive for Covid-19. This had a huge impact on the local community and she would not want to see that happen within the Borough. By purchasing these tests it would mean that testing could be undertaken quickly and should be able to alleviate this happening.

Councillor Margetts provided an update on the situation in the Borough and stated that Wokingham currently had a low level of Covid with cases around a third of the national average with track and trace just under 90% which was encouraging. However account had to be taken of the fact that the national picture was getting worse and that further outbreaks were likely to occur. The Council was therefore planning for these eventualities to ensure that they were ready to deal with and mitigate such incidences as soon as

possible. It was noted that the Council would be shortly accepting responsibility for some track and trace functions.

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) the gaps in Covid testing provision in Wokingham Borough be noted;
- 2) a supplementary estimate of up to £120,000 be approved for the purchase of Covid swab test service for emergency provision;
- 3) this supplementary estimate will be drawn down in stages as tests are needed for essential workers or outbreak management;
- 4) the decisions relating to the draw down on this supplementary estimate be delegated to the Director for Adult Social Care and Health in consultation with the Lead Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Services on the advice of the Public Health Consultant.

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Officer Response to the Recommendations from the Climate Emergency Task and Finish Group</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	The Executive on Thursday, 29 October 2020
<b>WARD</b>	None specific;
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	Executive Member for Resident Services, Communications and Emissions - Gregor Murray

<p><b>PURPOSE OF REPORT (INC STRATEGIC OUTCOMES)</b></p> <p>This report sets out the Officer response to the 13 Recommendations set out in section 2 (Attachment 1) Climate Emergency Task &amp; Finish Group, Report and Recommendations, September 2020.</p>
<p><b>RECOMMENDATION</b></p> <p>That the Executive approve the Officers' responses contained within this Report</p>
<p><b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b></p> <p>The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee established a Task and Finish Group to review the Wokingham Borough Climate Emergency Action Plan. The primary objective of the Group was to make recommendations for improvement which could further enhance the delivery of the plan and to support the aspiration of achieving a carbon neutral Wokingham Borough By 2030</p> <p>The Group's overall findings were that the Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) was a bold, ambitious document, in line with national best practice. Underpinned by a significant, dedicated budget and a clear governance structure.</p> <p>Not surprisingly, in light of the enormous scope of the Action Plan, a number of areas were identified where more work and clarification were needed to strengthen the document and enable the engagement of residents and key stakeholders across the Borough. Including, more work was required to clarify the impact of specific schemes and ensure that they were supported by SMART targets</p> <p>Following the completion of the Task and Finish Group's review of the Climate Emergency Action Plan (July 2020) and input from Officers, they formed 13 recommendations. These will help to strengthen the Action Plan, making it more robust, transparent and evidence-based.</p> <p>On the whole the recommendations were accepted by Officers subject to a few cases where Officers have explained their reasoning.</p>

## **BACKGROUND**

In July 2019, Wokingham Borough Council declared a Climate Emergency. The Council committed to “playing as full a role as possible in achieving a net carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030”. The Council pledged to develop a Climate Emergency Action Plan and to submit annual updates showing progress on individual carbon reduction targets.

The Action Plan (first published in January 2020) focussed on establishing the borough’s baseline carbon footprint along with eight priority areas for carbon (CO<sub>2</sub>) emission reductions, including transport, homes, businesses and waste. The Action Plan also set out proposals to generate renewable energy, increase carbon sequestration and strengthen the planning process to deliver carbon neutral construction and infrastructure. Finally, the Action Plan set out proposals for engagement with residents, schools, businesses and local stakeholders as well as ideas to promote positive behaviour changes.

The Council also pledged to submit annual progress reports showing progress on individual carbon reduction targets. The first progress report was scheduled on the anniversary of the declaration in July 2020 to provide a more detailed and robust action plan. In support of the Action Plan, a three year £50m Capital budget was approved at the Budget Council meeting in February 2020. A summary of the budget is set out in the Annex to the report in Appendix 1

The First Progress Report of the Climate Emergency Action Plan was taken to Council and approved in July 2020. As promised this was a detailed report with smart carbon targets. This included analysis of the council’s carbon footprint with projections to 2030 based on the actions set out in the Action Plan. At this point in time the actions in the plan were not sufficient deliver the level of carbon reductions necessary to meet the Borough’s 2030 target. However, the Action Plan is a living document and planning tool that assumes that new ideas and carbon reduction innovations will need to come on stream over the next 10 years to help the council play as full a role as possible in achieving a net carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030. As such, the Action Plan will remain a living document.

In order to scrutinise the Action Plan, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee established the Task and Finish Group at its meeting in February 2020. The Task and Finish Group established terms of reference. The primary objective of the Task and Finish Group was to scrutinise the emerging targets and key performance indicators underpinning the Action Plan and produce recommendations for improving where possible the plan. The Group also assessed the level of carbon reduction to be delivered for each target and its achievability, using SMART principles.

The Task and Finish Group met (virtually) on seven occasions and interviewed the Executive Member for Climate Emergency and a number of Officers. In order to seek external validation, the group interviewed Professor Paul Chatterton from the University of Leeds. They also received written evidence from the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (the LEP).

The Group’s overall findings were that the Climate Emergency Action Plan was a bold, ambitious document, in line with national best practice underpinned by a significant, dedicated budget and a clear governance structure. It commends the Executive Member

and Officers for the significant progress made on the Action Plan since January 2020, especially in light of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the national lockdown. Not surprisingly, in light of the enormous scope of the Action Plan, a number of areas were identified where more work and clarification were needed to strengthen the document and enable the engagement of residents and key stakeholders across the Borough. More work was required to clarify the impact of specific schemes and ensure that they were supported by SMART targets

The group concluded that the Council’s progress compares favourably with other local authorities, including some of the UK’s largest cities. The Council’s approach of developing a dedicated in-house team, supported by Officer working groups was also a positive, which will help to embed the Climate Emergency response throughout the organisation, including the Council’s contractors and suppliers. The report also outlines that a successful response to the Climate Emergency will only be delivered through the combined efforts of every resident, school, business, Town and Parish Council and other stakeholders across the Borough.

**Recommendations with Officer responses.**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Officer Response</b>
<p>1 That the Council work with schools, businesses and community stakeholders to develop a Vision for a Net Zero Borough, with indicators and milestones to demonstrate progress.</p>	<p>Agreed. The Council will work with the Climate Emergency Cross Party Working group to develop a Vision for what a carbon neutral borough will look like in 2030</p>
<p>2 That the annual progress report on the Climate Emergency Action Plan includes recognition of the levels of non-CO2 greenhouse gas emissions in the Borough and progress achieved in delivering reductions through the sequestration measures in place.</p>	<p>It is agreed that the CEAP should recognise the role of non-CO2 greenhouse gasses in climate change.</p> <p>However, the council’s climate emergency declaration was based on the Committee on Climate Change report and makes commitment to address CO2 emissions.</p> <p>Also, The Department of Business Energy and Industrial Strategy’s Local Authority emissions statistics do not at this time provide non-CO2 emissions data at the regional level. The BEIS data we receive automatically includes sequestration in the local authority footprints and offsets these against other sector carbon emissions.</p> <p>Opinions of whether CO2 reductions through sequestration should be offset against other greenhouse gasses rather than actually CO2 emissions are subjective Opinions vary and there is no universally accepted standard</p>

	Therefore, Officers do not agree that the carbon savings from sequestration actions should be used to off-set the impacts of other greenhouse gasses rather than the CO2 savings in the CEAP.
3. That implementation of the Climate Emergency Action Plan be monitored to ensure that actions are not detrimental to other environmental priorities such as improved air quality.	Agreed
4 That the Council's key decision reports include a section on Climate Emergency to ensure that the issue is mainstreamed into the decision making process. This must include a transparent, calculated carbon impact assessment of the proposal rather than a generic comment such as "in line with the Climate Emergency Action Plan".	Agreed. A methodology to provide carbon impact will be devised to support this recommendation.
5 That, as part of the 2021 progress report on the Action Plan, the Council commission an independent carbon accounting audit of the Action Plan's targets, methodology and underlying assumptions.	<p>The officers feel that this recommendation should be subject to the resources available and that considerations to strengthen the internal team are considered as a core requirement to improve the council's own capability.</p> <p>The Action Plan published in July 2020 was presented with a detailed methodology paper to describe the approach to assess carbon emissions providing transparency on the data and methodology used. The council has also introduced a methodology to assess individual projects by its potential carbon savings. This will provide significantly more value to the council and members of the public as it gives more understanding on the effects of individual initiatives. By strengthening the internal team, the council can speed up the practise for embedding these processes into all its operations.</p> <p>Also, The Department of Business Energy and Industrial Strategy publishes annual CO2 emissions data which will calibrate carbon savings projected in the plan.</p>

<p>6 That the six monthly update of the Action Plan, in January 2021, address the gaps and errors in the current version.</p>	<p>The council committed to present an annual report on the progress of the climate emergency action plan in July each year.</p> <p>As the Action Plan is a living document and planning tool, new ideas and carbon reduction innovations will be added over the next 10 years to help the council play as full a role as possible in achieving a net carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030.</p> <p>It is expected that the Action Plan will change as more information is made available and better details of individual projects are acquired.</p>
<p>7 That the annual update report on the Action Plan include estimates of consumption emissions, progress of measures aimed at increasing awareness of these emissions and individual responsibilities such as the promotion of local sustainable sourcing options for food, goods and services.</p>	<p>Agreed. Although, it should be noted that these will be rough estimates. Assessing consumption emissions for all of the products and services consumed by our residents will be challenging in practice, because calculating consumption-related emissions is highly complex and the information is frequently unavailable. Communities consume thousands of different types of products and services, and the emissions associated with each of these is affected by many decisions made by different actors throughout their life cycles.</p> <p>The officers agree that the Action Plan should highlight the level of commitment required by all residents, local businesses and other stakeholders, and that it should strengthen our efforts to promote behavioural change that promote new lifestyle choices such as supporting local sustainable sourcing options for food, goods and services.</p>
<p>8 That future iterations of the Action Plan set out SMART targets to reduce car usage, thereby tackling traffic congestion, and demonstrate how the Council is working with neighbouring authorities, the Local Enterprise Partnership, bus and rail operators to deliver transport solutions and a transport network and infrastructure</p>	<p>Agreed. Further work is required to tackle carbon dioxide emissions from transport and that engaging with stakeholders plays a significant part to achieve this.</p> <p>The council is developing a low carbon transport strategy that will consider best opportunities to engage with stakeholders</p>

which focuses on active travel and public transport.	and will strengthen the targets identified in the Action Plan.
9 That a further report be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, setting out the business case for the Green Bank Project, including an assessment of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the viability of the project. .	Agreed. Once sufficient progress has been made on this project a report will be produced for the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.
10 That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee scrutinise impact of the Local Plan Update on the Climate Emergency as part of its review of the new Local Plan later in 2020	Agreed. Particularly in light of proposed changes to planning policy by Government and the potential impact that this will have on the CEAP.
11 That the Council establish and publish details of the amount of land available for sequestration and renewable energy projects by surveying the Borough, in conjunction with Town and Parish Councils, to identify opportunities for tree planting, solar farms and other green projects.	Agreed.
12 That the annual update report on the Action Plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasise the relative significance of WBC's organisational footprint in any discussion of WBC's estate and facilities;</li> <li>• Provide details of progress on the Council's journey to becoming a Net Zero organisation, including investment, procurement and supply chains;</li> <li>• Outline the measures taken to protect individuals, families and groups most at risk from the impact of climate change and provide details of the outcomes;</li> <li>• Include a risk register, setting out the major risks (including</li> </ul>	Agreed. It should be noted that adding the likelihood of success or failure for each item is a relatively subjective exercise.

the impact of third party action and non-action);	
Include an assessment methodology which measures the likelihood (as a %) of success or failure for each item	
13 That, in light of the increasing number and complexity of initiatives aimed at tackling the Climate Emergency, consideration be given to strengthening the in-house team, especially in relation to “number crunching” of carbon reductions and project costs.	Agreed. The report recognises the scale of delivering the Climate Emergency Action Plan and the need for additional resources to ensure successful delivery
14 That the Action Plan recognises the important role played by Towns and Parishes across the Borough in moving to Net Zero and commits to working in meaningful partnership to develop and support local initiatives which turn new ideas into positive action on the ground.	Agreed. Towns and Parishes are currently meeting officers to plan how they can work with the council to deliver some of the actions in the CEAP

## 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)	£0	No	
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£0	No	
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£0	No	

### Other Financial Information

If the findings in recommendation 13, to support additional resource to deliver the CEAP, are approved then additional revenue funding will be required

### Stakeholder Considerations and Consultation

No further consultations due to be carried out

### Public Sector Equality Duty

This report relates to adoption processes which in themselves have no particular equalities implications. Due regard to Public Sector Equality Duty and equalities assessments are taken into account in the context of each scheme

**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***

This decision is key to the Council's carbon neutral objectives

**List of Background Papers**

Climate Emergency Task & Finish Group, Report and Recommendations, September 2020

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# **WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

### **CLIMATE EMERGENCY TASK & FINISH GROUP**

#### **REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**SEPTEMBER 2020**

#### **Task & Finish Group Members:**

Councillor Alison Swaddle (Chairman)

Councillors Keith Baker, Andy Croy, Andrew Mickleburgh and Malcolm Richards

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## **CLIMATE EMERGENCY TASK & FINISH GROUP**

### **Foreword by Councillor Alison Swaddle**

According to the Oxford Dictionary, the 2019 word of the year was “climate emergency”. The term is defined as a situation in which urgent action is required to reduce or halt climate change and avoid potentially irreversible environmental damage resulting from it. The risks relating to climate change include extreme weather events (floods, heatwaves and droughts), rising sea levels, disruption to food and water systems and irreparable damage to biodiversity across the globe.

In 2020, it is likely that the words “coronavirus”, “shielding” and “social distancing” will be vying for the word of the year title. Following ten years of austerity, the combined impact of climate change and the Covid-19 pandemic provides an enormous challenge for national and local government across the UK.

Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) declared a Climate Emergency in July 2019 with the aim of moving to carbon “Net Zero” by 2030. Over 280 councils have made similar declarations. WBC’s initial Climate Emergency Action Plan was submitted to Council in January 2020. In order to scrutinise the Action Plan, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee established the Task and Finish Group at its meeting in February 2020. The Task and Finish Group established terms of reference which focussed on scrutinising the emerging targets and key performance indicators underpinning the Action Plan. We also assessed the level of carbon reduction to be delivered for each target and its achievability, using SMART principles.

The Task and Finish Group met (virtually) on seven occasions. We interviewed the Executive Member for Climate Emergency and a number of Officers. In order to seek external validation, we interviewed Professor Paul Chatterton from the University of Leeds. We also received written evidence from the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (the LEP).

Our overall findings were that the Climate Emergency Action Plan was a bold, ambitious document, underpinned by a significant, dedicated budget and a clear governance structure. We commended the Executive Member and Officers for the significant progress made on the Action Plan since January 2020, especially in light of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the national lockdown. Not surprisingly, in light of the enormous scope of the Action Plan, we found a number of areas where more work and clarification were needed to strengthen the document and enable the engagement of residents and key stakeholders across the Borough. These areas are explored in the report. Also, throughout our discussions we were keenly aware that the Action Plan is a living document which will evolve over the next ten years. Our recommendations aim to strengthen the Action Plan as it begins that journey.

Finally, I would like to thank the Officers, Members and external experts who gave up their time and contributed to the Task and Finish Group’s work in such a positive and constructive manner.

Alison Swaddle

## Section 1 - Executive Summary

- 1.1 The 2015 Paris Climate Agreement saw nearly 200 countries agree on the need to cut greenhouse gas emissions in order to keep global temperatures “well below” 2 degrees C above pre-industrial times and to “endeavour” to limit them even more to 1.5 C. In November 2018, the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) published a report which outlined the enormous harm that would be caused by a 2 C rise in global temperature.
- 1.2 The 2008 Climate Change Act committed the UK Government to achieve an 80% reduction in carbon emissions, relative to 1990 levels, by 2050. In June 2019, the Government passed secondary legislation which extended the 2050 target to a 100% reduction, or Net Zero.
- 1.3 In July 2019, Wokingham Borough Council declared a Climate Emergency. The Council committed to “playing as full a role as possible in achieving a net carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030”. The Council pledged to develop a Climate Emergency Action Plan and to submit annual updates showing progress on individual carbon reduction targets.
- 1.4 The Action Plan (first published in January 2020) focussed on eight priority areas for carbon emission reductions, including transport, homes, businesses and waste. The Action Plan also set out proposals to generate renewable energy, increase carbon sequestration and strengthen the planning process to deliver carbon neutral construction and infrastructure. Finally, the Action Plan set out proposals for engagement with residents, schools, businesses and local stakeholders as well as ideas to promote positive behaviour changes.
- 1.5 The Group’s overall findings were that the Climate Emergency Action Plan was an ambitious document in line with national best practice. However, more work was required to clarify the impact of specific schemes and ensure that they were supported by SMART targets. We felt that the current version of the Action Plan was specific, measurable and time-bound, but more work was needed to demonstrate that it was achievable and realistic.
- 1.6 The Action Plan was underpinned by a significant three year £50m budget, but we noted that the budget contained a number of pre-existing spending commitments - while £18m was new spending, £13m was not reflected in the Action Plan. The Action Plan also contained a clear governance structure on paper. We questioned whether this translated into a real life structure which provided robust challenge and support from a range of stakeholders across the Borough.
- 1.7 We commended the Executive Member and Officers for the progress made on the Action Plan since January 2020, especially in light of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Council’s day-to-day activities. We also noted that the Covid-19 pandemic had created huge risks for the Borough, but also provided a

number of opportunities in relation to a “green recovery” with investment in new jobs, new ways of working and new methods of service delivery.

- 1.8 The Group noted that, in its current form, the Action Plan did not deliver the level of carbon reductions necessary to meet the Borough’s 2030 target. Furthermore, as the proposals to date are likely to have captured the “low hanging fruit” we believe that the Council’s Executive should recognise that much more needs to be done in order to achieve Net Zero. At the same time, we were reminded that the Action Plan is a living document and that many new ideas and carbon reduction innovations will come on stream over the next 10 years. As such, the Action Plan will remain a work in progress, requiring strong focus and rigorous scrutiny.
- 1.9 We concluded that the Council’s progress compares favourably with other local authorities, including some of the UK’s largest cities. The Council’s approach of developing a dedicated in-house team, supported by Officer working groups was also a positive, which will help to embed the Climate Emergency response throughout the organisation, including the Council’s contractors and suppliers. However, as outlined in the report, a successful response to the Climate Emergency will only be delivered through the combined efforts of every resident, school, business, Town and Parish Council and other stakeholders across the Borough.
- 1.10 The Group’s recommendations are set out in Section 2 of the report. We believe that they will help to strengthen the Action Plan, making it more robust, transparent and evidence-based.

## **Section 2 - Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the Council work with schools, businesses and community stakeholders to develop a Vision for a Net Zero Borough, with indicators and milestones to demonstrate progress.**
- 2.2 That the annual progress report on the Climate Emergency Action Plan include recognition of the levels of non-CO2 greenhouse gas emissions in the Borough and progress achieved in delivering reductions through the sequestration measures in place.**
- 2.3 That implementation of the Climate Emergency Action Plan be monitored to ensure that actions are not detrimental to other environmental priorities such as improved air quality.**
- 2.4 That the Council consider the impact of climate change on all its actions with key decision reports to include a section on Climate Emergency to ensure that the issue is mainstreamed into the decision making process. This must include a transparent, calculated carbon impact assessment of the proposal rather than a generic comment such as “in line with the Climate Emergency Action Plan”.**
- 2.5 That, as part of the 2021 progress report on the Action Plan, the Council commission an independent carbon accounting audit of the Action Plan’s targets, methodology and underlying assumptions.**
- 2.6 That the six monthly update of the Action Plan, in January 2021, address the gaps and errors in the current version.**
- 2.7 That the annual update report on the Action Plan include estimates of consumption emissions, progress of measures aimed at increasing awareness of these emissions and individual responsibilities such as the promotion of local sustainable sourcing options for food, goods and services.**
- 2.8 That future iterations of the Action Plan set out SMART targets to reduce car usage, thereby tackling traffic congestion, and demonstrate how the Council is working with neighbouring authorities, the Local Enterprise Partnership, bus and rail operators and other community stakeholders to deliver transport solutions and a transport network and infrastructure which focuses on active travel and public transport.**
- 2.9 That a further report be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, setting out the business case for the Green Bank Project, including an assessment of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the viability of the project.**

**2.10 That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee scrutinise the impact of the Local Plan Update on the Climate Emergency as part of its review of the new Local Plan later in 2020/21.**

**2.11 That the Council establish and publish details of the amount of land available for sequestration and renewable energy projects by surveying the Borough, in conjunction with Town and Parish Councils, to identify opportunities for tree planting, solar farms and other green projects.**

**2.12 That the annual update report on the Action Plan:**

- Emphasise the relative significance of WBC's organisational footprint in any discussion of WBC's estate and facilities;**
- Provide details of progress on the Council's journey to becoming a Net Zero organisation, including timelines for key activities and progress on investment, procurement and supply chains;**
- Outline the measures taken to protect individuals, families and groups most at risk from the impact of climate change and provide details of the outcomes;**
- Include a risk register, setting out the major risks (including the impact of third party action and non-action);**
- Include an assessment methodology which measures the likelihood (as a %) of success or failure for each item.**

**2.13 That, in light of the increasing number and complexity of initiatives aimed at tackling the Climate Emergency, consideration be given to strengthening the in-house team, especially in relation to "number crunching" of carbon reductions and project costs.**

**2.14 That the Action Plan recognises the important role played by Towns and Parishes across the Borough in moving to Net Zero and commits to working in meaningful partnership to develop and support local initiatives which turn new ideas into positive action on the ground.**

## Section 3 - Background

- 3.1 In 2015, the Paris Climate Agreement saw nearly 200 countries agree on the need to cut greenhouse gas emissions in order to keep global temperatures “well below” 2 degrees C above pre-industrial times and to “endeavour” to limit them even more to 1.5 degrees C. In November 2018, the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) published a report which outlined the enormous harm that would be caused by a 2 degrees C rise in global temperature. This included extreme weather events, rising sea levels, mass migration, disruption to food and water systems and huge damage to biodiversity across the globe. The IPCC stated that restricting warming to 1.5 degrees C rather than 2 degrees would require “rapid and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society”. The IPCC report acted as a wake-up call for national and local government around the world. As activist Greta Thunberg stated: “I want you to act as you would in a crisis. I want you to act as if our house is on fire. Because it is.”
- 3.2 A recent Met Office report stated that 2019 was the 12<sup>th</sup> warmest year since 1884. Although outside the top ten warmest years (all since 2002), 2019 set a number of UK high temperature records, including a new all-time record (38.7 C) and a new winter record (21.2 C). In the second week in August 2020, UK temperatures rose above 34 C for six days in a row, for the first time since 1961. There is growing concern that infrastructure for homes and buildings, transport, water and energy networks will be unable to cope with the added strain caused by hotter summers (with major storms/flooding) and wetter winters.
- 3.3 The UK is responsible for less than 1% of global emissions. The biggest emitters are China (27%), USA (13%) and India (7%). The UK Government has accepted a “moral responsibility” to lead the international response to climate change due to the country’s role in the industrial revolution. It has also recognised the opportunities relating to early adoption of innovative ideas and new technologies which drive progress towards a greener, carbon neutral economy. Over the past 30 years the UK has achieved significant emission reductions in the energy sector, largely through the phasing out of coal and the increasing use of renewable energy. However, in other sectors of the economy – transport, home heating and agriculture, emissions remain largely unchanged. In many sectors, technologies exist that can bring greenhouse gas emissions to zero. In electricity it can be done using renewable generation (wind and solar). In transport it can be done through a system that runs on electricity and hydrogen. Well insulated homes using green energy can also achieve absolute zero. However, sectors such as aviation and agriculture are unlikely to achieve this target, hence the need for balancing (sequestration) measures.
- 3.4 The 2008 Climate Change Act committed the UK Government to achieve an 80% reduction in carbon emissions, relative to 1990 levels, by 2050. In June 2019, Theresa May’s Government passed secondary legislation which extended the 2050 target to 100%, or Net Zero. The UK was the first G7 nation to legislate for this outcome. Net Zero refers to a situation where there is a balance between the amount of greenhouse gas emissions produced and the amount removed

from the atmosphere, predominantly through natural carbon sinks such as new forests and woodland. The 2008 Act also established the Committee on Climate Change (CCC), a public body that advises the Government on progress against the targets. The CCC has described the 2050 target as “technically feasible but highly challenging”. In its progress report to Parliament (June 2020) the CCC highlighted the opportunity, post Covid-19, to implement a recovery which “drives new economic activity, accelerates our transition to Net Zero and strengthens our resilience to the impacts of climate change”. The Government has made good progress in some areas, e.g. the March 2020 Budget included provisions for:

- £500m investment in electric vehicle charging infrastructure to ensure that drivers are never more than 30 miles from a rapid charging station;
- A plastic packaging tax which (from 2022) will require manufacturers and importers of plastic packaging with less than 30% recycled content to be subject to a tax of £200 per tonne;
- £800m investment in a carbon capture and storage fund for two UK sites, one by the mid-2020s and a second by 2030;
- Increased investment in flood defence works which will be doubled to £5.2bn over the next five years.

At the same time, the Budget committed £27bn to fund major road building schemes across the country and continued the 10 year freeze on fuel duty. It should be noted that, over the same 10 year period, bus and train fares have been allowed to increase every year. Over the next six months the Government will publish major strategic documents such as the Buildings and Heat Strategy and the Transport Decarbonisation Plan. Also, in November 2021, the Government will host COP 26, the 26<sup>th</sup> UN Climate Change Conference, in Glasgow. As host, the UK will be expected to demonstrate significant progress on its plans to reduce carbon emissions and move towards its Net Zero commitment.

- 3.5 In tandem with the Government’s legislative changes, UK councils started to declare climate emergencies, beginning with Bristol City Council in November 2018. To date over 280 councils have made similar declarations. In July 2019, Wokingham Borough Council declared a Climate Emergency. The Council committed to “playing as full a role as possible in achieving a net carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030”. The Council pledged to develop a Climate Emergency Action Plan, the initial version of which was approved in January 2020, and to submit annual updates showing progress on individual carbon reduction targets. In support of the Action Plan, a three year £50m Capital budget was approved at the Budget Council meeting in February 2020. A summary of the budget is set out in the Annex to the report.
- 3.6 In February 2020, the Council also approved its new Community Vision and Corporate Delivery Plan for 2020/24. The Corporate Delivery Plan includes commitments to:

- Deliver against our Climate Emergency Action Plan and ensure that becoming carbon neutral is given due weight through all our strategies and decision making;
- Ensure that our colleagues across the Council and our contractors take measures, where possible, to reduce carbon emissions, including making our own buildings more energy efficient;
- Help and support our residents and businesses to make behavioural changes that actively address the challenges of climate change;
- Continue to tackle fly-tipping, litter, graffiti and waste generation;
- Enhance our existing green areas and valued open spaces.

3.7 Also, in February 2020, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee agreed to establish the Climate Emergency Task and Finish Group (the Group). The Group met for the first time on 5 May 2020 and agreed the following terms of reference:

- To scrutinise the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan;
- To scrutinise emerging targets and key performance indicators underpinning the Action Plan;
- To assess the level of carbon reduction to be delivered by the Action Plan in light of the Council's 2030 target;
- To produce a final report to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and the Executive, with guidance for improvement relating to the Action Plan.

3.8 Between May and September 2020, the Group held seven virtual meetings. The Group reviewed the Action Plan with a focus on the specific targets and the underpinning carbon reduction assumptions. It also considered a range of national briefings and reports, including an assessment of progress made by other councils. We also received evidence from the following individuals:

- Nigel Bailey (WBC Assistant Director, Housing and Place Commissioning);
- Professor Paul Chatterton (University of Leeds);
- Ian Gough (WBC Energy Officer);
- Graham Ebers (WBC Deputy Chief Executive and Project Sponsor);
- Rhian Hayes (WBC Category Manager, Economic Prosperity and Place);
- Gregor Murray (WBC Executive Member for Climate Emergency);
- Diana Torvar (WBC Climate Emergency Strategy Officer).

In addition, we received written evidence from the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership.

3.9 Prior to the meeting with the Executive Member, the Group set out its initial findings on the Action Plan. Those findings are included in this report. Additional findings have also been added. Following the initial drafting of our report, we held a further meeting with the Executive Member in order to sense check and give initial feedback on our conclusions. The Group's final report will be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee in September 2020 and then to the Council's Executive in October 2020.

## Section 4 – Evidence and Findings

### 4.1 Vision for Net Zero

As set out above, in January 2020 the Council published its new Community Vision for the Borough. The Vision sees the Borough as “a great place to live, learn and grow and a great place to do business”. In looking at the Climate Emergency Action Plan, we noted the key priority areas, projects and carbon reduction targets. However, we felt that the Action Plan would benefit from a Vision for Net Zero, i.e., what sort of place will the Borough be in ten years’ time when we have progressed towards Net Zero. How will life in the Borough be different in terms of the homes we live in, the way we travel, the way we work and communicate, the ways in which we spend our leisure time and the way we source food, goods and services.

The Vision could also set out measures of success in relation to home energy efficiency, renewable heat and power, decarbonised transport, waste and recycling efficiency and the empowerment of individual residents and local communities. We felt that the development of a Vision for Net Zero could be an exciting project for engagement with local schools, businesses and community groups. There is strong public support for change to tackle the Climate Emergency and the time for change is now. The Borough’s residents are intelligent and articulate, so there is an exciting opportunity to build community support and to be at the forefront of this agenda. The Council should be clear about the scale of the challenge, including securing and utilising the necessary resources effectively and efficiently, and the implications of inaction.

**Recommendation 1 – That the Council work with schools, businesses and community stakeholders to develop a Vision for a Net Zero Borough, with indicators and milestones to demonstrate progress.**

### 4.2 Carbon Footprint

The Borough’s carbon footprint is the total level of greenhouse gas emissions caused by individuals and organisations and the consumption of goods and services, expressed as carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) equivalent. CO<sub>2</sub>, produced by the burning of fossil fuels, makes up around 80% of the total of greenhouse gases. Others include methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons and sulphur hexafluoride.

In order to set a baseline for CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, the Council used data produced by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). BEIS produces data for each local authority in the UK (two years in arrears). The 2017 data for the Borough is summarised in the table below.

**Table:** Local Authority Carbon Dioxide Emissions 2017 – Wokingham Borough

Sector	CO <sub>2</sub> (kt)
Industry & Commercial - Electricity	94
Industry % Commercial - Gas	40
Large Industrial Installations	0
Industrial & Commercial - Other Fuels	17
Agricultural Combustion	4

Domestic Electricity	71
Domestic Gas	177
Domestic – Other Fuels	10
Road Transport (A Roads)	86
Road Transport (Motorways)	175
Road Transport (Minor Roads)	89
Diesel Railways	14
Transport Other	8
Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF)	-15
<b>Total for All Sectors</b>	<b>771 kt</b>

Discounting the impact of drive through motorway traffic (though not all motorway traffic is drive through) and rail travel, the Borough’s carbon footprint was estimated as **580.9** thousand tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent (580.9 ktCO<sub>2</sub>e). Officers carried out further calculations to assess the impact of ongoing national carbon reduction policies on the Borough, including decarbonisation of the electricity grid and the transport system. This, together with a projected increase in sequestration, produced a final carbon reduction target of **274.5** ktCO<sub>2</sub>e to be achieved by 2030.

Delivering all the actions currently set out in the Action Plan would result in a shortfall of **72.7** ktCO<sub>2</sub>e by 2030 based on current figures. We noted that the assumptions and carbon reduction figures in the Action Plan will inevitably change as new ideas come forward, new Government policies are implemented, the full impact of the pandemic is assessed and residents embrace the behaviour changes suggested in the Plan. However, it was important that the numbers “stacked up” to ensure that the Action Plan retained credibility and public confidence.

The Group felt that it was reasonable to base the Borough’s carbon footprint and Climate Emergency Action Plan on the annual CO<sub>2</sub>e data produced by BEIS. However, it was also important to recognise that CO<sub>2</sub> accounted for only around 80% of greenhouse gas emissions and that separate plans should be in place to tackle the 20% non-CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research (University of Manchester) suggested that the Council adopt a LULUCF (land-use, land-use change and forestry) pathway that included CO<sub>2</sub> sequestration sufficient to help compensate for non-CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

We also noted that the Council agreed a motion, at its meeting on 23 July 2020, aimed at strengthening its approach to air quality management. This included monitoring the level of particulate matter 2.5 (extremely small particles) across the Borough, committing to further work on No-Vehicle-Idling Zones and encouraging local businesses to sponsor green walls and tree planting. We felt that monitoring of the Action Plan should ensure that actions did not have a detrimental impact on other environmental issues such as air quality.

**Recommendation 2 – That the annual progress report on the Climate Emergency Action Plan include recognition of the levels of non-CO<sub>2</sub> greenhouse gas emissions in the Borough and progress achieved in delivering reductions through the sequestration measures in place.**

**Recommendation 3 – That implementation of the Climate Emergency Action Plan be monitored to ensure that actions are not detrimental to other environmental priorities such as improved air quality.**

#### **4.3 Carbon Budgets**

The 2008 Climate Act established the concept of carbon budgets – the amount of fossil fuels we can use without exceeding the 1.5 C limit. The CCC monitors performance against the Government’s five yearly carbon budgets which run until 2032. These budgets limit the amount of greenhouse gases the UK can legally emit over a five year period. Applying principles from the Paris Agreement, the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research has produced carbon budgets for every local authority in the UK. The proposed carbon budget also includes a projected emissions reduction pathway and an average emissions reduction rate.

For WBC to make its fair contribution towards the Paris Agreement, the Tyndall Centre recommended that:

- The Borough should stay within a maximum cumulative CO<sub>2</sub> budget of 5 mtCO<sub>2</sub>e for the period 2020 to 2100. At 2017 emission levels it was projected that we would use this budget within seven years from 2020;
- Initiate a programme of CO<sub>2</sub> mitigation to deliver cuts in emissions averaging 13% per annum (made up of national and local actions);
- Reach Net Zero no later than 2042 – earlier years for reaching Net Zero are also within the recommended budget.

The Group felt that the annual update report of the Action Plan should include progress against this projected emissions pathway as a reminder of the rapid progress we need to make. We noted that the Council’s carbon budgeting methodology was based on the annual BEIS data, but felt that an assessment of progress against the carbon budget would complement that work.

#### **4.4 Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic**

The recent report from the CCC identified the Covid-19 pandemic as a turning point in tackling climate change. The Committee made a number of recommendations urging the Government to deliver an economic recovery which accelerates the transition to net zero and strengthens resilience to the impacts of climate change. The Committee highlighted a number of priority actions, including:

- Reinforcing “climate-positive” behaviours that have emerged during lockdown such as remote working and delivering customer service remotely. We wished to emphasise that a reduction in car journeys was the quickest and most important win (by CO<sub>2</sub> volume);
- Infrastructure to make it easy and safer to walk, cycle and work remotely;
- Tree planting, change of land use and green infrastructure which bring benefits for the climate, biodiversity, air quality and flood prevention;
- Investment in low carbon retrofits and buildings fit for the future which also provides new employment and reskilling opportunities;
- Moving towards a circular economy through increased reuse and recycling;

It is commendable that the majority of these issues are addressed in the WBC Action Plan. However, the Group felt that the Council's Covid-19 Recovery Plans should also focus on any opportunities to reshape the local economy and deliver a "green recovery". For example, is the level and balance of investment in the Capital programme consistent with the assumptions contained in the Action Plan and the "new normal" post Covid-19? How is the Capital Programme being reviewed and reshaped to reflect the challenges and opportunities arising out of the pandemic? What lessons has the Council learned as result of the remote delivery of services and home working for the majority of Council staff? How can the benefits of this change be baked into the Council's recovery plans? What has been the impact of remote working on congestion and air pollution levels across the Borough and how can reduced traffic levels be maintained? What opportunities are there to support new training initiatives and new jobs, such as retrofitting homes and installing solar panels, to deliver improved energy efficiency and the delivery of green infrastructure? How do we promote, celebrate and encourage the early adoption of innovation in new green technologies within the Borough?

We noted that, in a recent report, the Local Government Association (LGA) urged the Government to work with councils to develop post Covid-19 economic recovery options, including proposals for a jobs guarantee programme providing new opportunities, including in the low-carbon sector. This will help to counter the projected level of job losses due to coronavirus, which are likely to increase further, when the Government furlough scheme ends from October 2020.

In the future, the Group felt that key Council decision reports should include a carbon impact assessment (similar to financial and equality impacts) of the decision on the Climate Emergency and potential linkages to the projects in the Action Plan.

**Recommendation 4 – That the Council consider the impact of climate change on all its actions with key decision reports to include a section on Climate Emergency to ensure that the issue is mainstreamed into the decision making process. This must include a transparent, calculated carbon impact assessment of the proposal rather than a generic comment such as "in line with the Climate Emergency Action Plan".**

#### **4.5 SMART Targets**

The Group noted that the Action Plan contains a number of key assumptions upon which detailed modelling has been carried out. The assumptions include:

- Doubling public transport use by 2030 from the 2019 baseline;
- 20% reduction in total distance travelled in private vehicles by 2030;
- By 2030, 50% of new vehicles registered in the Borough each year be electric vehicles (EV), 25% delivered by Government action, 25% delivered via the WBC Electric Vehicle Strategy;
- 20% of households in the Borough to be retrofitted by 2030.

Whilst the Group recognised the need to set out assumptions in order to carry out the modelling in the Action Plan, it felt that there should be more detail in the narrative about the factors underpinning the assumptions. The assumptions should

be based on SMART principles: specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound. For example, the doubling of public transport use will depend on actions taken by the Government and bus/train operators. 50% electric vehicles will depend on Government policy, the actions of motor manufacturers and changes in public awareness and behaviour. Measures to support active travel and decarbonising cars and vans will be included in the Government's Transport Decarbonisation Plan, due to be published later in 2020.

Clearly the Council will play a part in this work, but the Group felt that the Action Plan would be strengthened by setting out the necessary actions required from Government and other key actors. The Group felt that it was important to position the Action Plan within the framework of wider joined up working necessary to achieve Net Zero. We felt that the current iteration of the Action Plan was specific, measurable and time-bound, but much more work was necessary before it was demonstrably achievable and realistic.

Notwithstanding the comments about the underlying assumptions, the Group felt that the latest version of the Action Plan was much more robust and credible than the version published in January 2020. The Group were pleased see the robust methodology paper and felt that this should be included in the annual report to Council. The Group also recognised the extensive research which underpinned the documents and the role of the Advisory Board of experts who were sense and fact checking the Council's work. We were impressed by the skills and knowledge of the in-house team which had already carried out a significant amount of work in developing the Action Plan.

The Group noted that the numbers set out in the detailed methodology paper did not always match the numbers in the summary table. The numbers provided as the line items in the Action Plan did not always correspond to the totals provided in the same section, while these totals did not always correspond to the totals in the summary table and the detailed methodology. As a result it was not easy to assess, on the basis of these numbers, the carbon reductions the Action Plan hoped to generate or the size of the "carbon gap" between "no WBC action" carbon emissions in 2030 and zero carbon emissions in 2030. As outlined above, the Action Plan indicated a carbon reduction shortfall of 72.7 ktCO<sub>2e</sub> in 2030. The Group was not confident that this was the correct total based on the numbers presented in different parts of the Action Plan and the supporting detailed workings. We noted that this element of the gap was the result of the technical process of assembling the Action Plan.

In order to foster public confidence in the Action Plan targets and underlying assumptions, the Group felt that independent evaluation of the progress made would be essential. This would also provide effective challenge to the in-house team, allow benchmarking of progress made by other local authorities and demonstrate an open, transparent process. We also felt it essential that future iterations of the Action Plan contain clear, accurate and coherent presentation of the carbon numbers. We considered that mathematically incorrect numbers would damage the credibility of the Action Plan and hinder vital public engagement. We felt that an independently verified carbon accounting audit, as part of the 2021

update, would provide a solid foundation for the future and build confidence in the process.

In order to make the Action Plan more accessible, the Group felt that it should include a one-page summary, setting out a dashboard which represented:

- The Council's overall carbon reduction targets;
- The size of the carbon gap/shortfall;
- The impact of expected nationally driven carbon reductions;
- The contribution of measures in the Action Plan to reduce emissions;
- The cost of the measures in the Action Plan;
- Progress towards implementing key measures (by CO<sub>2</sub> impact).

**Recommendation 5 – That, as part of the 2021 progress report on the Action Plan, the Council commission an independent carbon accounting audit of the Action Plan's targets, methodology and underlying assumptions.**

**Recommendation 6 - That the six monthly update of the Action Plan, in January 2021, address the gaps and errors in the current version.**

#### **4.6 Territorial vs Consumption Emissions**

The Group felt that the Action Plan should also refer to the distinction between territorial and consumption emissions. We know that that many of the goods and services consumed in the UK are imported from overseas. Similarly, many goods and services produced in the UK are exported. As an example, in 2017, the UK's consumption emissions were 773 mtCO<sub>2</sub>e compared to territorial emissions of 460.2 mtCO<sub>2</sub>e (i.e. 68% higher). The consumption based emissions include imported goods, aviation and shipping.

Allocating responsibility for emissions can be done in two ways. The territorial basis places responsibility on the country where the emissions physically take place. The consumption basis allocates emissions to the country where they are eventually consumed. Understanding the Borough's wider climate change impact through its relationship to goods and services produced worldwide can help in promoting a focus on lower carbon supply chains and more sustainable local options.

The Group accept that it is reasonable and consistent to use the territorial emissions definition in the Action Plan. However, the relationship to consumption emissions should be stated and used as part of the engagement process aimed at increasing awareness and changing behaviour amongst the Borough's residents and businesses. Again, we are not recommending an additional carbon budgeting approach, but felt that an assessment of consumption emissions would help to focus on the scale of the challenge facing the Borough.

**Recommendation 7 – That the annual update report on the Action Plan include estimates of consumption emissions, progress of measures aimed at increasing awareness of these emissions and individual responsibilities such as the promotion of local sustainable sourcing options for food, goods and services.**

## 4.7 Transport Emissions

Transport is the largest contributor (28% in 2018) to UK greenhouse gas emissions. Transport emissions are 4% higher than in 2013 and only 3% lower than 1990. In 2018, 94% of car journeys were under 25 miles, with 58% under five miles. According to the National Travel Survey, 87% of car users in England believe that their current lifestyle means that they need to own a car. The growth in ownership of sports utility vehicles (SUVs) highlights one of the problems we face. Their market share increased from 6% in 2008 to 25% in 2019. Under current legislation, petrol and diesel motor vehicles will still be on sale well into the 2030s. Also, the Covid-19 pandemic has significantly reduced the usage of public transport in the short term – the development and roll-out of a vaccine will play a key role in restoring confidence and demand. Locally, the Borough faces a number of significant challenges:

- The Borough has one of the highest per capita car ownership rates in the country;
- Building around 800 new homes each year (potentially double that total under recent Government consultation proposals) adds over 1,000 cars to the, already crowded, local transport network;
- The Borough has good transport (road and public transport) connectivity east to west, but less so for the settlements in the north and south;
- Air quality zones are in place in Twyford, Wokingham town centre and land adjacent to the M4;
- The location of schools in the Borough results in a significant number of school run journeys which criss-cross the area, adding to congestion levels, especially in the morning rush hour;
- The regeneration of Wokingham town centre is based on attracting more visitors and shoppers into the town.

The Government will publish its Transport Decarbonisation Plan in the autumn of 2020. It will set out a Vision whereby public transport and active travel will be the first choice for daily activity and all road vehicles will be carbon neutral. Achieving this Vision will require enormous changes in public behaviour underpinned by serious investment in alternatives to the motor car such as walking and cycling infrastructure and public transport. Progressing to Net Zero in the Borough will require a significant reduction in the number of vehicles on the road and, of those remaining, a significant shift to electric vehicles. We felt that much more work was necessary to achieve the modal shift required to meet the targets in the Action Plan.

The Action Plan states that the Council will seek to reduce transport emissions by using technology to reduce congestion and improve traffic flows. Secondly, the number of electric vehicle (EV) charging points will increase across the Borough. The Council will also encourage residents to take up more sustainable, active transport options including walking, cycling and to use public transport more frequently.

The Group felt that the detailed calculations in the Action Plan around the impact of 50% of new vehicle registrations each year being EV were not supported by the data. As the EV component of the total carbon reduction in the Action Plan was

22%, the total reduction figure would be reduced significantly if this figure was corrected.

We were also briefed on the “fundamental law of traffic congestion” developed by academics in the UK and USA, which states that:

- The number of vehicle-miles travelled increases in direct proportion to the available lane-miles of highways;
- Building new roads and widening existing ones only results in additional traffic that continues to rise until congestion returns to previous levels;
- The most effective way to reduce traffic congestion is congestion pricing as used in cities such as London, Stockholm and Singapore.

Assuming that the fundamental law is correct, the commitments in the current WBC Capital Programme would increase the number of vehicle miles travelled, thereby increasing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions whilst not reducing the level of traffic congestion across the Borough. Feedback from studies into the Stockholm experience indicated that a sustainable urban transport system must incorporate four strategies: attractive public transport, walkability, compact spatial planning and restraints on car traffic. All four strategies strengthen each other. Without one of them, the remaining three strategies lost effectiveness.

In its response to Reading Borough Council’s Local Transport Plan Consultation (August 2020), WBC stated:

“Demand Management measures are potentially difficult to justify where alternatives are not readily available or viable for many people. This is particularly the case for those in rural areas who depend on a car to make at least part of their journey. If bus services can reach these rural areas, or Park and Ride has capacity and is cheap enough and fast enough to make it a natural choice then it is recommended that we support this. Otherwise it may be seen simply as a tax on those who have no other option. As with all the measures proposed the impact on the surrounding network wherever the boundary of such schemes falls needs to be considered carefully and mitigated where necessary”.

We also noted that the Council’s Capital Programme for 2020/23 commits to £154m on building new roads and infrastructure and only £14m on alternative transport, greenways, park and ride and byways. The Council is currently working with partners to develop an updated Local Transport Plan (LTP). This document will play a crucial role in setting out and delivering on the Council’s commitment to achieving Net Zero by 2030. The LTP should set out a baseline for traffic congestion with specific reduction targets based on SMART principles.

The Group considered evidence from the LEP about the way in which the impact of the Climate Emergency was included in the process for evaluating infrastructure projects. We looked at the recent example of the Coppid Beech Park and Ride scheme (funded 80% by the Local Growth Fund and 20% by WBC) and reviewed the independent assessment report. We felt that future WBC infrastructure bids to the LEP should include more detailed carbon reduction assessments, in line with the principles set out in the Action Plan. The LEP told us that its recent “Call for

Bids” (through the Berkshire Local Transport Body) included a provision for focusing on scheme benefits delivered through addressing the climate change agenda. We also noted that the LEP felt it had an “excellent” working relationship with WBC.

In relation to the impact of school run traffic, we felt that a dynamic and proactive approach to reducing the use of cars on the school run was essential. The Highways and Parking Enforcement teams working with schools would be crucial in making walking or cycling to school the first choice for many parents and children.

We were informed that all options for reducing transport emissions were still on the table. We recognised the potentially negative public reaction to proposals which impact on car usage. However, we felt that the time for bold, imaginative solutions was now.

**Recommendation 8 – That future iterations of the Action Plan set out SMART targets to reduce car usage, thereby tackling traffic congestion, and demonstrate how the Council is working with neighbouring authorities, the Local Enterprise Partnership, bus and rail operators and other community stakeholders to deliver transport solutions and a transport network and infrastructure which focuses on active travel and public transport.**

#### **4.8 Domestic and Business Emissions - Green Bank Project**

The Action Plan stated that there were around 72,000 dwellings in the Borough, with 85% using fossil fuel based natural gas. Home Heating is a major challenge to be addressed as part of the Climate Emergency. It is currently responsible for between a quarter and a third of UK greenhouse emissions.

The proposed Green Bank would provide loans to help residents and businesses fund energy efficiency projects and move from natural gas to low carbon forms of energy. The Action Plan states that the Green Bank will provide a loan to assist householders in their net zero carbon ambitions. This will include energy efficiency measures on the fabric of the building and replacement of appliances with low carbon versions. We were informed that discussions were ongoing with a major financial institution which would finance the loans, with no financial risk for WBC.

The Group felt that more detail was required to understand the cost of setting up and running the Green Bank Project, the basis for the carbon saving projections, the relevant risk assessments and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the proposals, i.e. the changed financial situation facing many of the Borough’s residents. It would also be helpful to understand the benefits of using the Green Bank over other lending institutions and the impact of Government schemes to deliver energy efficiency improvements, such as the recent £2bn fund for home refurbishments.

**Recommendation 9 – That a further report be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, setting out the business case for the Green Bank Project, including an assessment of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the viability of the project.**

#### **4.9 Renewable Energy Projects in the Borough**

The Action Plan stated that the Council aimed to develop five large-scale solar PV farms between 2020 and 2025. This would increase the production of renewable energy and deliver an income stream which could be reinvested in other carbon reduction projects.

We were informed that good progress had been made on two potential solar farm sites and two more were under investigation, although no specific evidence was provided due to confidentiality issues. As an example, the cost of setting up one 38 hectare site was estimated at £12m. This site could potentially deliver 25 gigawatt hours of electricity which was over two thirds of the current energy demand for the Council's own operations (35 gigawatt). There was clearly potential for income generation arising out of the solar farms proposal. At this point, the most effective way to unlock this potential was still being discussed, but the way forward looked positive.

The Group welcomed the solar farm initiative as a positive method of delivering clean energy locally whilst also developing a new income stream for the Council. We noted that the funding for solar farms was one of the few new funding items in the Climate Emergency Budget. We noted that the £18m commitment (36% of the budget) was projected to deliver 25 ktCO<sub>2</sub>e (12% of the projected total carbon savings). We also questioned the amount of land required to deliver this project in conjunction with the proposal to plant 250,000 new trees across the Borough. See 4.11 below.

#### **4.10 Local Plan Update - Net Zero Construction and Infrastructure**

The Action Plan stated that the upcoming Local Plan Update (LPU) would include provisions to ensure that major commercial and residential developments delivered high sustainable construction standards. Major developments will be expected to achieve innovative design solutions for energy efficiency and low carbon energy generation and use. The new Local Plan would also establish a spatial strategy aimed at securing development which allows for more people to live and work in locations where journeys can be undertaken by walking, cycling and public transport. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee was already committed to scrutinising progress on the LPU later in 2020/21. We felt that progress relating to the new Local Plan's impact on Climate Emergency and the impact of recent Government announcements on changes to the Planning system should be considered as part of the Committee's review.

**Recommendation 10 - That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee scrutinise the impact of the Local Plan Update on the Climate Emergency as part of its review of the new Local Plan later in 2020/21.**

#### **4.11 Carbon Sequestration and a Greener Environment**

The Action Plan stated that the Council will plant 250,000 trees by 2025 with the aim of increasing capacity for carbon offsetting and improving levels of biodiversity across the Borough. Large-scale tree planting is an important tool in tackling Climate Emergency. Trees and soil lock up carbon dioxide and absorb damaging pollutants such as sulphur dioxide and nitrous oxides. A single tree can absorb as

much as 22kgms of carbon dioxide each year and can sequester 0.9 tonnes by the time it reaches 40 years old.

As stated in 4.8 above, we questioned the amount of land required to deliver a number of solar farms and the proposed level of tree planting across the Borough. We noted that the Woodland Trust has produced an Emergency Tree Plan for the UK which contains recommendations for national and local government. The Plan states that the percentage of woodland cover in the UK stands at 13% and that this should be increased to 19% by 2050 in order to support the achievement of carbon neutrality. This amounts to an increase of 1.5 million hectares (around 2 million football pitches). The Group felt that the tree planting proposals in the Action Plan provided an opportunity to work in partnership with schools, local communities and Town and Parish Councils. We also noted the importance of developing a wider landscape management approach which ensured that the correct type of tree was planted in the most appropriate location.

The Group noted that planting on the scale set out in the Action Plan would have a limited impact on CO<sub>2</sub> sequestration in the Borough. Assuming that all the planting targets were met, the Action Plan indicated that tree planting would deliver 3.5 ktCO<sub>2</sub>e per annum, i.e. around 2% of the total at a cost of £2.2m (around 4% of the spend). We also noted that the detailed workings relating to afforestation provided sequestration totals for the life of the trees rather than per annum. This created the risk that readers may misunderstand the impact of tree planting in achieving the Net Zero target.

**Recommendation 11 - That the Council establish and publish details of the amount of land available for sequestration and renewable energy projects by surveying the Borough, in conjunction with Town and Parish Councils, to identify opportunities for tree planting, solar farms and other green projects.**

#### **4.12 Engage with Young People and Support Sustainable Schools**

The Action Plan stated that the Council aimed to launch a sustainable schools programme which would increase awareness and promote behaviour change amongst young people. It was hoped that young people would then act as influencers amongst families and community groups.

The Group welcomed the wide range of actions aimed at engaging schools and young people in tackling the Climate Emergency, although it acknowledged that many young people already have a high level awareness of the issues. We felt that there was an opportunity to work with schools to develop a Vision for Net Zero and to encourage young people to act as community champions. We also felt that discussions should be held with local schools on potential curriculum development to improve knowledge about the Climate Emergency and the roles that local communities can play to support the Action Plan.

#### **4.13 Reduce Waste Sent to Landfill**

The Action Plan stated that the Council aimed to achieve zero waste to landfill, 70% recycling by 2030 and 90% recycling by 2030. We noted that the Council had made good progress in this area with waste to landfill under 5% and recycling at 60% (in line with the EU Waste Directive). We noted, however, that carbon

reduction initiatives would generate new challenges, such as the task of recycling spent lithium-ion batteries from electric vehicles. The Council accepted that the Action Plan contained stretching targets, but was committed to working in partnership to drive innovation and positive solutions. A key part of this process would be winning the hearts and minds of residents about the community benefits of effective recycling and waste minimisation.

#### **4.14 Encourage Behaviour Change**

The Group felt that the section of the Action Plan on “Engagement and Behavioural Change” lacked ambition. The proposed actions include phrases such as “actively communicate” and “provide and share information” with residents. Also, there are no project costs allocated to this section of the Action Plan. The Group felt that the Action Plan presented a real opportunity to engage with and empower residents and community stakeholders so that they became an integral part of the Borough’s response to the Climate Emergency.

At the January 2020 Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee there was a discussion on the potential for developing a local citizens’ climate assembly, as had happened in other parts of the country. We noted that the UK Climate Assembly had completed its series of virtual meetings and was now preparing its report, to be submitted to Parliament in September 2020. The Government has committed to take account of the assembly’s recommendations. As stated above, the Group believes that it is important to understand the impact of the Borough’s demography and to engage with residents at an early stage, before strategic and policy decisions are taken. There is a risk that a perception may build that development and implementation of the Action Plan is being carried out by a relatively small number of Members and Officers. As an example, the Climate Emergency Cross-Party Member working group has only met twice since January 2020.

We noted the wide range of behavioural changes which could help to support the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the Borough. These changes need not be expensive or reduce well-being and could deliver significant co-benefits to health and beyond. Examples of behaviour change include:

- Drive less – reducing car ownership, dependency and use through modal shift to public transport, walking and cycling will provide co-benefits for air quality, congestion, more active and healthy lifestyles. Progress in decarbonising UK electricity, together with falls in the cost of renewables and batteries, creates an opportunity for consumers to reduce emissions by shifting to electric vehicles, potentially cutting a third from the average household’s footprint;
- Reduce flying – 70% of flights are taken by 15% of the population. A single return flight from London to New York (including the effects on the high atmosphere) contribute a quarter of the average person’s annual emissions. The pandemic has severely restricted the number of flights taken, but air travel will take off again if/when a successful vaccine becomes widely available.
- Eat less meat and dairy products – According to the CCC, UK agriculture is expected to account for approximately 30% of remaining positive emissions by 2050. The impacts of UK food consumption also extend beyond emissions currently produced by UK agriculture – both through imported foods and the potential to free-up land use for carbon sequestration through afforestation.

Healthier diets will help to address the obesity crisis highlighted by the impact of Covid-19 on specific groups.

- Plant a tree and/or create a garden with shrubs and flowers that will attract wildlife, grow vegetables and eat local produce – find out where goods and services are sourced. Don't buy unsustainable products. Use less plastic, or no plastic. Take a three minute shower instead of a ten minute shower. Avoid "fast fashion" – the IPCC has calculated that the fashion industry produces 10% of global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions every year.

#### **4.15 WBC as Community Leader**

The Group felt that, as a democratically elected body, the Council had a responsibility to lead from the front in delivering key messages and promoting change by setting an example in relation to its policies and behaviours. In so doing we welcomed the Council's approach of developing a dedicated in-house team, supported by Officer working groups. This will help to embed the Climate Emergency response throughout the organisation, its contractors and suppliers. We felt that the in-house team should have access to ongoing training and support to enable it to embrace new innovations and techniques, including the ideas we have put forward in the report. We also noted that the in-house team currently comprised 1.5 full-time equivalent posts. In light of the importance of tackling the Climate Emergency and the growing number and complexity of issues to be addressed in future years, we considered that additional staff resources were justified, especially in relation to "number crunching" the costs and carbon reductions relating to individual projects.

As set out above, we believe that progress towards Net Zero requires openness, transparency and a willingness to work in partnership. The Action Plan states that the Council's organisational carbon footprint is 11,156 tCO<sub>2</sub>e, which amounts to 1.45% of the Borough's footprint. We noted that £5m (10%) of the £50m Climate Emergency budget was committed to making WBC a carbon neutral organisation.

The Council aims to become a Net-Zero carbon organisation by 2030. As such, it should aim to share its experiences and ideas in order to assist local schools, businesses and partner organisations who are on the same journey. The Council should also review its investment portfolio, procurement methodology and supply chains to ensure consistency with its Net Zero ambitions. We suggest that leading businesses in the Borough be asked to do the same, with the LEP providing publicity and support.

In the same way as Covid-19, the Group felt that the impact of climate change would be felt most by our most vulnerable and disadvantaged residents in areas such as housing, underlying health conditions, fuel poverty, flooding, air quality and the resilience of and access to public services. It is essential that the Council engage with all sectors of the community to ensure that its response to climate change (alongside its response to Covid-19) takes into account the diverse views and needs of all the Borough's residents. As an example, in 2015, 7.1% of households in the Borough experienced fuel poverty, 4,446 households. A household is fuel poor if it has higher than typical energy costs and would be left with a disposable income below the poverty line if it spent the money to meet those costs. Fuel poverty and cold homes represent a major public health problem in the

UK. Improvements in home energy efficiency can help to cut carbon emissions whilst leaving low income families with more money for food and other essentials.

The Group felt that implementation of the Action Plan provided an opportunity for the Council to share its knowledge and experience with other local authorities. In so doing the Council may be able to boost its reputation and unlock new sources of funding and support. We also felt that Action Plan would be strengthened by the addition of a risk register and that consideration should be given to a methodology for assessing the probability of actions being delivered within the 2030 timeframe. So, for example, if a proposed action was assessed at 75% achievability, further actions may need to be considered to fill the gap.

**Recommendation 12 – That the annual update report on the Action Plan:**

- **Emphasise the relative significance of WBC’s organisational footprint in any discussion of WBC’s estate and facilities;**
- **Provide details of progress on the Council’s journey to becoming a Net Zero organisation, including timelines for key activities and progress on investment, procurement and supply chains;**
- **Outline the measures taken to protect individuals, families and groups most at risk from the impact of climate change and provide details of the outcomes;**
- **Include a risk register, setting out the major risks (including the impact of third party action and non-action);**
- **Include an assessment methodology which measures the likelihood (as a %) of success or failure for each item.**

**Recommendation 13 – That, in light of the increasing number and complexity of initiatives aimed at tackling the Climate Emergency, consideration be given to strengthening the in-house team, especially in relation to “number crunching” of carbon reductions and project costs.**

#### **4.16 Partnership with Towns and Parishes**

The Borough is covered by three Town Councils and 14 Parish Councils. The Town Councils (Earley, Wokingham and Woodley) have significant local assets such as leisure centres, community facilities, parks and open spaces. WBC is working to support the Towns and Parishes in developing their own response to the Climate Emergency. This includes sharing information about the WBC Action Plan and guidance on the development of individual action plans and projects. This process has helped to develop local knowledge and reduce the risk of double counting of carbon reductions. Joint working has also helped to develop an understanding of individual carbon footprints for each of the Towns and Parishes.

In the same way as WBC, the Towns and Parishes have a democratic mandate to lead their local communities. As such, they play an important role, working in partnership, to drive the Climate Emergency agenda forwards by developing local

solutions and networks. It is important that WBC seeks to harness this local commitment and knowledge and works closely with the Towns and Parishes to achieve shared solutions and positive outcomes for local communities.

**Recommendation 14 – That the Action Plan recognises the important role played by Towns and Parishes across the Borough in moving to Net Zero and commits to working in meaningful partnership to develop and support local initiatives which turn new ideas into positive action on the ground.**

## Section 6 - Conclusions and Next Steps

6.1 The Group's overall conclusion is that the Climate Emergency Action Plan is an ambitious document which has evolved considerably from its first iteration in January 2020. It is in line with best practice across the sector. In fact, the Council's approach compares favourably with the approach taken by more high profile local authorities. However, as set out in the report, we recommend a number of changes which, we believe, will make the Action Plan more robust and credible. These include:

- Correcting a number of technical errors of presentation and logic;
- A rigorous review of a number of key assumptions including:
  - the implications of achieving 50% EV registrations per annum by 2030;
  - A business case and projected uptake rates for the Green Bank project;
  - A reconciliation of the £50m budget with the monetary values in the Action Plan.

The Group was informed that the Action Plan included an assessment of the carbon impact of around 10,000 new homes in the Borough over the next ten years, but did not include, for instance, the associated carbon impact of additional vehicles on the transport network. We felt that the Action Plan should clarify the assumptions made in assessing the impact of additional homes on the Borough's carbon footprint.

6.2 The recent report from Climate Emergency Manchester on the way that major UK cities have tackled these issues sets out three key findings:

- **Missing £ signs** – few climate emergency responses are costed, or include a plan for funding.

The WBC Action Plan meets this test for the next three years, although the Group identified a number of issues relating to the budget, issues which are set out in the report. For example, we queried the fact that £13m of Capital funding for the construction of roads was not linked to any item in the Action Plan and noted that some "big ticket" spending items did not appear to deliver commensurate levels of carbon reduction. We also noted that the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Council's finances may well restrict future levels of funding. Consequently, actions which reduce emissions whilst delivering new income streams and measurable carbon "value for money" will be vital.

- **"Green Recovery" more slogan than reality** – increased active travel infrastructure is welcome, but limited. Retrofit is hailed by leaders, but the next steps are not clear.

WBC has outlined projects to increase active travel and the use of public transport. The Green Bank project aims to support homeowners to improve energy efficiency. These projects constitute a positive approach but need to be underpinned by SMART targets, detailed business cases and decisive action. Without these, there is a risk that the projects will have no material impact.

- **Engagement is rarely ongoing or city-wide** – local authorities have either carried out small-scale or one-off consultations, or established stakeholder groups of “usual suspects”.

The WBC Action Plan is underpinned by a strong governance structure on paper. However, as evidenced by the errors and omissions identified in the report, we would have liked to have seen more evidence of rigorous challenge arising out of the various bodies, including the Climate Emergency Advisory Group. The governance arrangements must translate into real engagement with all the key stakeholders in the Borough and strong partnerships with neighbouring authorities, key partners and the LEP. The Council should encourage critical evaluation and challenge through targeted, meaningful and ongoing engagement with residents, community groups, schools, businesses and Town and Parish Councils. A successful response will only be delivered through the efforts of every resident in the Borough.

- 6.3 The Task and Finish Group report will be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on 16 September 2020 for discussion and approval. Subject to any amendments it will then be submitted to the Council’s Executive for consideration in October 2020. We hope that the report helps to demonstrate the value of the Scrutiny process in providing constructive challenge and support in developing the Council’s Climate Emergency Action Plan. The Council’s Constitution requires the Executive to agree which recommendations (if any) are acceptable (with a timeframe for implementation) and which recommendations are not (with reasons).
- 6.4 In order to ensure that future Scrutiny is effective, the Group requested that the annual update of the Action Plan be submitted to the relevant Scrutiny body in a timely manner that will enable Scrutiny feedback to be carefully considered and incorporated.
- 6.5 The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee will monitor the implementation of the Group’s recommendations. The Committee may decide to scrutinise further specific aspects of the Action Plan as it progresses or to set up further Task and Finish Groups as necessary.

## WBC Climate Emergency Capital Budget 2020/23

Project Name	Project Description from the Medium Term Financial Plan	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000	2022/23 £'000
Public Rights of Way Network	Investment in all public rights of way and other non-motorised routes to support the needs of all types of users	612	737	737
Wokingham Borough Cycle Network	Investment in current/future cycle networks in the Borough	500	500	1,000
Greenways	A network of quiet commuting and leisure routes for pedestrians and cyclists	610	874	742
South Wokingham Railway Crossings	New foot and cycle structures in the Borough	0	0	1,500
Byways	Foot/bridle/cycleway enhancements or new build in the Borough	100	100	0
Winnersh Triangle Parkway	Transport infrastructure enhancement in the Borough	3,100	0	0
Coppid Beech Park and Ride	Transport infrastructure enhancement in the Borough	2,700	0	0
Transport infrastructure enhancement	Bus stop infrastructure works to support the North Arborfield SDL Bus Strategy	54	0	0
Renewable energy infrastructure projects	Renewable energy generation infrastructure, i.e. solar farms (fields of solar panels) feeding into a battery or grid arrangement	3,500	6,500	8,000
Waste schemes - recycling	Purchase of brown bins, paper sacks and recycling boxes to enable the Borough to continue the waste/recycling scheme	89	89	89
Support services energy reduction schemes	Investment in energy reduction schemes through various mechanisms, e.g. lighting, insulation and improvements – delivering energy bill savings	250	250	250
Food waste collection	Provision of food waste containers	20	20	20
Biodiversity Capital projects	Rolling programme of Capital projects aimed at enhancing the biodiversity value of various sites and other assets	25	25	0
Managing congestion and pollution	Investment in future road building/enhancement across the WBC road network (including new relief roads)	3,000	5,000	5,000
Energy reduction projects	Expenditure on a range of energy efficiency projects in existing properties – including LED lighting, cavity wall, loft insulation, boiler controls	1,500	1,500	1,500
<b>Climate Emergency</b>		<b>16,060</b>	<b>15,595</b>	<b>18,838</b>
<b>Grand Total between 2020 and 2023</b>		<b>£50,493,000</b>		

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Revenue Budget Monitoring report FY2020/21 - Quarter 2</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	The Executive on Thursday, 29 October 2020
<b>WARD</b>	None specific;
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	Executive Member for Finance and Housing - John Kaiser

## **PURPOSE OF REPORT (INC STRATEGIC OUTCOMES)**

To deliver the Council Priorities for the Community, ensuring the efficient effective and safe use of resources. The Council agrees and sets its budget in the February preceding the current financial year and this report seeks to update Executive on the budget position throughout the year and provide an estimate of the outturn position and impact on balances at year-end (31 March 2021).

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Executive note:

- 1) the significant financial impact of the COVID-19 crisis as illustrated in the Executive Summary and note that any unfunded additional responsibilities falling on the Council as a result of any further lockdown measures are not included in the 2020/21 forecasts;
- 2) the overall forecast of the current position of the General Fund revenue budget, Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) illustrated in the Executive Summary and appendices attached to the report;
- 3) the recent announcement from the Prime Minister confirmed that there would be a further package of support for local government, of around £1 billion. Further details of this funding will be confirmed shortly. Any income and related expenditure from this is currently not factored in the figures in this report;
- 4) that on 22 September, the Council were allocated £55k from Local Authority Compliance and Enforcement Grant. Any income and related expenditure from this is currently not factored in the figures in this report.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report is to allow the Executive to note the current expenditure to date (as at 30 September 2020) for the second quarter of the current financial year and to inform the Executive of the forecast outturn positions for 2020/21 for the Council's net revenue expenditure, its General Fund Balance (GFB), the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), and the Schools' Block funding.

## **Recommendation 1 – Financial Impact of Covid-19**

Like all councils across the country, Wokingham have been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. This unprecedented event has had immediate financial implications (for example spend on PPE to support the local community, loss of income from closed services.) and has longer lasting financial implications (health of national / local economy). Central Government have been pro-active in supporting Local Authorities with emergency funding and upfront grant payments to ease cashflow. All additional funding and support is needed and greatly appreciated. However, the Council are still estimating a significant financial impact as highlighted in the 'High Level Financial Impact' table below.

The Council's finance team have prioritised the monitoring of the financial impact, working closely with all services across the Council to understand the implications. This has been a complex task, not least with the situation emerging on a regular basis at a national level but also the significant impact the pandemic has had across all services of the Council.

As the pandemic continues to develop the financial monitoring and reporting has remained flexible. Mindful of the impact of a second wave of infections and the renewed increased workload for Council staff and additional resource implications for re-initiating the local response to any second wave and any new burdens on local authorities this imposes, the Council continues to undertake further work to understand the longer term financial implications beyond the 20/21 financial year. These implications are actively being considered as part of budget setting for the 21/22 financial year.

The Council continues to report on a regular basis to MHCLG, in addition to working with partners (e.g. CCG, Leisure operator) and other local authorities to further understand the impact. The Council will always aim to recover as many of the costs of the pandemic that it is allowed to under central government funding streams.

### **High Level Financial Impact**

The table below shows the current estimate of the financial impact from Covid-19. It is important to note with the situation changing almost on a daily basis, the short term and long term financial effect from Covid-19 is difficult to predict. Assumptions have been made using actual costs incurred to date and estimates for the costs during recovery phases over the financial year.

	£,000
Additional Expenditure	£13,880
Lost Income	£4,825
Delayed Saving Plans	£1,185
3rd Party Income (CCG, grants)	(£8,958)
<b>Impact from Covid-19</b>	<b>£10,932</b>
Less: Emergency Government Funding	(£8,303)
<b>Net Impact from Covid-19</b>	<b>£2,629*</b>

The £2.629m net impact from Covid-19 has improved from the £5.732m reported to Executive in July'20. This improvement has been driven mainly from additional emergency government funding and reimbursement of lost income from the government.

These figures do not include (at this stage) the impact of any second wave of the pandemic and any associated local lockdown that may be imposed. If this were to occur, then the cost estimates above are likely to increase.

### **Recommendation 2 – Current Position**

The Executive has agreed to consider Revenue Monitoring Reports on a quarterly basis. In February 2020, the Council agreed and set its net General Fund (Revenue) budget at £146.215 million; following year end, this is to be further adjusted to account for agreed carry forward of budget and movements between directorates. This gives a working budget for each of the Councils Directorates. The working budgets, spend to date and forecast outturn are shown in the table below.

Directorate	2020/21 – net budget position - as at 30 September 2020				
	Approved (Working) Budget*	BAU** Forecast (Excl. Covid Impact)	Excl. Covid Net over / (under) spend	Covid Forecast	Incl. Covid Net over / (under) spend
	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000
	a	b	c = b - a	d	e = c + d
Adult Social Care & Health	52,782	52,382	(400)	2,210	1,810
Chief Executive	9,212	9,212	0	0	0
Children's Services	35,261	35,261	0	1,680	1,680
Communities, Insight & Change	7,813	7,813	0	448	448
Place and Growth	37,293	37,843	550	1,261	1,811
Resources and Assets	3,909	4,119	210	4,032	4,242
Other (Direct covid spend + Impact on Ctax base)	0	0	0	1,301	1,301
Emergency Covid grant funding from Government	0	0	0	(8,303)	(8,303)
<b>Revenue Expenditure Total</b>	<b>146,270</b>	<b>146,630</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>2,629</b>	<b>2,989</b>

\* Approved Working Budget is based on budget agreed at Council in February '20 plus any restructures, and approved carry forwards.

\*\* BAU = Business as usual.

Further details of the outturn forecast position and variances are also shown at Appendix A. The main items of BAU variance identified to date are:

Adult Social Care & Health – underspend of £400k. As a result of the expert determination there is a reduction in the central management costs to the Council from Optalis of c£300k in 20/21. This efficiency has been achieved earlier than anticipated as this is built into the savings assumptions for 21/22 and beyond. Negotiations surrounding any further changes to central management costs in Optalis is ongoing.

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on Adult Social Care services. There continue to be many variables to understand as we work through potential impacts of phase 2 specifically relating to hospital discharges and supporting the vulnerable in our community. A small underspend of £100k in relation the BAU budgets is reported which we will continue to monitor closely.

Chief Executive – no BAU material variances identified.

Children's Services – While an overall on budget BAU position is reported for Children's Services, two key areas of current and emerging pressure underly this.

#### Social Care Placements

The number and cost of social care placements has been impacted by covid [£321k] but, in addition to this, forecasts are now reaching above the budget model [£240k]. While this is currently being managed through targeted offsetting budget areas within the Directorate, a small number of complex cases provide for financial challenge. Secure placements for children and young people in Wokingham are rare and therefore not part of budget setting assumptions, however current developing circumstances may require costs above that assumed in the Q2 forecast. A supplementary estimate request may be considered for Q3 should unbudgeted costs in this area be experienced.

#### Home to School Transport

Current forecasts for Home to School Transport project an overspend in-year [£537k] through a combination of covid related loss of income / delayed savings programme, and BAU higher than budgeted demand levels.

Additional covid related grant of £146k is available for the first half of the autumn term but is ringfenced for very particular additional covid response activity, and therefore does not contribute to the overall budget position.

SEND transport continues to be the key area driving the budget pressure, with costs rising above that assumed at the time of budget setting. This corresponds with a period of significantly increased SEND demand and activity. Please see DSG section below.

Communities, Insight & Change – no BAU material variances identified.

Place and Growth – Pressures on the Revenue Drainage Budget £100k & £620k on the Highways Reactive Maintenance budget due to increase in schedule of rates prices in the new highways contract. Offset by savings (£170k) from Winter maintenance reserve.

Resources and Assets – overspend of £210k in relation to reduction of shared service income from Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead in operational property service. Work ongoing to review options to mitigate this pressure.

#### General Fund

Taking account of the net overspends above and the known effect of Covid-19 pressures (assuming no further government funding), the balance on the General Fund

as at 31 March 2021 is estimated to be £8.631m. This will obviously deteriorate if further pressures from a second wave of the pandemic materialise.

See Appendix B for further details.

### **Housing Revenue Account (HRA)**

There are no material variances (favourable or non-favourable) forecast in the HRA on the business as usual for quarter one. There are no material variances from the impact from Covid 19 on the HRA.

The balance on the HRA reserve is forecast to be £0.889m at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. See appendix C for further detail.

### **Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)**

The DSG is currently forecasting an in-year deficit of £2.6m, with the budget pressure continuing to be within the High Needs Block. Taken with the brought forward deficit of £3.36m, a forecast cumulative deficit of £5.98m is now projected to 31st March 2021, representing 3.9% of total DSG budget.

#### **High Needs Block**

The updated forecast position represents an adverse movement of £1.09m on that reported at Q1, with the main movements due to increased numbers and costs for the 2020/21 academic year across:

- Out of Borough Maintained
- Post-16
- Independent Special and Non-Maintained

While actions associated with the SEND Strategy continue to be driven forward, overall progress against the Deficit Management Plan has been impacted by both Covid and a significant rise in the number of children and young people with an Education Health & Care Plan (EHCP). At the start of the 2020/21 academic year 1,211 EHCPs were in place against a figure of 1,002 at the same point the previous year, an increase of 21%.

In recent weeks the ESFA has issued guidance and a template to use as a planning tool, to develop evidence-based and strategic plans covering SEND provision. Use of the tool is being explored as part a review of planning assumptions given the ongoing increases in demand. Further information is available on the line below.  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dedicated-schools-grant-dsg-deficit-management-plan>

#### **Individual school budgets**

As we progress through the financial year, the impact of covid on individual school budgets is becoming clearer. Loss of income and increased staffing costs in managing 'bubbles' and sickness represent the areas of most significant financial challenge.

The Department for Education (DfE) launched a scheme to allow schools to claim for exceptional costs experienced during the summer term, however the scope of the scheme was limited and excluded, for example, loss of income. Information gathered from maintained schools in Wokingham indicated lost income levels at the end of the summer term to be in excess of £595,000.

A small number of schools were already facing a very difficult financial position for the 2020/21 financial year, and it is therefore likely that a greater number will now face a budget deficit. Discussion is being led through Schools Forum on the impact on schools across the Borough, seeking opportunities to support and learn from colleagues, and to provide an overall view from both maintained schools and academies for strategic discussion with the DfE.

## 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)	Working budget of £146.270 million	No – forecast o/s of £0.360 million	Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	to be agreed in MTFP		Revenue
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	to be agreed in MTFP		Revenue

### Other Financial Information

Effective monitoring of budgets is an essential element of providing cost effective services and enables any corrective action to be undertaken, if required. Many of the budgets are activity driven and can be volatile in nature.

### Stakeholder Considerations and Consultation

None

### Public Sector Equality Duty

Public Sector Equality Duty assessments are undertaken during individual business cases.

***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***

None

### List of Background Papers

Appendix A – Revenue Monitoring Summary  
 Appendix B – General Fund Balance  
 Appendix C – Housing Revenue Monitoring Summary

<b>Contact</b> Mark Thompson	<b>Service</b> Business Services
<b>Telephone</b> Tel: 0118 974 6555	<b>Email</b> mark.thompson@wokingham.gov.uk

## REVENUE MONITORING REPORT September 2020

## GENERAL FUND SUMMARY

Directorate	End of Year Position					Comment on major areas of estimated over / (underspend) excluding impact from Covid 19
	Current Approved Budget	BAU Forecast (i.e. excluding Covid Impact)	Excl. Covid Net over / (under) spend	Covid Forecast	Incl. Covid Net over / (under) spend	
	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	
Resources and Assets	3,909	4,119	210	4,032	4,242	Overspend of £0.210m in relation to reduction of shared service income from Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead in operational property service. Work ongoing to review options to mitigate this pressure.
Chief Executive	9,212	9,212	0	0	0	No BAU material variances identified.
Children's Services	35,261	35,261	0	1,680	1,680	An overall balanced BAU position for Children's Services is still forecast for the year. Pressures within the SEND service and Home to School Transport are forecast, but are being off-set by in-year managed underspends and non-recurring opportunities in other areas of the Directorate. Pressures are also increasing within the social care placements budget, and this remains under close review.
73 Adult Social Care & Health	52,782	52,382	(400)	2,210	1,810	Underspend of £0.400m. As a result of the expert determination there is a reduction in the central management costs to the Council from Optalis of c£300k in 20/21. This efficiency has been achieved earlier than anticipated as this is built into the savings assumptions for 21/22 and beyond. Negotiations surrounding any further changes to central management costs in Optalis is ongoing. The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on Adult Social Care services. There continue to be many variables to understand as we work through potential impacts of phase 2 specifically relating to hospital discharges and supporting the vulnerable in our community. A small underspend of £100k in relation the BAU budgets is reported which we will continue to monitor closely.
Place and Growth	37,293	37,843	550	1,261	1,811	Pressures on the Revenue Drainage Budget £100k & £620k on the Highways Reactive Maintenance budget due to increase in schedule of rates prices in the new highways contract. Offset by savings (£170k) from Winter maintenance reserve.
Communities, Insight & Change	7,813	7,813	0	448	448	No BAU material variances identified.
Other (Direct covid spend + Impact on Ctax base)	0	0	0	1,301	1,301	No impact on BAU
Emergency grant funding from Government	0	0	0	(8,303)	(8,303)	No impact on BAU
<b>Revenue Expenditure Total</b>	<b>146,269</b>	<b>146,630</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>2,629</b>	<b>2,989</b>	

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**Estimated General Fund Balance - 31st March '21**

Note	£,000	£,000
<b>1 General Fund Balance (as at 31/3/2020)</b>		<b>(£12,431)</b>
Budgeted contributions to reserves (as per MTFP)	(£1,979)	
		<b>(£1,979)</b>
<u>Supplementary Estimates</u> Sep'20 - Covid test services (£120k approved in total)	£55	
		<b>£55</b>
<u>Carry Forwards from 2019/20</u> Adult Social Care & Health Chief Executive Children's Services Communities, Insight & Change Resources and Assets Place and Growth	£380 £0 £0 £0 £1,714 £640	
		<b>£2,734</b>
<u>Service Variance Excl. Covid-19 (including 20/21 carry forwards requests)</u>  Adult Social Care & Health Chief Executive Children's Services Communities, Insight & Change Resources and Assets Place and Growth	(£400) £0 £0 £0 £210 £550	
		<b>£360</b>
<b>2 Estimated net impact from Covid - 19</b>		<b>£2,629</b>
<b>Estimated General Fund Balance 31/3/2021</b>		<b>(£8,631)</b>

Notes

1. General balance as at 31/03/20 is taken from the unaudited statement of accounts and is subject to audit review.

2. Based on assumption that no further funding comes from central government. The Council will continue to lobby for additional funding to cover the impact from Covid-19.

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**REVENUE MONITORING REPORT September 2020**  
**HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT**

Director: G Ebers

Lead Member, Housing Services: John Kaiser

Service		End of Year Position		
		Current Approved Budget	Current Forecast	Provisional Variance
		£,000	£,000	£,000
<b>Rents</b>	Expenditure	332	332	0
	Income	(14,981)	(14,981)	0
	Net	(14,649)	(14,649)	0
<b>Fees &amp; Charges / Capital Finance Charges</b>	Expenditure	97	97	0
	Income	(125)	(125)	0
	Net	(28)	(28)	0
<b>Housing Repairs</b>	Expenditure	3,184	3,184	0
	Income	(30)	(30)	0
	Net	3,154	3,154	0
<b>General Management</b>	Expenditure	576	576	0
	Income	(21)	(21)	0
	Net	555	555	0
<b>Sheltered Accommodation</b>	Expenditure	293	293	0
	Income	(476)	(476)	0
	Net	(183)	(183)	0
<b>Capital Finance</b>	Expenditure	7,036	7,036	0
	Income	(59)	(59)	0
	Net	6,977	6,977	0
<b>Subtotal Excluding Internal and Capital Charges</b>		<b>(4,174)</b>	<b>(4,174)</b>	<b>0</b>
Internal and Capital Charges		4,174	4,174	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**Housing Revenue Account Reserve****£,000**

HRA Reserves as at 31st March 2020	(2,091)
2020/2021 Planned Spend	1,202
2020/2021 Forecast Variance - BAU	0
2020/2021 Forecast Variance - Covid-19	0
<b>Estimated HRA balance as at 31st March 2021</b>	<b>(889)</b>

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# Agenda Item 40.

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Capital Monitoring 2020/2021 - end of September 2020</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	The Executive on Thursday, 29th October 2020
<b>WARD</b>	None Specific;
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	Executive Member for Finance and Housing - John Kaiser

## **PURPOSE OF REPORT (INC STRATEGIC OUTCOMES)**

Effective use of our capital resources to meet the Council Plan investment priorities, and delivering value for money for residents.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The Executive is asked to:

- 1) note that the Council's Capital Programme has been reviewed and will continue to be throughout the year in the context of the impact of COVID 19 on funding sources and service requirements, and that any changes will be presented to Executive for approval;
- 2) approve and note the proposed rephrasing to the Capital Programme following the 'in-year' review including the impact of Covid 19, as set out in paragraph 3 and Appendix B. There is no financial / service impact from the reprofiling of budgets into 2021/2022;
- 3) note the position of the capital programme at the end of Quarter 2 (to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020) as summarised in the report below and set out in detail in Appendix A;
- 4) note Appendix C which highlights capital performance by key activities. This is part of the Council's enhanced financial management focusing on the key capital projects, monitoring performance against budget and impact on funding levels (including borrowing);
- 5) agree that £6m of ringfenced funded capital budget originally programmed for 2021/2022 is brought forward into the current year (2020/2021), for the acceleration of the delivery of the SCAPE – Road Infrastructure project;
- 6) note and approve an addition to the 2020/21 capital programme, the project for Church Lane, Shinfield – Flood Alleviation Scheme, to be funded from ring fenced Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) grant from the Environment Agency of £115k.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report informs the Executive of the progress of the Council in delivering its capital programme for the financial year 2020/2021. The Executive have previously agreed to consider Capital Monitoring Reports on a quarterly basis and this report highlights the capital monitoring as at the end of the second quarter of the financial year (30<sup>th</sup> September 2020).
2. The COVID 19 pandemic has had an unprecedented impact on the Council's finances, in terms of both its revenue and capital resources. It is therefore essential that the capital programme is closely reviewed to assess the assuredness of funding sources and if there have been any changes in service requirements. The Council on the other hand must recognise that capital investment will play an important role in local and regional recovery from the impact of the crisis.
3. The Council's finance team working with services across the council have conducted a review of the programme to identify rephasing of projects to match expected delivery, taking account of the impact on the service delivery and project cost. This is carried out every year, but now with extra emphasis on the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic on both the delivery of projects but more importantly any delays in the funding streams (for example developer contributions). It is essential to point out that projects identified are deferring either the start of the project or the commencement of the main works element of the project. The review originally has identified £105.4 million of rephasing, in the second quarter of the year, this was adjusted to **£113.6 million** and this is summarised below; a full list of the adjusted projects is at 'Appendix B - List of proposed rephasing of projects in Quarter 2' and Executive is asked to approve the updated rephasing of these projects.

Projects rephased due to Covid 19	Other projects rephased
£24.6 million	£89.0 million

4. The programme will continue to be monitored and reviewed throughout the financial year and any further rephasing will be notified to Executive for approval. Review of capital projects has identified a £600k savings (further detail on Appendix A), which can be reinvested into future funding of capital schemes in the capital programme.

Capital Monitoring Forecast Outturn Position for 2020/2021 (as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020):-

	£'million
Capital Programme approved at Council (Feb 2020)	157.3
Budget rephased from prior years (existing projects)	156.8
New budget added to Capital Programme (in 2020/21)	0.5
<b>Capital Approved Budget</b>	<b>314.6</b>
Budget rephased to later years	(113.6)
<b>Working capital programme</b>	<b>201.0</b>
Forecast variances to the programme - savings	(0.6)
<b>Forecast Capital Outturn</b>	<b>200.4</b>

5. All projects that have been rephased have been made in consultation with the project / programme managers and they confirm there is a nil or negligible impact of the re-phased programme on service delivery and the rephasing does not increase the cost of the project or have a revenue impact on the service area.
  
6. As per recommendation 4), the Executive are asked to note Appendix C which compares actual spend to date against budget across our key capital projects (totalling budgets of £163m). The table highlights that the majority of the key projects are on track to spend budget by year end. Where percentages are low this is due to planned project spend being weighted towards the second half of the year. This new report is part of the Councils enhanced financial management focusing on the key capital projects, monitoring performance against budget and impact on funding levels (inc. borrowing).
  
7. As per recommendation 5), the Executive are asked to agree that £6m of capital budget originally programmed for 2021/2022 is brought forward into the current year (2020/2021), for the acceleration of the delivery of the SCAPE – Road Infrastructure project (investing in future road building / enhancement across the boroughs network). This is reprofiling of ringfenced funded budget already approved by the Council.
  
8. As per recommendation 6), the Executive are asked to note and approve an addition to the 2020/21 capital programme, the project for Church Lane, Shinfield – Flood Alleviation Scheme, to be funded from ring fenced Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) grant from the Environment Agency of £115k (this is a ring fenced grant received specifically for this project and does not add any further financial commitment to the councils capital programme).

## 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)	£200.4m	Yes	Capital
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£113.6m	Yes	Capital
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	To be agreed in MTFP in Feb'21		

### **Other Financial Information**

None

### **Stakeholder Considerations and Consultation**

Stakeholders should be reassured of the effective management of the council's resources.

### **Public Sector Equality Duty**

Equality assessments are carried out as part of each capital project

***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 capital programme includes projects which help achieve our priorities in relation to climate change.

### **List of Background Papers**

See attached:-

Appendix A: Capital Monitoring Summary Report to September 2020.

Appendix B: List of proposed rephasing of projects in Quarter 2.

Appendix C: The progress towards completion vs spend for major capital projects.

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**APPENDIX A - CAPITAL MONITORING REPORT September 2020**

Directorate	Current Approved Budget £,000	Current Approved Budget is split into:				Analysis of Current Year (Yr 1)		Comments
		Current Year (Yr 1) £,000	Next Year (Yr 2) £,000	Budget Rephased to Year 2 %	Impact on Service Delivery	Current Forecast £,000	(Under) / Overspend £,000	
<i>Notes</i>	1	2	2			3		
Adult Social Care & Health	10,304	5,594	4,710	46%	No material / financial service impact from reprofiling into Year 2	5,292	(302)	<b>Material Variance (Under/Overspend):</b> £(302)k saving in Connected Care (IT equipment) due to utilisation of budget brought forward from 2019/20.
Children's Services	33,892	23,565	10,327	30%	No material / financial service impact from reprofiling into Year 2	23,565	0	<b>Material Variance (Under/Overspend):</b> None
Communities, Insight & Change	7,732	5,331	2,401	31%	No material / financial service impact from reprofiling into Year 2	5,331	0	<b>Material Variance (Under/Overspend):</b> None
Place & Growth	121,748	73,881	47,866	39%	No material / financial service impact from reprofiling into Year 2	73,881	0	<b>Material Variance (Under/Overspend):</b> None
 Resources & Assets	140,921	92,601	48,320	34%	No material / financial service impact from reprofiling into Year 2	92,332	(269)	<b>Material Variance (Under/Overspend):</b> £(200)k saving on Bulmershe Leisure centre build costs. £(69)k saving on Tape Lane, Hurst redevelopment against agreed budget.
<b>Total</b>	<b>314,596</b>	<b>200,972</b>	<b>113,625</b>	<b>36%</b>		<b>200,401</b>	<b>(571)</b>	

- Notes**
- 1) Current approved budget is made up of approved budget through the MTFP plus additional budget approved in year.
  - 2) Current approved budget is split at the start of the year into budgeted spend in current year and spend in next year.
  - 3) Current forecast is estimated spend for the year.

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## Appendix B - Approval for Year 2 Profiling (for quarter 2 - to 30th September 2020)

Working closely with the services across the Council, the following table highlights the changes to the rephasing of the capital programme since quarter 1. There is no material impact on service delivery or project cost.

Directorate	Project	Additional Description / Explanation of movement	All Rephasing £	Of which, COVID Rephasing £
<b>Previous Quarter 1 Total</b>			<b>105,368,594</b>	<b>20,739,849</b>
<b>Since Q1, the following projects have been identified to reprofiled to be spent in 21/22.</b>				
Place & Growth	Toutley Highways Depot Modernisation	Further work being undertaken on the business case	4,675,851	0
Place & Growth	Wokingham Town Centre Regeneration Environmental Improvements	Delay to works to minimise congestion while other highway improvements that place	380,000	0
Place & Growth	Wokingham Borough Cycle Network	Further work being undertaken on the business case	333,477	0
Resources & Assets	Town Centre Regeneration Old Marks & Spencer site	Construction of site delayed due to covid 19	2,650,000	2,650,000
Resources & Assets	Energy Reduction Projects	Site access delays due to covid 19	1,300,000	1,300,000
Resources & Assets	Bulmershe Campus Access Improvement Works	Reprofiling of spend to allow construction during school holidays	334,894	0
Resources & Assets	Property investment portfolio	Site access delays due to covid 19	292,040	292,040
Resources & Assets	Mandatory disabled facility grants	Reduced access to residential homes during covid 19	125,913	125,913
<b>Further reprofiling to spent in 21/22</b>			<b>10,092,175</b>	<b>4,367,953</b>
<b>Since Q1, the following projects have been identified to be brought forward from 21/22 into 20/21. These schemes are part of the budget agreed for 20/21 in the MTFP, but at the start of the year were identified to be spent in 21/22 but now will be spent in this year.</b>				
Children's Services	Schools Devolved Formula	Multiple school projects previously identified for 2021/22 have been brought forward to be delivered in 2020/21 (funded by ring fenced grant)	(701,818)	0
Resources & Assets	Alexander House (AXA) House (WTCR) Refurbishment	Acceleration of planned drainage works	(121,447)	0
Resources & Assets	Housing (Tenants Services)	Acceleration of budget profile due to easing of working restrictions during COVID-19 pandemic	(500,000)	(500,000)
Resources & Assets	Purchase of council houses	Acquisitions brought forward to meet service needs and market opportunities	(513,065)	0
<b>Project spend reprofiled back to 20/21</b>			<b>(1,836,330)</b>	<b>(500,000)</b>
<b>Total (as at 30th September 2020)</b>			<b>113,624,438</b>	<b>24,607,802</b>

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## Appendix C - Capital project by key activity as at 30th September 2020

The following table highlights by key activities the actual spend year to date as a percentage of the total year 1 budget. Where percentages are low this is due to project spend being weighted towards the second half of the year. This new report is part of the Councils enhanced financial management focusing on the key capital projects, monitoring performance against budget.

Key Activities	Year 1 Budget £'000	Actuals YTD £,000	Actual as % of budget	Explanation of Material Variance (Figures rounded)
Strategic Assets - Other	45,021	2,275	5%	Budget planned to be spent in second half of year include Strategic Property and Commercial Assets (Investment Fund) £27m and Strategic Property and Commercial Assets £10m.
Strategic Development	37,916	16,099	42%	Budget planned to be spent in second half of year include £13m on SCAPE - Road infrastructure projects by year end and Shinfield Eastern Relief Road agreed passporting of developer funding £7m.
Town Centre Regeneration	18,941	3,438	18%	Budget planned to be spent in second half of year include Carnival Pool Area Redevelopment, £11m (including construction of leisure centre, library and residential build) and Elms Field & Peach Place (£4m) completion works.
Basic Needs Primary - Additional Places	13,851	2,609	19%	On going new school construction projects at Arborfield Primary (£6m) and Matthews Green Primary (£5m).
Wokingham Housing	13,559	300	2%	WBC (Holdings) Ltd Loan (£13m), business case to be considered by Holding Company.
Housing Regeneration	11,005	186	2%	Budget planned to be spent in second half of year include Gorse Ride Regeneration (£8m), including ongoing property acquisitions.
Integrated Transport	8,579	889	10%	Budget planned to be spent in second half of year include Winnersh Triangle Parkway (£2.6m) 1st phase contract awarded and Coppid Beech Park and Ride (£2m) where construction starts this year
Highways and Maintenance	6,484	2,335	36%	Highways Carriageways Maintenance (£4m) - Schemes originally accelerated due to Covid and availability of highways, but remainder to be delivered as per original plan from September onwards.
Special Education Needs	3,766	1,809	47%	Budget planned to be spent in second half of year include Addington School Expansion (£0.7m) and Foundry PRU (£0.4m), projects underway already.
Tenant Services Housing Repairs & Adaptions for Disabled	3,600	689	19%	Housing Repairs & Adaptions for Disabled (£3m) - projected to spend in year, some spend delayed in first part of year due to access to sites (Covid 19).

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<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Draft Housing Strategy 2020-2024</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	The Executive on Thursday, 29 <sup>th</sup> October 2020
<b>WARD</b>	None Specific;
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Director of Place and Growth - Chris Traill
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	Executive Member for Finance and Housing - John Kaiser.

## **PURPOSE OF REPORT (INC STRATEGIC OUTCOMES)**

To obtain Executive approval to consult on Wokingham Borough Council's Draft Housing Strategy 2020-2024.

The draft 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 the Executive approve consultation on the Wokingham Borough Council's Draft 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. The draft 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. A detailed action plan will accompany the final strategy and will be updated on an annual basis. The action plan will give more detail 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.

The draft 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 key priorities and strategy format have been discussed and agreed in principle by the Affordable Housing Implementation Group.

The expected outcomes of the strategy are:

- Delivery of more homes in the Borough – which includes 1000 addition homes over the 4 year strategy as part of the Council's 1-4-5 housing delivery programme and a further 800 affordable homes to be delivered through the Council's partnership with housing associations
- More opportunities for low cost home ownership, such as the affordable self-build programme at Wheatsheaf Close in Winnersh
- 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
- 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 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 will have the opportunity to respond to our consultation on the draft strategy. The consultation will be 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 will also be publicised via a press release and our social media.

As part of the consultation we will ask questions around whether they agree with the objectives set out in the strategy, what challenges they think the Borough is facing in terms of housing, and what fundamental outcomes they would like to see from delivery of the strategy.

If the Executive approve consultation on Wokingham Borough Council's Draft Housing Strategy 2020 – 2024, the final strategy and action plan will be considered by Executive in early 2021, after which we will publicise the 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 2 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 draft 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 will be updated on an annual basis. The action plan will give more detail 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 draft 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 key priorities and strategy format have been discussed and agreed in principle by the Affordable Housing Implementation Group.

### **BUSINESS CASE (Including Options and Evidence of Need)**

The draft 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. 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.

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 of the strategy are:

- Delivery of more homes in the Borough – which includes 1000 addition homes over the 4 year strategy as part of the Council's 1-4-5 housing delivery programme and a further 800 affordable homes to be delivered through the Council's partnership with housing associations
- More opportunities for low cost home ownership, such as the affordable self-build programme at Wheatsheaf Close in Winnersh
- 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
- 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 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

#### Next Steps

If the Executive approve consultation on Wokingham Borough Council's Draft Housing Strategy 2020 – 2024, the final strategy and action plan will be considered by Executive in early 2021, after which we will publicise the new strategy.

#### **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)	-	-	-
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 will have the opportunity to respond to our consultation on the draft strategy. The consultation will be 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 initial 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 energy efficiency, reduce carbon emissions and fuel poverty.

#### **List of Background Papers**

Draft Housing Strategy 2020 – 2024 – Enclosure 1.  
 Equality Impact Assessment – Enclosure 2  
 Housing Facts and Figures Update October 2019-March 2020 – Enclosure 3

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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 housing strategy, we will help to ensure that we address and understand our housing need, 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. As part of this we will invest in our own housing stock and deliver more affordable homes through the Council’s housing companies. 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?
<b>Address and understand our housing needs</b>	Delivery of more homes in the Borough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Council to lead on the delivery of 1000 additional homes over the 4 year strategy period (Housing 1-4-5 Challenge) to include at least 50% affordable homes (local rents and low cost home ownership)</li> <li>Work towards delivering the number of homes per annum (all tenures) set by Government</li> <li>An additional 800 affordable homes to be delivered through the Council's partnership with housing associations</li> </ul>
	More opportunities for low cost home ownership and private renting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver the Council's first affordable self-build scheme at Wheatsheaf Close, Winnersh and develop other opportunities for community led housing</li> <li>Explore new tenures and opportunities to help those who want to get onto the housing ladder – e.g., Rent to Buy</li> <li>Work with private landlords to expand the private rented sector to increase the range of available housing options</li> </ul>
	The Council helps to deliver the right homes in the right places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a strong evidence base of need and develop housing policies which will inform and complement the new Local Plan</li> <li>Ensure that any development with housing provision addresses local need and essential infrastructure is delivered up front</li> <li>Make the best use of Council-owned land setting the standard for high quality sustainable housing</li> <li>Continue to deliver high quality affordable, social and market homes for local people in Wokingham Borough by working with a range of partners and agencies</li> <li>Implement a new Allocations Policy to ensure best use of the Borough's affordable housing stock</li> <li>Address the housing needs of our Gypsy Roma Traveller and boat dweller communities</li> </ul>
<b>Supporting our vulnerable residents through a range of housing options</b>	Delivering housing and support tailored to meet identified need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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</li> <li>Continue to provide a range of housing support services to help vulnerable people live independently</li> <li>Delivery of a new council owned care home</li> <li>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</li> </ul>
	Improving guidance and information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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</li> <li>Enhance the digital advice and guidance available to residents via the Council's website and social media</li> </ul>
	Developing effective policies and strategies to ensure supported housing meets need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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</li> </ul>
<b>Improving the quality, sustainability and management of the Borough's homes</b>	Improving the quality and management of homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve the quality and on-going management of homes and environment on all new developments</li> <li>Make best use of existing homes and assets to help tackle housing need as well as over-crowding and under-occupation</li> <li>Ensure all landlords in the Borough engage with and listen to their tenants and deliver the best possible housing management service</li> <li>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</li> <li>Support our Private Rented Sector (PRS) residents and work with PRS landlords to improve standards of properties</li> <li>Improve the temporary and emergency accommodation offer for rough sleepers and homeless residents</li> <li>Ensure that fire safety, health and safety remains the top priority in every home and housing scheme</li> </ul>
	Ensuring quality and sustainability of design of all homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The adoption of a new Local Plan, Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document and Borough Design Guide</li> <li>Improve energy efficiency, reduce carbon emissions and fuel poverty, working towards net zero carbon by 2030</li> <li>Explore more innovative ways of housing delivery including modern methods of construction</li> </ul>
	Regenerating communities and housing stock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to deliver regeneration programmes of older, poor quality housing stock such as the Gorse Ride estate in Finchampstead</li> <li>Ensure any regeneration projects are led by the local community and address their needs and priorities</li> </ul>
<b>Enriching people's lives</b>	Developing more socially inclusive communities through employment opportunities and skills development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote independence, health and wellbeing to all residents</li> <li>Work to provide all tenants with a stable home to increase life chances</li> <li>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</li> <li>Continue to expand employment and training opportunities for all residents including exploring and implementing opportunities for vulnerable residents</li> <li>Improve day to day housing affordability through preventative projects to tackle challenges such as fuel poverty</li> <li>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</li> </ul>

## 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"> <li>Number of new homes delivered</li> <li>Number of affordable homes delivered</li> <li>Delivery of Wheatsheaf Close, affordable self-build project</li> <li>Implementation of new Allocations Policy</li> <li>Delivery of additional GRT pitches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Numbers of people accessing information, advice and guidance</li> <li>Number of care leavers and LD residents in suitable accommodation</li> <li>% of those presenting as homeless, homeless acceptances and use of B&amp;B</li> <li>Delivery of supported housing projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>% of affordable housing stock which meets the Decent Homes Standard</li> <li>Ensure all new homes are carbon-neutral</li> <li>Adoption of a new Local Plan</li> <li>Affordable Housing SPD and Borough Design Guide</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of households lifted out of fuel poverty</li> <li>Number of residents participating in business enterprise/skills development courses</li> <li>% satisfaction levels in the annual New Homes survey</li> </ul>

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.

### **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:	<b>Housing Strategy 2020 – 2024</b>
Completed by:	Frances Haywood, Senior Strategy Officer
Has the EQIA been discussed at services team meeting:	<b><i>To be discussed at leadership teams</i></b>
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:

- 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

**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:

- 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

## 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 Update October 2019 to March 2020

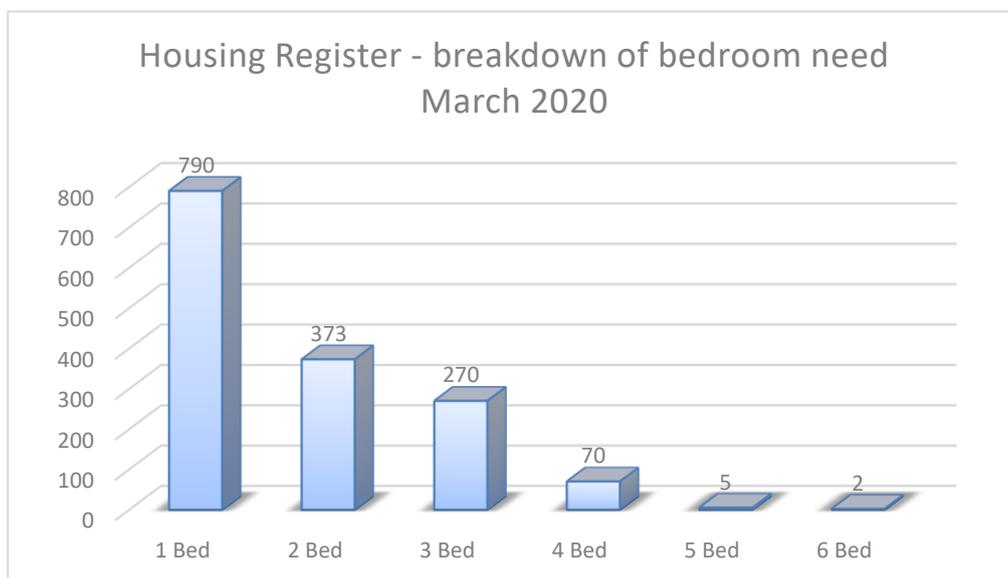
This document has been produced to provide stakeholders and colleagues with information about key housing issues in Wokingham Borough, and to underpin our Housing Strategy.

### 1. Housing Need

#### 1.1 Housing Register

At the end of the 2019/20 financial year, there were 1,510 households on the Council's Housing Register. This compares to 1,493 at the end of September 2019. Figure 1 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 (March 2020).

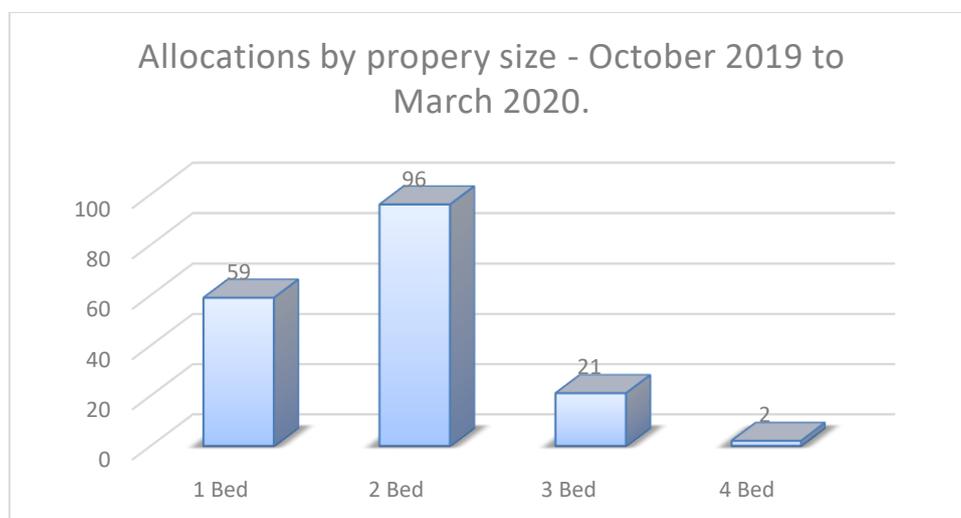


#### 1.2 Allocations

Between October 2019 and March 2020, there were 178 allocations. Most of the allocations were to new build homes and, due to Covid-19 restrictions, sign ups and viewings have been delayed. Of these 178 allocations, the highest proportion were for one and two bedroom properties, reflecting the need

from the housing register. The graphs below shows allocations by property size between October 2019 and March 2020.

Figure 2: Allocations by property size October 2019 to March 2020.

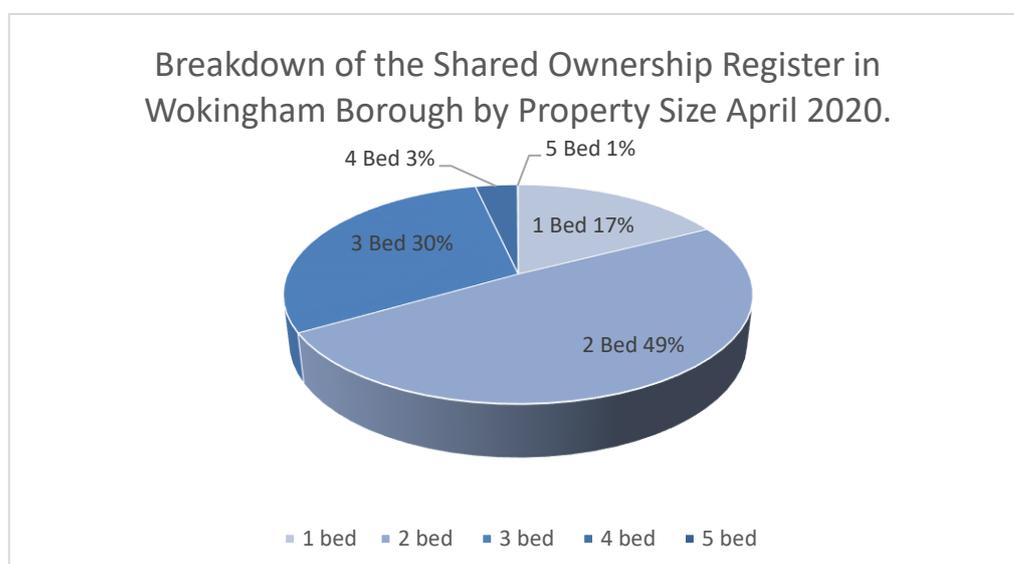


There were 212 allocations between April and September 2019, which is a total of 390 allocations during 2019/20.

### **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. As of April 2020, there were 1,595 households who have registered their interest in a shared ownership property within Wokingham Borough. Of these, 629 currently live in the local area. Of the 1,595 households currently on the register, just under half (49%) have requested two bed accommodation. A breakdown of need by bedroom size is shown in the graph below.

Figure 3: Breakdown of the Shared Ownership Register in Wokingham Borough by Property Size April 2020.



### 1.3 Homelessness Presentations

Between October 2019 and March 2020, we saw 114 homelessness presentations, 24 fewer than the first two quarters when 138 presentations were recorded. In the 2019/20 financial year, there were 252 presentations in total. The number of homelessness presentations has risen from 2018/19, when we saw 188 presentations in total.

The graph below shows the main reasons why households/individuals have declared themselves as homeless in 2019/20. Assured shorthold tenancies (ASTs) ending is the biggest reason throughout the year, as shown in the graphs below.

Figure 4: Reason for loss of previous accommodation October 2019 to March 2020.



### 1.5 Homelessness Applications

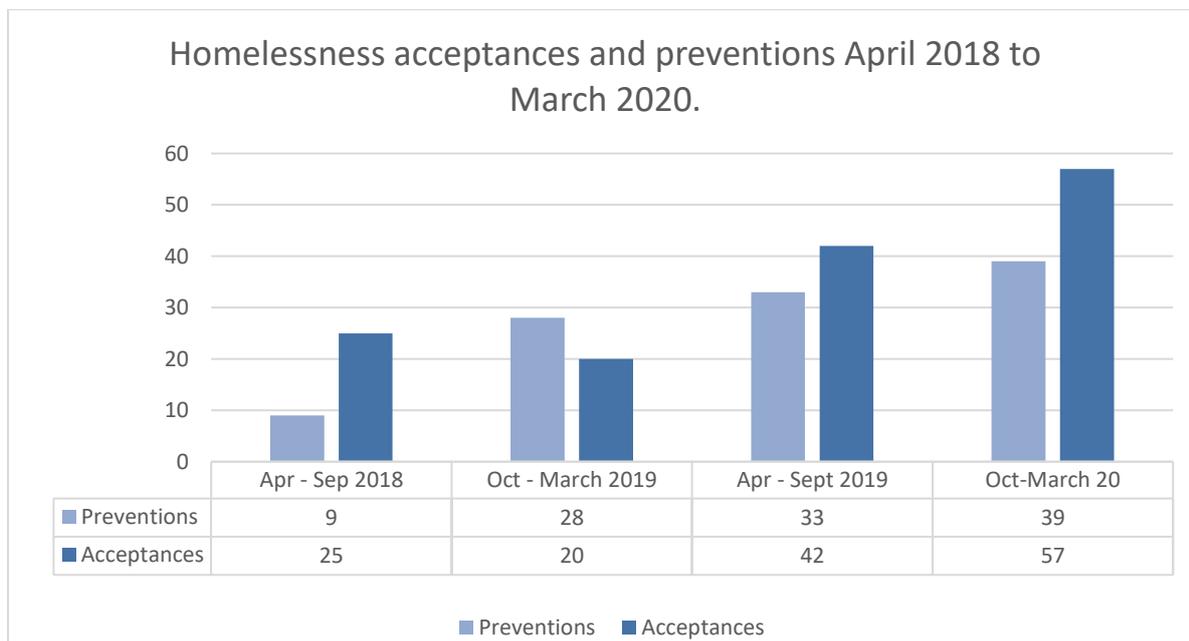
There were 57 homelessness acceptances in the last two quarters of the 2019/20 financial year, an increase of 15 from the first two quarters (42). This is compared with 20 acceptances in the first two quarters of the 18/19 financial year and 31 in the last two quarters.

The data highlights the increase the service is seeing in homelessness presentations and acceptances.

The number of preventions in the third and fourth quarter of the 19/20 financial year was 39, an increase of 6 from the first two quarters (compared with 28 in the first two quarters of the 18/19 financial year and 31 in the third and fourth quarters). All of these preventions were rent in advance payments or mediation conducted by homelessness caseworker.

The graph overleaf shows the number of homelessness acceptances and preventions from April 2018 to March 2020.

Figure 5: Homelessness acceptances and preventions April 2018 to March 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 446 completions, which consisted of 198 social rented properties, 220 shared ownership and 28 intermediate/affordable rent. We are anticipating over 300 completions in 2019/20, although we are anticipating some slippage with the economic uncertainty following Covid-19.

Figure 6: Affordable housing completions 2009/10 – 2019/20.

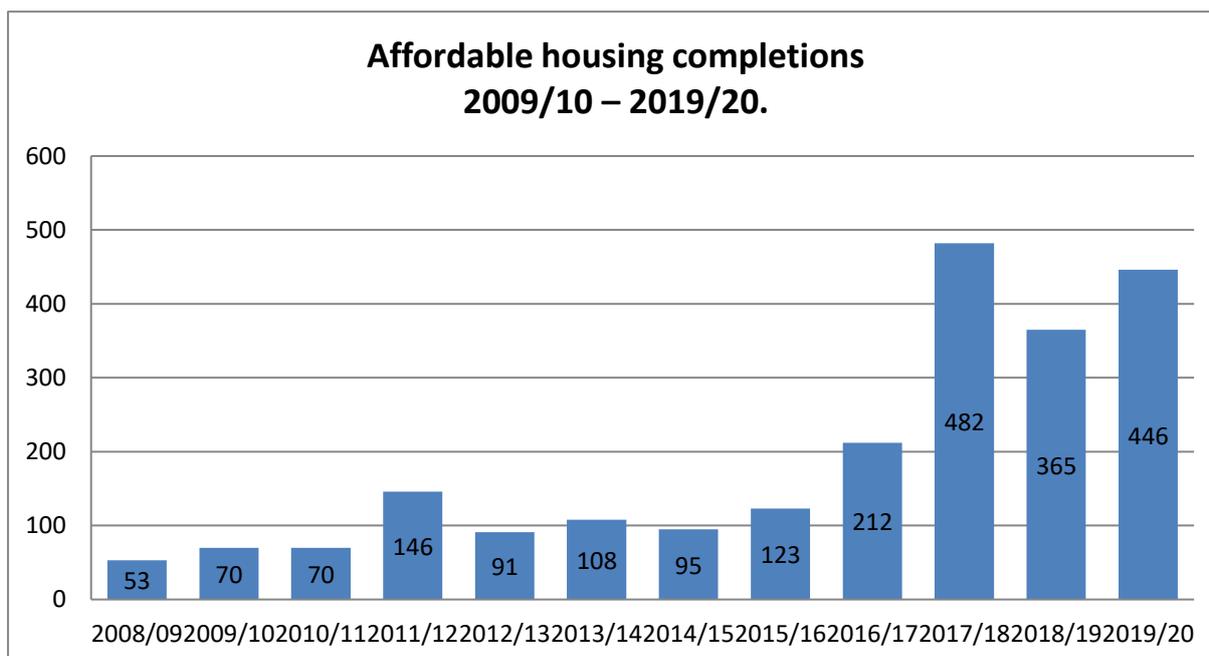
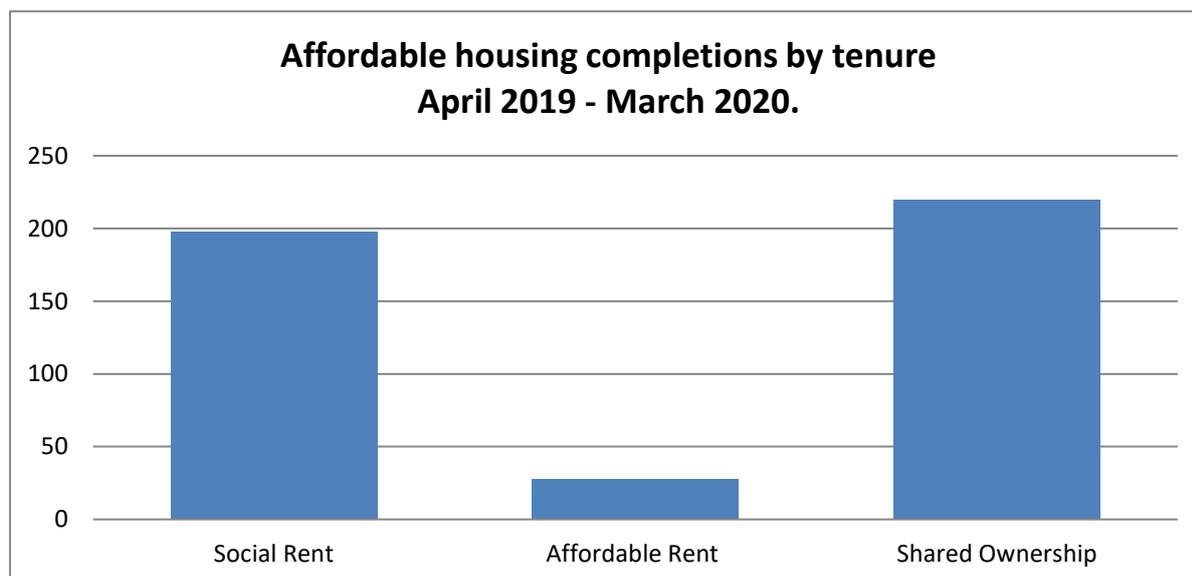


Figure 7: Affordable housing completions by tenure April 2019 – March 2020.



**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**

Rightmove's Housing Price Index for April 2020 states that there are not enough properties coming to the market to provide meaningful new seller asking prices this month (due to COVID-19). The average asking price of the daily dwindling number of properties coming to market from 8<sup>th</sup> March to 11<sup>th</sup> April saw a monthly price fall of 0.2% to £311,950, with the annual rate of increase from last April being 2.1%. New sales are 'almost impossible' under the COVID-19 restrictions, but on 13<sup>th</sup> May estate agents were advised to return to work and so the market should begin to recover. Economic forecasts do not predict a long-term strain on the housing market due to lockdown measures.

Savills UK Housing Market Update anticipates transactions in 2020 to fall to 20%-40% of the five-year average and recover to 60%-80% of this by January 2021. Savills expect to see price falls of -5% to -10% in the short term after house prices rose by 0.9% nationwide on average, reflecting pre-lockdown confidence. This forecast depends on short sharp economic downturn and may change as the economic outlook is constantly shifting.

## Local

House prices in the borough have remained steady over the last 12 months. Latest data from the HM Land Registry shows that average price of all properties in Wokingham borough was £413,115 in February 2020<sup>1</sup>. This is a 1.8% (+£7,390) annual change from April 2019 when average house prices were £405,725. The average house prices in Wokingham Borough remain significantly higher than the national average at £209,399 in February 2020. 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 – January 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

### 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. During April – December 2013 a total of 39 properties were sold across the borough through the Help to Buy scheme. The table overleaf shows there have been a further 425 properties sold through the Help to Buy scheme from January 2014 to March 2020.

<sup>1</sup> <https://landregistry.data.gov.uk/app/ukhpi/browse?from=2019-04-01&location=http%3A%2F%2Flandregistry.data.gov.uk%2Fid%2Fregion%2Fwokingham&to=2020-04-01>

Table 2: Help to Buy sales in Wokingham Borough January 2014 to March 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	2
Market Place Mews, Wokingham	Kirkby Homes	1
Shinfield Meadows, Shinfield	Bovis Homes	3
Shinfield Meadows, Shinfield	Bloor Homes	3
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
Shinfield Meadows	Bloor Homes	12
Kingsley Park at Arborfield	Redrow	3
Riseley Place, Basingstoke Road	Riseley Holdings	6
Aston Gate, Wargrave	RJ and L Edwards	3
Hatchwood Mill, Winnersh	Bovis Homes	3
Finchwood Park, Finchampstead	Legal & General	115
<b>Total</b>		<b>425</b>

### **3.3 Affordability**

Data published by the Office for National Statistics on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2020, shows that in England in 2019 full-time employees could typically expect to spend around 7.8 times their workplace-based annual earnings on purchasing a home; this is a significant improvement from the previous year, when the ratio was 8.0. Table 3 overleaf is an illustration of purchaser affordability for property types within the borough.

Table 3: Purchaser affordability by property type in Wokingham Borough January 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)
<b>All</b>	£406,721	£81,344	£92,965	£1923.85
<b>Detached</b>	£611,883	£122,377	£139,859	£2894.30
<b>Semi-detached</b>	£388,786	£77,757	£88,865	£1839.02
<b>Terraced</b>	£302,505	£60,501	£69,144	£1430.89
<b>Flat/Maisonette</b>	£217,765	£43,553	£49,775	£1030.06

### **3.4 Mortgage repossessions**

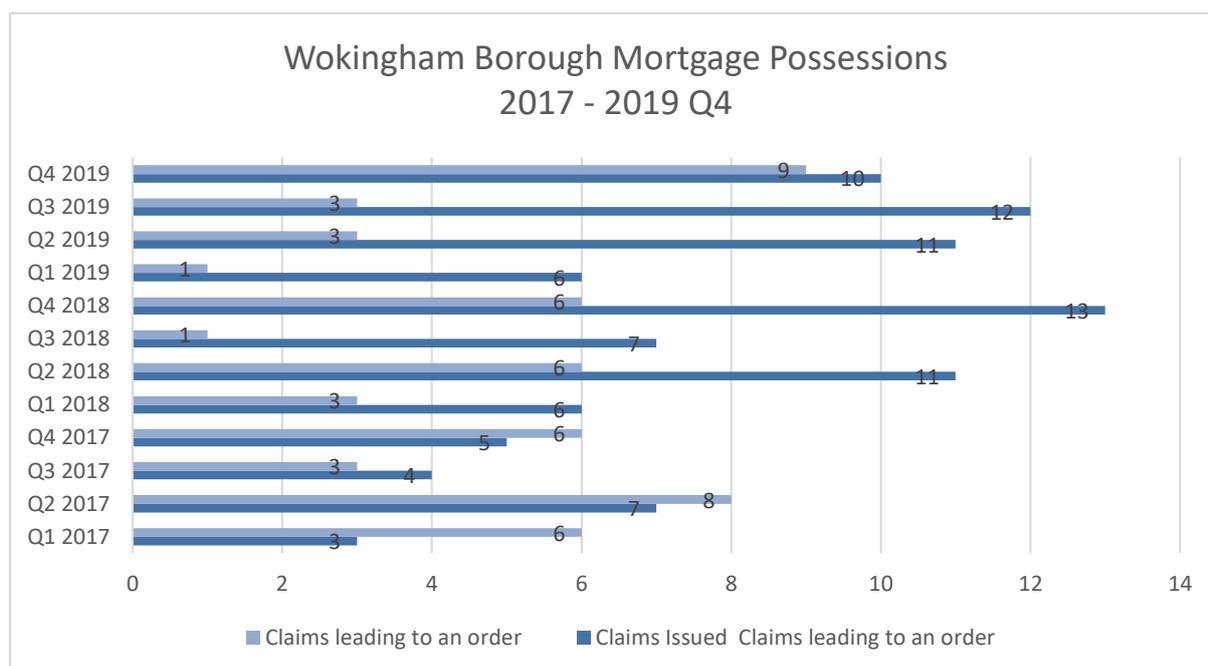
The Ministry of Justice publishes quarterly statistics on mortgage possession actions in county courts<sup>2</sup>. However, it is worth noting that the figures do not indicate how many properties have actually been repossessed. Repossessions can occur without a court order being made and not all court 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.

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 8 overleaf.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/mortgage-and-landlord-possession-statistics>

Figure 8: 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 March 2020 had risen by 1.8% to £959 compared to March 2019. The average current asking rent in Wokingham is £1,237 per calendar month.<sup>3</sup> Table 4 gives a breakdown of asking rents for privately rented homes as of April 2020, together with the applicable Local Housing Allowance (LHA) and the potential shortfall between these figures.

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

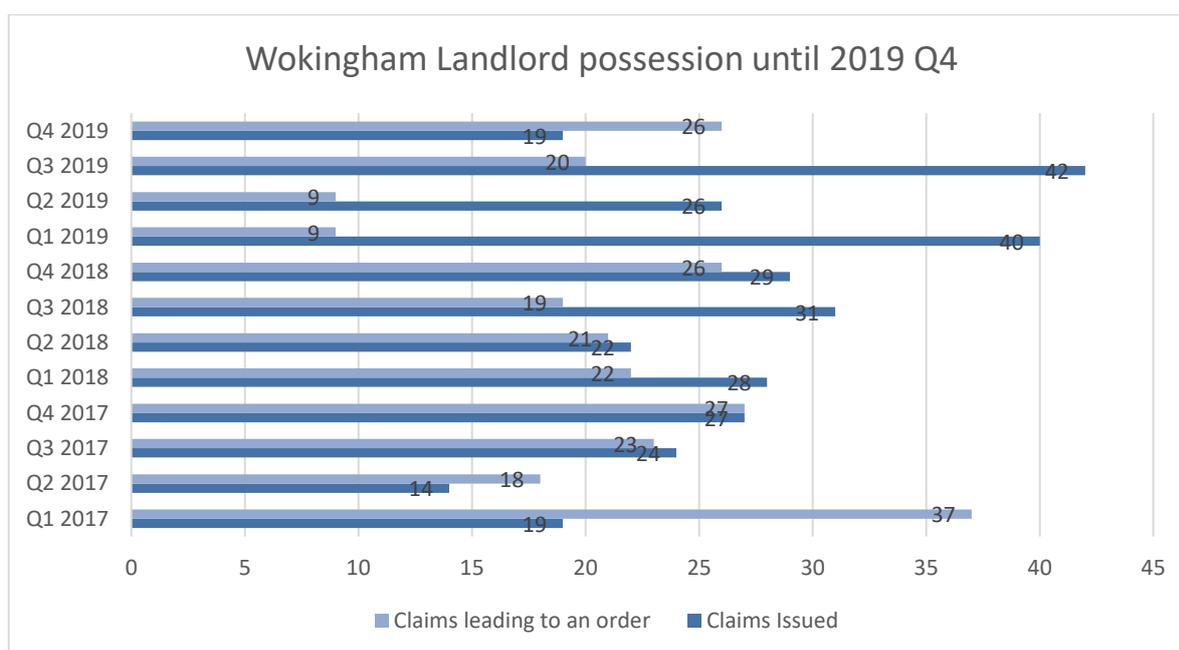
Property Type	LHA April 2020 (pcm)	Average Asking Rent (pcm)	% change in average asking rent since October 2019	Potential Shortfall (pcm)
<b>1 Bed Flat</b>	£795	£849	+11.4%	£54
<b>2 Bed Flat</b>	£950	£1073	-3.8%	£123
<b>2 Bed House</b>	£950	£1085	-0.9%	£135
<b>3 Bed House</b>	£1150.01	£1388	-2.9%	£237.99
<b>4 Bed House</b>	£1549.99	£1704	-2.5%	£154.01

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.zoopla.co.uk/market/wokingham/>

## **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. Figures for suspended possession orders are included in the data for the Figure 10. Claims issued decreased in quarter 2 of 2019 on the previous quarter, but claims leading to an order remained the same.

Figure 9: 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 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 and 29<sup>th</sup> February 2020 in line with Department for Work and Pensions reporting guidelines. The total DHP fund available for the year is £184,648. It is important to note that DHP payments are utilised by both private tenants and local authority tenants. March data was not available at the time of writing. The DHP spend in detail can be seen in the table overleaf.

Table 5: DHP spend April 2019 to February 2020.

Month	UCDHP-PTEN	UCDHP-LAHRA	Total UC pmt	Housing Benefit	Total DHP paid	Cumulative total	Fund Remaining
April	£1,851	£1,022	£2,873	£6,074	£8,947	£8,947	<b>£175,701</b>
May	£994	£2,231	£3,225	£7,615	£10,840	£19,787	<b>£164,861</b>
June	£241	£1,201	£1,442	£4,398	£5,839	£25,627	<b>£159,021</b>
July	£4,814	£2,245	£7,059	£7,092	£14,151	£39,778	<b>£144,870</b>
Aug	£1,682	£1,879	£3,560	£4,468	£8,028	£47,806	<b>£136,842</b>
Sept	£2,269	£1,991	£4,260	£3,581	£8,201	£56,007	<b>£128,641</b>
Oct	£3842.83	£4,678.64	£8,521.47	£4,634.65	£13,156.12	£69,163.57	<b>£115,484.43</b>
Nov	£3,014.11	£1,250.08	£4,264.19	£2,953.92	£7,218.11	£76,381.68	<b>£108,266.32</b>
Dec	£4,202.78	£6,240.56	£10,443.34	£7,685.27	£18,128.61	£94,510.29	<b>£90,137.71</b>
Jan	£7,253.06	£3,098.57	£10,351.63	£5,289.27	£15,640.90	£110,151.19	<b>£74,496.81</b>
Feb	£13,818.66	£1,723.35	£15,542.01	£11,252.60	£26,794.61	£136,945.80	<b>£47,702.20</b>

\*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)

### **Local Welfare Provision (LWP)**

The Local Welfare Provision (LWP) for this financial year is £23,170. In total, the Council has received 46 applications for help via the LWP in this financial year currently, as shown in the table below.

Table 6: LWP applications in 2019/20.

	Applications Received	Applications Refused	Withdrawn
April	1	0	0
May	5	1	0
June	1	0	0
Jul	9	4	0
Aug	4	1	0
Sept	6	1	0
Oct	6	1	0
Nov	2	1	0
Dec	5	0	0
Jan	4	0	0
Feb	1	0	0
Mar	2	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>		

The amounts paid each month are shown in the table overleaf.

Table 7: LWP spend in 2019/20.

<b>LWP amounts paid.</b>	
<b>April</b>	£119
<b>May</b>	£30
<b>June</b>	£4.70
<b>Jul</b>	£209
<b>Aug</b>	£1,153.91
<b>Sept</b>	£25
<b>Oct</b>	£130.00
<b>Nov</b>	£20.00
<b>Dec</b>	£585.83
<b>Jan</b>	£645.14
<b>Feb</b>	£15
<b>Mar</b>	£309.98
<b>Total for year</b>	<b>£3,247.56</b>

**Universal Credit.**

As of 5 April 2020, 633 residents were known to have applied for Universal Credit since we started recording this data.

The government announced that to help protect people's incomes from the financial impacts of coronavirus, the Universal Credit standard allowance will be increased by £1,000 a year for the next 12 months. The working tax credit basic element will be increased by the same amount.

The current standard allowance for Universal Credit is £251.77 if you are single and under 25, £317.82 if you are single and aged 25 and over, £395.20 for a couple where you are both under 25, and £498.89 for a couple where either of you are 25 or over.

The government also announced that deductions for Universal Credit or legacy benefit overpayments would be paused, as well as for Social Fund Loans and Tax Credit debts.

As of 5th April 2020, 633 residents were known to have applied for UC. Data was produced (that is available upon request) showing the start balance and current balance (at 5 April 2020). When adding up all the balances (arrears, zero balances and credit balances) for the 633 accounts, the total amount owing at the application date was £456,265.44. At 5 April 2020, the balances were £391,060.60.

This is a decrease in arrears of £65,204.84, which when divided by 633 accounts, shows us that the average arrears decrease per account is £103.01. The most recent four weekly in arrears Alternative Payment Arrangements and Third Party Direct Payments were received and credited to rent accounts on Thursday 26 March 2020. Therefore, while the average arrears reduction of £103.01 is the best to-date, this could have further improved, as at 5 April 2020 further weeks direct payments are due that will not be paid until Thursday 23 April 2020.

While this performance goes against the trend of large increases being reported in the media, we continue to understand the importance of early support for residents who apply for Universal Credit.

The table below shows the average arrears increase/decrease since April 2018.

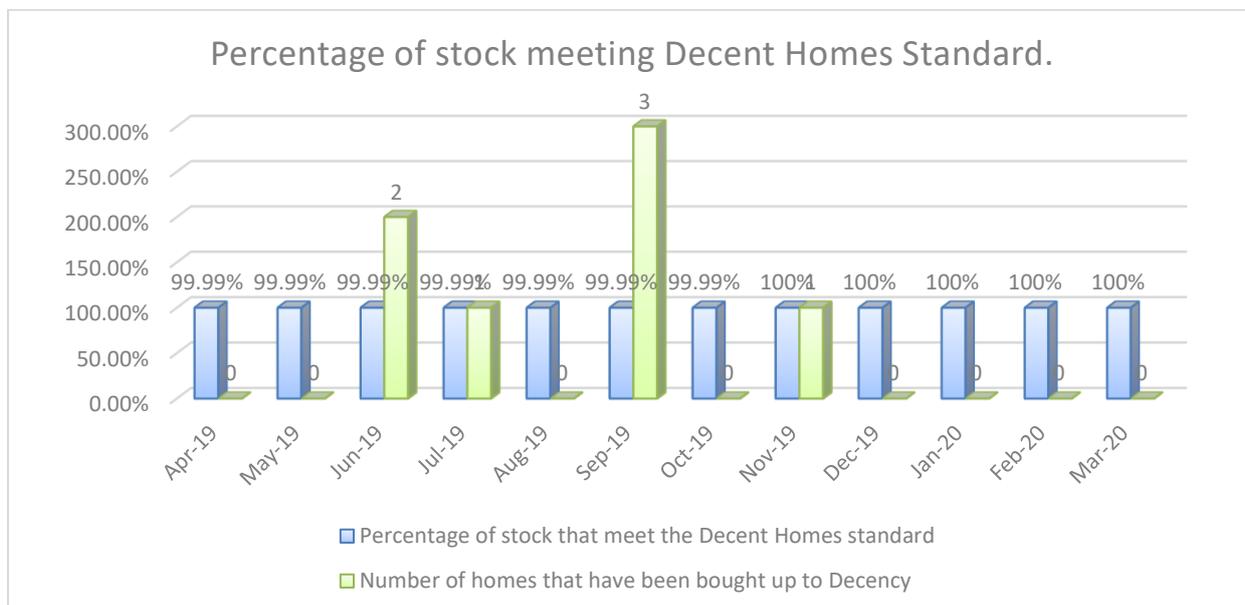
Table 8: Average arrears increase/decrease since April 2018.

Date	Number of claimants	Average arrears increase or decrease
April 2018	83	£348.66 increase
June 2018	128	£277.90 increase
October 2018	220	£60.43 increase
3 January 2019	261	£33.39 increase
3 February 2019	280	£71.35 decrease
31 March 2019	319	£58.08 decrease
9 June 2019	385	£0.76 decrease
30 June 2019	404	£0.83 decrease
4 August 2019	444	£4.86 decrease
1 September 2019	464	£5.00 decrease
6 October 2019	494	£6.05 increase
10 November 2019	534	£80.66 decrease
8 December 2019	553	£95.17 decrease
5 January 2020	563	£99.47 decrease
9 February 2020	585	£88.80 decrease
1 March 2020	601	£101.61 decrease
5 April 2020	633	£103.01 decrease

**Decent Homes**

At the end of the financial year, the percentage of stock that meets the Decent Homes Standard remains at 100%. We have been at 100% since November 2019. Please note the data includes properties that are part of the Gorse Ride Regeneration Project.

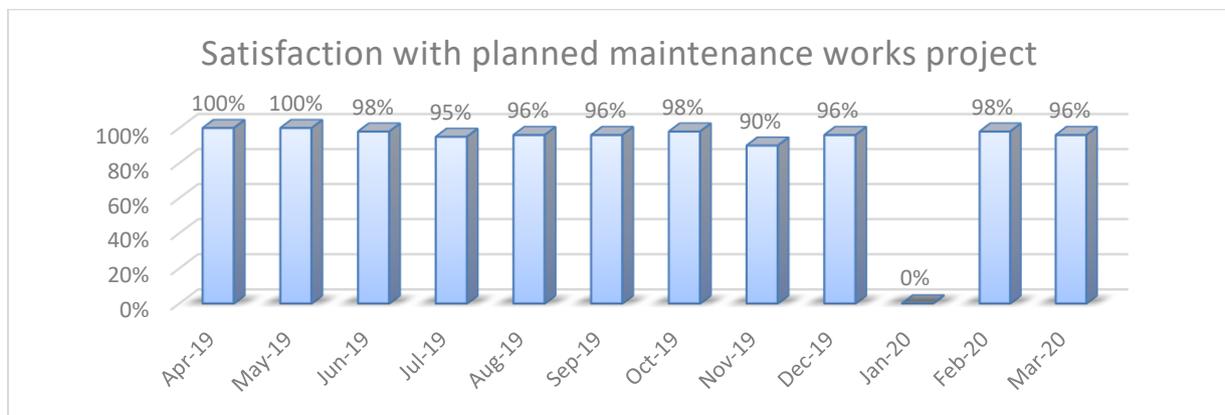
Figure 10: Percentage of stock meeting Decent Homes Standard.



At the beginning of each financial year a number of properties will fall out of Decent Homes Standards as highlighted by the Keystone reporting system. At the beginning of the 18/19 financial year this number was 27. Approximately 25 properties will fall out of Decent Homes Standard in 2020 and a further 95 in 2021. However, the bulk of 2020 work seems to be routine rather than complex and therefore we feel we will once again achieve 100% compliance during the year on the assumption that Covid-19 does not affect works over the medium term.

The service has been collecting satisfaction surveys from tenants on the windows and doors refurbishment programme. Satisfaction data is collected from this programme as it is the biggest refurbishment programme the service is currently undertaking. Satisfaction levels amongst the tenant base with the refurbishment programme has been positive with the average satisfaction level for the whole year being 97%. The graph below shows overall tenant satisfaction with the service from the programme.

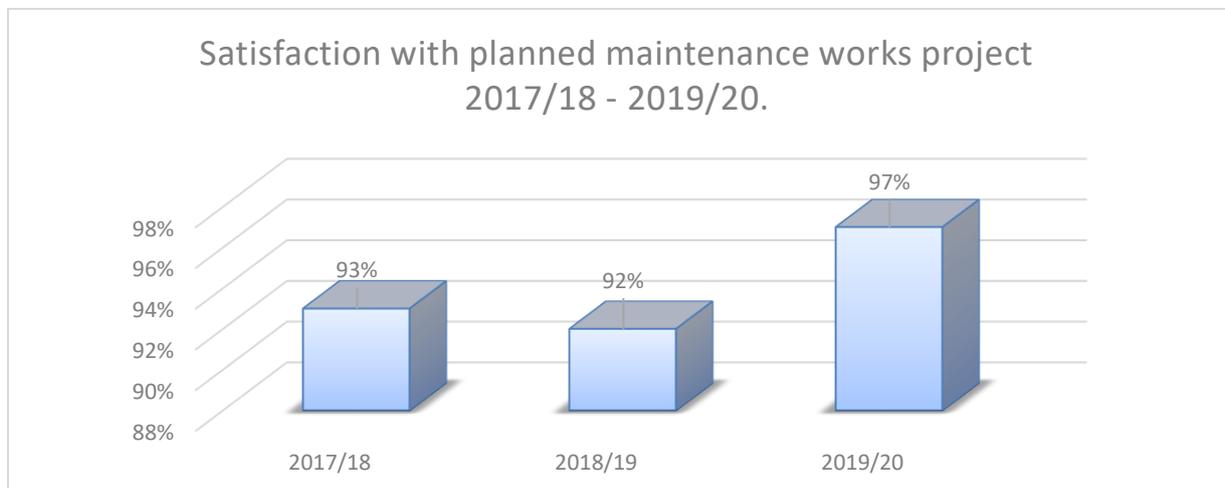
Figure 11: Satisfaction with planned maintenance works project.



Please note: the 0% figure seen in January was due to no windows or doors refurbishments taking place in that month.

This level of satisfaction for this planned maintenance project is the highest the service has seen since data on this indicator has been collected. This is shown in the graph overleaf.

Figure 12: Satisfaction with planned maintenance works project 2017/18 – 2019/20.



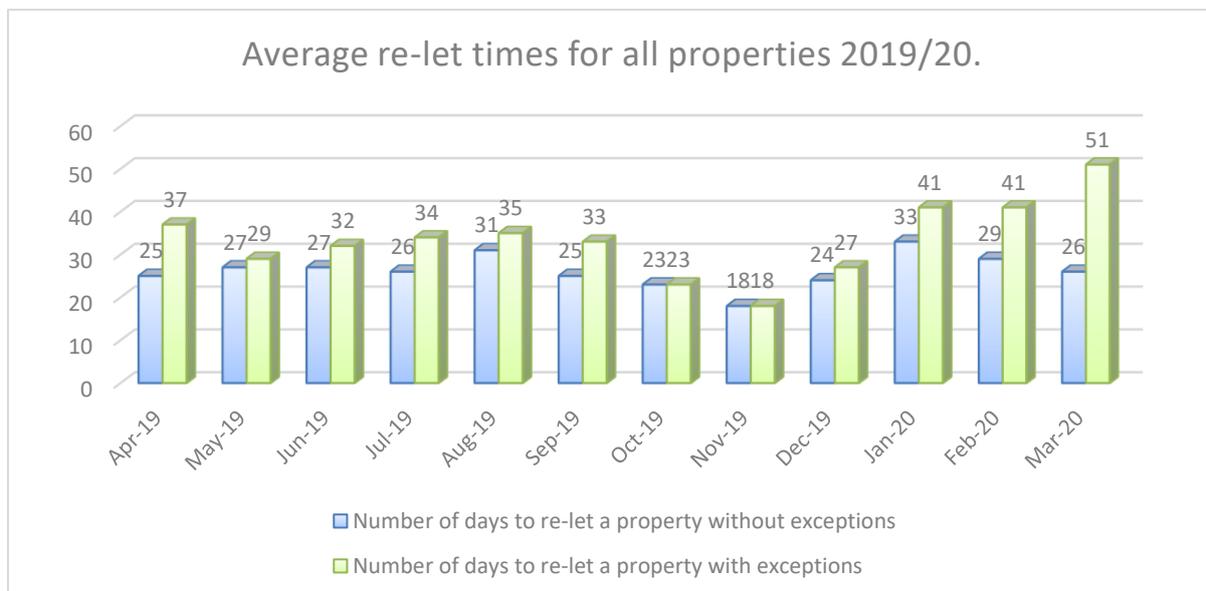
### 5.3 Voids

The average re-let time for a void (empty) property at the end of the 2019/20 financial year was 26 days, four days fewer than the target set of 30 days (compared with 29 days at the same time in the last financial year). 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.

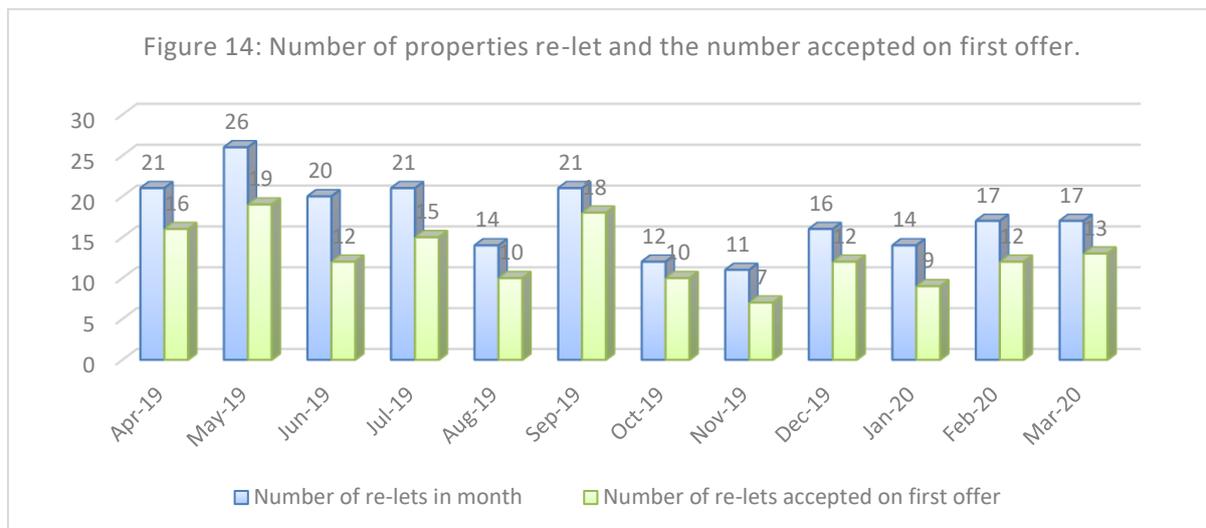
If including exception properties, the average re-let times for properties was 33 days (compared with 40 days at the same time in 2018/19 financial year). The average re-let times for all properties throughout the year can be seen in the graph below:

Figure 13: Average re-let times for all properties 2019/20.



As shown in the graph above, the service was within target for re-let times except for one month (not including exception properties). This is particularly positive, because by the end of the financial year, the service had re-let 210 properties; the highest number of re-lets in the last three years (182 in 17/18 and 201 in 18/19). The graph overleaf shows the number of properties re-let and the number accepted on the first offer.

Figure 14: Number of properties re-let and the number accepted on first offer.



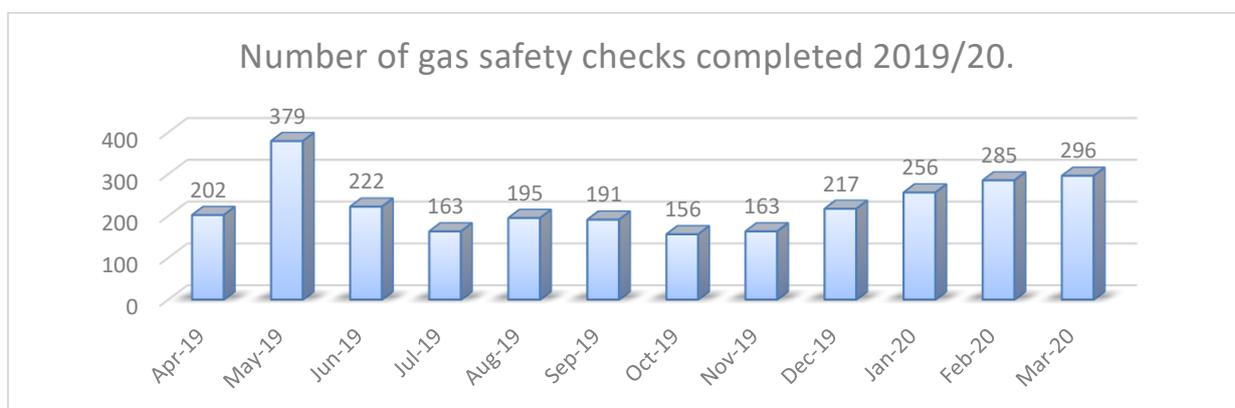
As shown above, 73% of properties re-let were accepted on the first offer. This high percentage of accepted properties is a factor in ensuring re-let times are within target.

In terms of tenant satisfaction, both standard of re-let properties and the service received during the voids process have scored well with satisfaction targets being met in both performance indicators (85% for condition of property and 90% for the overall letting service). 90% are satisfied with the property condition and 96% are satisfied with the service provided by the Voids Team. Please note, these figures incorporate eleven months' worth of data as satisfaction surveys were not returned in one month of the year.

**5.4 Gas Servicing**

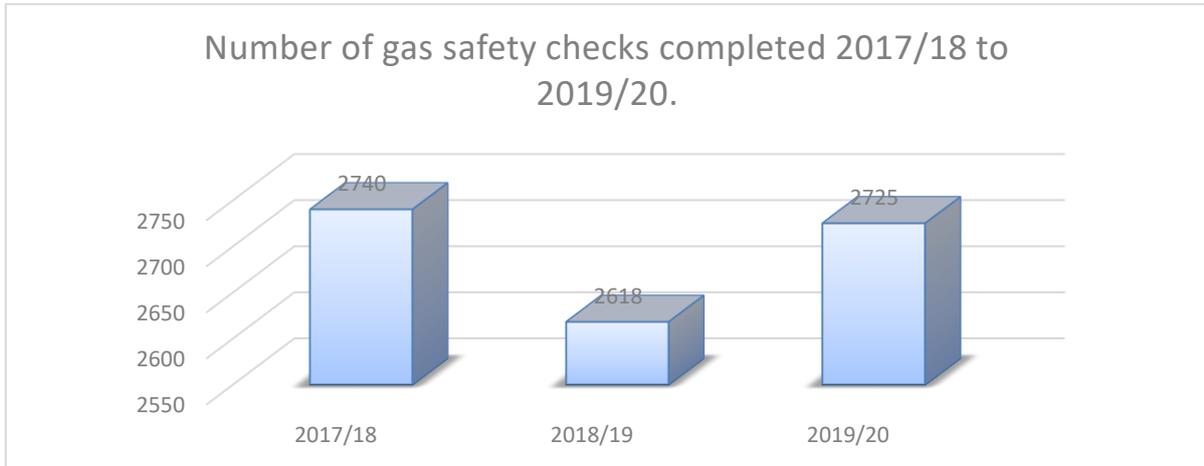
The fourth quarter of the 2019/20 financial year saw 837 gas safety checks completed, which means a total of 2,725 services completed for the year.

Figure 15: Number of gas safety checks completed 2019/20.



This is, as expected, following similar gas service number trends for the previous two financial years:

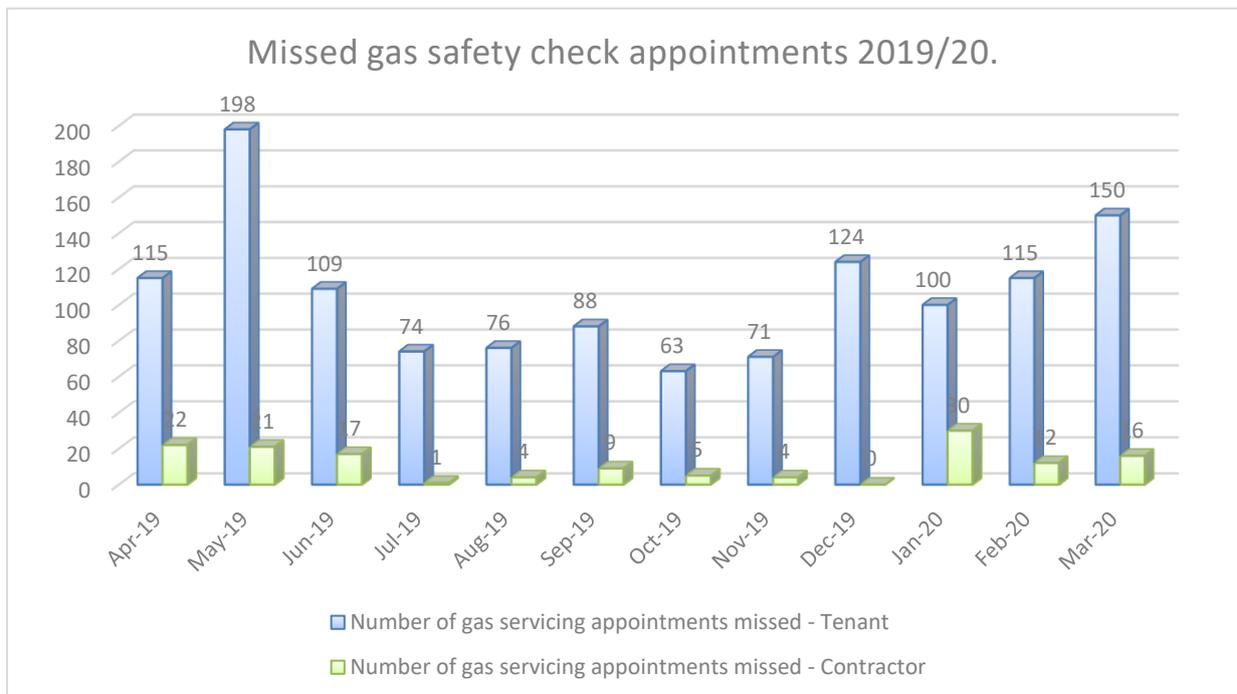
Figure 16: Number of gas safety checks completed 2017/18 to 2019/20.



It must be noted that the service had an average 100% gas service completion rate in the 19/20 and 18/19 financial years.

When looking at missed appointments, the number missed remains high, as with the 18/19 financial year. In total, there were 1,424 missed appointments of which 1,283 were attributed to tenants and 141 to the gas servicing contractor. This is an increase of 168 missed appointments from the 18/19 financial year when the service began collecting data on the indicator. Please note this figure includes cold call appointments.

Figure 17: Missed gas safety check appointments 2019/20.

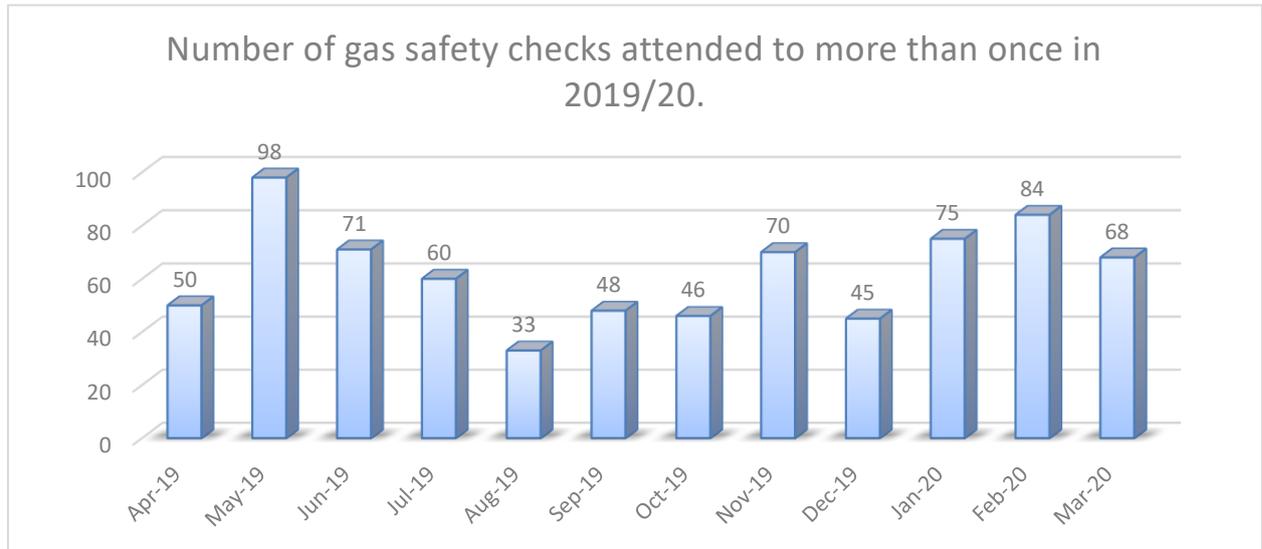


As shown in the graph above, the first and last quarters of the financial year saw high number of missed appointments; May and March in particular with over 150 appointments missed.

These high figures represent a slight concern for the service, as efforts have been made to reduce missed appointments by the Repairs Team and through communications channels such as Housing Matters. Chasing missed appointments can take up significant resource time when officers could be dealing with other matters.

The graph below highlights the number of times each month multiple visits were required to complete a gas service:

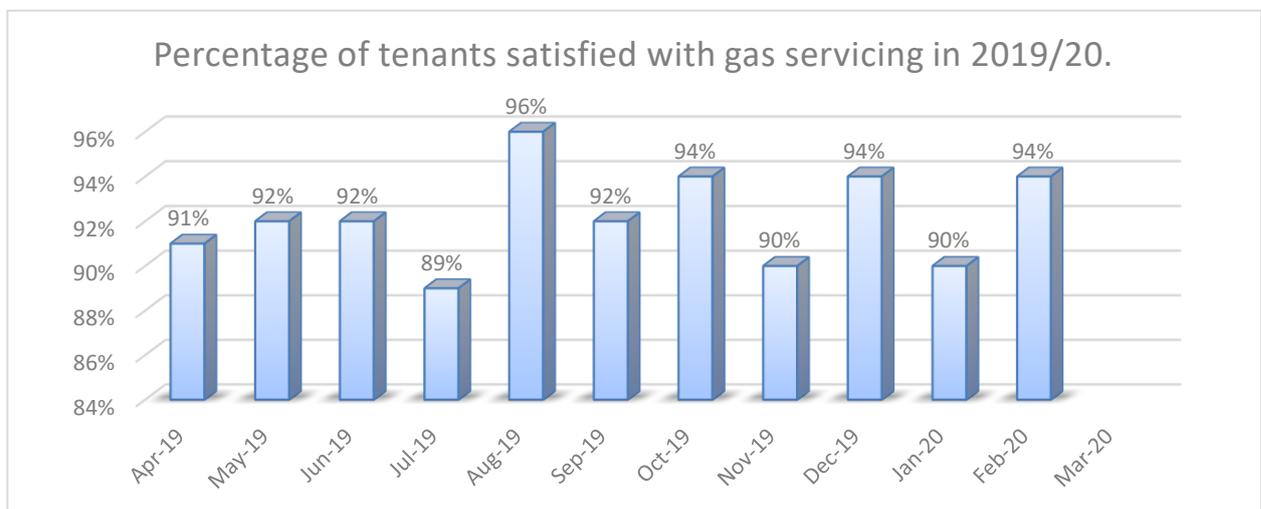
Figure 18: Number of gas safety checks attended to more than once in 2019/20.



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.

The service has also been collating tenant satisfaction figures for gas servicing in this financial year. The results have been very positive and the average satisfaction rate (for the overall service received) is 92% (against a target set of 85%):

Figure 19: Percentage of tenants satisfied with gas servicing in 2019/20.



Please note, the figure for March is 0 because no surveys were given out at this time.

## **6. Private Sector Housing**

### **6.1 Housing Related Service Requests**

A total of 474 housing related service requests were received from October 2019 to March 2020 by the Public Protection Partnership. These are broken down by complaint type in Table 9.

Table 9: Housing related service requests by complaint.

<b>Type of Complaint</b>	<b>Number of Complaints</b>
Drainage	12
Accumulations	25
Bonfire/Smoke	53
Filthy & Verminous	2
Immigration Inspections	0
Empty Properties	6
Pest Related	57
Noise	143
Asbestos	3
Light	8
Animal Advice	3
Other	162

A total of 75 complaints were received specifically related to poor housing condition between October 2019 to March 2020. A breakdown of the tenure type of complainants is below in Table 10.

Table 10: Housing related service requests by tenure.

<b>Type of Tenure</b>	<b>Number of Complaints</b>
Owner Occupied	7
Private Rented	43
LA	5
Housing Association	0
Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)	9
Mobile Home	16

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

No housing improvement notices were served between October 2019 and March 2020.

### **6.3 House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Mandatory Licensing**

A total of 77 HMOs are licensed at the current time with a further 31 in the licensing process.

## **6.4 Housing General**

### **6.4.1 Landlord Accreditation**

This scheme is currently suspended.

### **6.4.2 Park Homes and Caravan Sites**

As at March 2020, there were 55 site licences in place.

### **6.4.3 Immigration Inspections**

None completed during this period.

## **6.5 Flexible Home Improvement Loan Scheme**

Between October 2019 and March 2020, five 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.

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 – Residential Team Manager.

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<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Wokingham Borough Council Carers' Strategy 2020-2025</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	The Executive on Thursday, 29 October 2020
<b>WARD</b>	None Specific;
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	Director, Adult Social Care and Health - Matt Pope, Director, Children's Services – Carol Cammiss
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Services - Charles Margetts Executive Member for Children's Services – UllaKarin Clark

## **PURPOSE OF REPORT (INC STRATEGIC OUTCOMES)**

Following extensive consultation and engagement with carers, young carers, providers and internal stakeholders we seek approval for the Council to adopt the new Carers Strategy. The Council had a Carers' Strategy in place which ended in 2019.

This strategy articulates the strategic priorities of the Council to carers, residents, care partners and providers. It details how we will deliver improved outcomes for our residents over the next five years.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Executive approve Wokingham Borough Council's Carers' Strategy as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Our ambition is for Wokingham Borough to be one of the best boroughs for adults, carers and young carers in need of support to live, where they feel safe, included and a key part of our community. The Carers Strategy 2020-2025 sets out our approach to successfully achieving this whilst making sure people realise the desired outcomes that are important and personal to them.

14,000 people in Wokingham Borough identified themselves as a carer in the 2011 census providing unpaid care to a partner, family member or friend/neighbour (and this is expected to be higher given that many people do not relate to being carers). This is an increase on the 2001 census figures of 8.2% and shows that unpaid care has increased at a faster pace than population growth over the last decade.

The care that people provide within our communities is a valuable asset; according to the Social Market Foundation on average family carers provide 19.5 hours per week of care and there is an estimated 149 million hours of care a week being provided by family carers in the United Kingdom. If these carers were no longer able to provide care, society would need to hire an extra 4 million full time care-givers. According to a recent

report by the Department of Health and ADDAS there is a net saving of almost £4.00 to Local Authority social care budgets for every £1.00 that is spent on carers support <sup>1</sup>.

The Carers' strategy sets out our vision and strategic priorities to support carers and identifies the actions we and our partner organisations will take to achieve these in the context of challenging budgetary and demographic pressures. This strategy is aligned to the Adult Social Care strategy which focusses heavily on how the Council and its partners will prevent, reduce and delay the need for formal care and support and where possible to improve people's health and wellbeing, focusing on prevention and self-help.

The Council values the contribution that carers make to their local communities and is committed to supporting those who are unable to be self-sufficient in this essential role.

The Carers strategy highlights gaps that have been identified in our current carers' services, highlights areas where we want to develop and establishes the focus of our work over the next five years. It reflects some of the key themes inherent in the Carers Action Plan 2018-2020: Supporting carers today (Department of Health & Social Care, June 2018). Identifying and engaging with carers will be a key priority for the Council and its partners, given that we have 14,000 carers in the borough. In addition it is crucial that we develop a local offer that ensures carers are better informed about the services and support available to them with clear pathways and a whole family approach to assessments.

The strategy is for a period of five years, 2020 – 2025. Once agreed by Executive we will work with our partners to deliver the priorities set out. Over the next five years (2020-2025), our priorities will be:

- Identifying and recognising carers
- Supporting young carers
- Working carers
- Enabling carers to have a life outside of caring

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[https://www.local.gov.uk/search?cx=000243444332556997522%3Aejuacxcsewy&cof=FORID%3A11&ie=ISO-8859-1&query=economic+case+for+local+investment+in+carer+support&op=Search&form\\_build\\_id=form-MRgDWnjku\\_y1GeH8lcEHinlkjoMrUbHPHTZ7iRxWKc&form\\_id=search\\_form\\_input](https://www.local.gov.uk/search?cx=000243444332556997522%3Aejuacxcsewy&cof=FORID%3A11&ie=ISO-8859-1&query=economic+case+for+local+investment+in+carer+support&op=Search&form_build_id=form-MRgDWnjku_y1GeH8lcEHinlkjoMrUbHPHTZ7iRxWKc&form_id=search_form_input)

## **BACKGROUND**

The Carers Strategy ensures that as a local authority we are able to meet our statutory responsibilities to carers and young carers as determined by the Care Act 2014 and Children and Families Act 2014.

Adult carers will have:

- Support to look after their own health and well-being.
- Receive services which will support them in their caring role to prevent, reduce or delay the need for other care and support for the person they care for
- Have a range of support and resources to enable them to have a life outside of caring
- Get the information and advice that they need relating to care. This includes breaks from caring and should be tailored to an individual following assessment
- Carers have a right to an assessment, and where eligible, support to meet their needs

Under the Care Act 2014 and Children and Families Act 2014, local authorities must provide young carers with:

- An assessment whether they are currently caring or intend to care. Assessments must consider the impact of caring in relation to their education, employment, well-being, and personal development, physical, mental and emotional health. Their views must be taken into account about what they want to happen
- A transition assessment before their 18th birthday

The Government's National Carers Action Plan 2018-2020 builds on the National Carers Strategy 2008 which has been adopted by successive governments. This provides a framework to how local authorities may implement the act:

- Creating services and systems that work for carers
- Employment and financial well-being
- Supporting young carers
- Recognising and supporting carers in the wider community and society
- Building research and evidence to improve outcomes for carers

The Carers Strategy will support the Council in discharging its statutory duties under the Care Act 2014 and Children and Families Act 2014.

The Council currently spends £402,000. per annum on carers support services which are commissioned from the voluntary sector. A further £690,000. is also spent on residential respite. These sums come from the council's total budget for Adult Social Care of £49.6 million per annum. Carers' services offer good value for money in preventing and delaying people from needing statutory services. Currently just 2% of our Adult Social Care budget is spent on supporting carers.

Locally 14,000 people in Wokingham Borough identified themselves as a carer in the 2011 census (and this is expected to be higher given that many people do not relate to being carers). Of these 230 were aged 16 or under and 489 were aged 16-24. There are 2,300 people in Wokingham Borough who provide 50 hours or more unpaid care per week. 3,000 carers are over the age of 65, this is predicted to rise by 35% by 2030 and the number of carers over 80 will rise by 70%.

The Carers' Strategy will be critical in helping the Council plan for this demand over the next 5 years, particularly in terms of preventing, reducing and delaying the need for formal care and support. It will drive the development of commissioning and spending plans that ensure:

- Value for money
- Spending is managed within the Council's resource limits
- Effective and efficient markets are developed and managed for support and care and the Voluntary and Community Sector
- Improved and better outcomes are delivered for people needing support and their carers.

## **BUSINESS CASE**

The Carers Strategy will allow the Council to understand and plan for the changing demographic profile and the demand for services in the context of a challenging financial position and a growing and aging population. Where appropriate, the Council will prevent, reduce and delay the need for people to access formal care and support.

The strategy sets out the Council's future ambitions and desired outcomes it wants to achieve for carers, through a clearly articulated ambition with a focus on promoting independence and a strength based approach.

By 2025 Wokingham Borough will be the best borough for adults, carers and young carers in need of support to live, where they feel safe, are valued and included as a key part of our community. The outcomes we want to achieve are:

- Increased identification of carers
- Carers supported to access community assets
- Improved and accessible information and advice
- Reduced loneliness and isolation
- Improved physical, and mental well being
- Improved life chances for young carers
- Better support for working carers
- Carers enabled to take a break

Investing in carers services has been a proven way of preventing or delaying the need for statutory services. The Council wants to support carers to continue in their much valued role, so they can live happier and more independently for longer.

## **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)	£402,000.	Yes	Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£402,000.	Yes	Revenue

Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£402,000.	Yes	Revenue
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<b>Other Financial Information</b>
None

<b>Stakeholder Considerations and Consultation</b>
Consultation has already taken place, please see above

<b>Public Sector Equality Duty</b>
Please find Equalities Impact Assessment attached

<b>Climate Emergency – <i>This Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to playing as full a role as possible – leading by example as well as by exhortation – in achieving a carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030</i></b>
During the life time of the strategy, some services will be recommissioned due to procurement regulations and to ensure they are in line with our strategic priorities, offer high quality to residents and provide value for money. As such a time we will ensure that any environmental considerations are taken into account.

<b>List of Background Papers</b>
WBC Carers Strategy 2020-2025 EQIA Population profile

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# Wokingham Borough Council Carers' Strategy

## 2020-25

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## FOREWARD

BY THE DIRECTORS OF ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES.

**Adult Social Care values the difference that carers make to the quality of life of many of the most vulnerable people in our community; older people, people with a disability or those with a long term illness.**

Wokingham Borough Council wants to ensure that those people who provide unpaid care for others are able to have a quality of life where they are able to have a life outside of caring, they can meet with friends or family, be in employment and take part in recreational activities and interests.

Our population in Wokingham is growing, year on year people are living longer and as a result the number of unpaid carers is growing in our community. This is happening at the same time as we have seen funding reduced.

The Carers Strategy sets out how we will approach these challenges over the next five years, how we will respond to the needs of carers in our community ensuring the most vulnerable receive services and working with our partners in the Voluntary Sector and Health Services to enable carers to have access to information, advice and support so that they may live fulfilled, independent lives.

### **Matt Pope**

Director of Adult Social Care

**Childrens Services have developed a shared vision with our partners to enable us to improve outcomes for children and young people across the Borough of Wokingham who having caring responsibilities.**

There are many young carers who live in our community providing support in their families, to a parent, grandparent or siblings. This strategy sets out our ambition to ensure these children and young people do not go un-noticed in our community.

The Carers Strategy includes our vision for young carers, so that they are afforded the same opportunities to engage in activities that other children and young people who do not having caring responsibilities have access to. We want them to be able to achieve in education, to be safe and healthy both physically and emotionally, to enjoy social recreation activities, and to make the successful transition into adulthood.

Within our Carers Strategy a number of action points set out how we will support our young carers to enable them to reach their full potential. It builds on our past successes and clearly sets out a direction for our future.

### **Carol Cammiss**

Director of Children's Services

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our collective vision is to enable all carers in Wokingham, children, young people and adults, to be able to access the support they need and to be recognised and valued in their community.

Our ambition is for Wokingham Borough to be the best borough for young carers and adult carers to live, a Borough where they feel safe and are well supported, are valued and included as a key part of our community.

The care that people provide within our communities is a valuable asset; according to the [Social Market Foundation](#) (SMF) on average family carers provide 19.5 hours per week of care and there is an estimated 149 million hours of care a week being provided by family carers in the United Kingdom. If these carers were no longer able to provide care, society would need to hire an extra 4 million full time care-givers. Locally 14,000 people in Wokingham Borough identified themselves as a carer in the 2011 census (and this is expected to be higher given that many people do not relate to being carers). Of these 230 were aged 16 or under and 489 were aged 16-24. 3,000 carers are over the age of 65, this is predicted to rise by 35% by 2030 and the number of carers over 80 will rise by 70%.

There are 2,300 people in Wokingham Borough who provide 50 hours or more unpaid care per week. Young carers, on average, provide 25 hours a week of care, this is equivalent to £12,000 per year on a part time carers' wage.

Despite this only 553 carers are known to Wokingham Borough Council (WBC), the Council values the role of carers and acknowledges that if it was not for carers, the impact on the social care would be immeasurable both in terms of staffing and financially. According to a recent report by the Department of Health and ADASS there is a net saving of almost £4.00 to Local Authority social care budgets for every £1.00 that is spent on carers support<sup>1</sup>. If the numbers from the SMF were applied, this could equate to 243,000 hours being delivered per week by the 14,000 carers in the borough. Therefore we must ensure that carers have access to the support they need when they need it. The current spend on carers services in the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) is £402, 000 and a further £690,000 is spent annually on providing respite. However although this may not be their primary target group the majority of the VCS services provide support to carers too.

The work WBC do for carers is governed by policies and legislation such as The Care Act 2014<sup>2</sup>, Children and Families Act 2014<sup>3</sup> and the Carers Action Plan 2018-2020: Supporting carers today<sup>4</sup>. This strategy sets out our vision

<sup>1</sup>ADASS (2018) Economic Case for Local Carer Investment [https://www.local.gov.uk/search?cx=000243444332556997522%3Aejuacxsewy&cof=FORID%3A11&ie=ISO-8859-1&query=economic+case+for+local+investment+in+carer+support&op=Search&form\\_build\\_id=form-MRgDWnjkkuy1GeH8lcEHinlkoMrUbHPHTZ7iRxWkC&form\\_id=search\\_form\\_input](https://www.local.gov.uk/search?cx=000243444332556997522%3Aejuacxsewy&cof=FORID%3A11&ie=ISO-8859-1&query=economic+case+for+local+investment+in+carer+support&op=Search&form_build_id=form-MRgDWnjkkuy1GeH8lcEHinlkoMrUbHPHTZ7iRxWkC&form_id=search_form_input)

<sup>2</sup>HM Gov.UK (2014) Care Act 2014 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents/enacted>

<sup>3</sup>HM Gov.UK (2014) Children and families Act 2014 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents/enacted>

<sup>4</sup>DoHSC (2018) Carers Action Plan 2018-2020 [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/713781/carers-action-plan-2018-2020.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/713781/carers-action-plan-2018-2020.pdf)

and strategic priorities for carers and young carers over the next five years. It details our approach to successfully achieving our ambition whilst making sure people realise the desired outcomes that are important and personal to them.

### Highlights and key successes

All of our carer services were reviewed in 2017-2018 as part of our VCS review. In the last 12 months WBC has established a working group and carers have been able to have direct input into the design of a new carers' page on our website that has improved their ability to access information.

We also worked with carers, providers and social workers to design a new on-line assessment form which has been included on our new carers' page. Carers can also request an assessment by phoning the Health Hub for Adult Social Care.

We have developed the online tools that carers are able to access via our Digital Resource for Carers. Carers are able to access advice and information, find out what resources are available to support them in their caring role and online training 24 hours a day.

- Over 500 carers are registered with Wokingham Outreach Service (331 carers are registered with the emergency respite support service)
- There are currently 16 adult carer support groups operating in the Wokingham Borough
- 37.1% of carers reported that they had as much social contact as they would like
- 62.3% of carers find it easy to find information about support
- 70.6% of carers report that they have been included or consulted in discussion about the person they care for

Our Young Carers Service has ensured that children and young people with caring responsibilities are actively involved in service development. A Young Carers Forum has been established that gives young carers a voice and ensures their views are heard.

Young Carers (the commissioned provider) have grown the number of children and young people that they work with by over 700% with over 200 young carers currently registered with this service. They are providing regular groups and activities for young carers, drop in sessions and peer support groups as well as developing

relationships with schools and delivering training to teachers on identifying young carers in both primary and secondary schools. As a result of the service we have seen social isolation and loneliness reduce.

- Young Carers service working in 7 primary schools and 10 secondary schools
- Young Carers Leads established in 2 secondary schools
- Young Carers Schools Award established in 2 secondary schools
- There are currently 2 young carer support groups, a number of drop in sessions and peer support groups and a Young Carers' Forum operating in Wokingham Borough
- There is a 12 month programme for young carers activities

### PURPOSE OF STRATEGY

The Carers Strategy will support us in achieving our vision as determined in the Council Plan.

Our vision in Wokingham Borough is to provide people and their carers with: **safe, appropriate, timely and quality support that prevents, reduces or delays the need for ongoing care; and gives people choice and control, makes a positive difference to their lives and maximises their wellbeing and independence in their local community.**

Our priorities are:

- Keep people safe
- Prevent, reduce and delay the need for formal care and support
- Involve people in their care and support
- Work in partnership and commission services that deliver quality and value for money

Our ambition is for Wokingham Borough to be the best borough for young carers and adult carers to live, a Borough where they feel safe and are well supported, are valued and included as a key part of our community.

WBC values the vital contribution that carers make to their local communities and is committed to supporting those who are unable to be self-sufficient in this essential role. The Council want carers to have the support they need. This includes having the right information available at the right time, access to a life outside caring, full access to education and/or employment, leisure activities and being able to keep in touch with friends and family. This strategy sets out our vision and strategic priorities to support carers and identifies the actions we and our partner organisations will take to realise this, whilst acknowledging the context a challenging budgetary position and growing demographic pressures.



This strategy is for all carers, young carers and adult carers living in the Wokingham Borough. The strategy is linked to a number of other WBC strategies and priorities and should be read in conjunction with our Market Position Statement, Learning Disability Strategy and the Voluntary and Community Sector strategy. In addition it is also informed by: Emotional and Well Being Strategy, Health and Well Being Strategy, Children & Young People Plan, JSNA and Wokingham Neglect Strategy.

The strategy and priorities have been developed with carers and carer providers. It builds on our successes in meeting the needs of some of our most vulnerable people in our community and identifying gaps and opportunities to develop services.

Delivering our carers strategy will be a collaborative approach which will involve Adults and Children's Services working together with our Health, VCS and independent care providers.

## BACKGROUND

### Who is a Carer?

A carer is someone who helps another person who needs support due to illness, age, disability, substance misuse or mental health problems. Adults, Children and Young People can be carers. Carers may support someone with personal care, household tasks, finances or emotional support. This is not the same as someone who is paid to provide care professionally or care from a VCS organisation.



We may all become a carer at any given time, sometimes this is for a short period of time, for example to support a family member recuperate following hospital discharge or we may be a carer on a long term basis. Some carers will care for more than one person, for example an elderly parent and a child with a disability, this is called 'sandwich' caring. There are also complex situations where carers, particularly older couples, care for each other. This can happen, for example when one person may have a physical disability whilst the other needs emotional support, this is called 'mutual caring'.

This strategy has been coproduced by WBC in partnership with local VCS organisations that provide services to both adult and young carers, and in consultation with adult carers and young carers which took place between August and September 2018. Adult and young carers were offered a number of opportunities to take part in this process; they could complete our online survey, they could complete our postal survey, and they could attend a number of drop in sessions that were held both in the daytime and the evening. Additionally, a series of workshops, focus groups and interviews were conducted over a number of months.

A survey was sent to 563 carers. Young carers received details of the survey via a newsletter and were

encouraged and supported to complete it. The survey was promoted widely through provider groups and newsletters as well as being sent directly to all carers who are registered with WBC. We received 197 completed carer's surveys, in addition to this 20 people attended our public consultation sessions; we had an overall response rate of 35%. Of these respondents 49% of carers reported being retired, whilst 51% of carers reported being in employment or education. 61% of carers reported providing over 50 hours of care per week. The services used mostly by carers is information and advice, followed by support groups. (Appendix 1. Wokingham Borough Population Profile)

### OUR VISION

The council values the role of carers within our community and wants carers to have the support they need. This includes having the right information available at the right time, access to a life outside caring, education, employment and leisure activities and being able to keep in touch with friends and family.

**OUR VISION IS TO ENABLE ALL CARERS IN WOKINGHAM TO BE ABLE TO ACCESS THE SUPPORT THEY NEED AND TO BE RECOGNISED AND VALUED IN THEIR COMMUNITY**

### OUR PRIORITIES

A number of key themes emerged during the consultation process; we have analysed these responses in the context of local need as well as national and local strategies. These have been examined in light of our statutory responsibilities as determined in the Care Act 2014 and Children and Families Act 2014. A number of priorities were agreed after consulting widely with carers, VCS organisations and health and social care professionals. These priorities will form the key tenets on which our 'Carers Offer' will be developed and reflect some of the key themes inherent in the *Carers Action Plan 2018-2020: Supporting carers today* (Department of Health & Social Care, June 2018).

- Identifying & recognising carers including seldom heard carers (military, travellers, LGBT, young carers, working carers, BAMER, mental health, substance abuse)
- Supporting Young Carers
- Working carers – empowering working age carers
- Enabling carers to have a life outside of caring (recreation, health & well-being, learning & education)

Our aim is to work in partnership to develop services and systems that work for carers. Working in partnership with VCS organisations, and key health and social care professionals will ensure the success of this strategy. We will continue to listen to carers and work with them to make sure our systems work for them.

### NATIONAL CONTEXT: ADULTS

In 2016 the government put out a call for evidence, *How can we improve support for carers?*<sup>5</sup>. The most frequently mentioned support reported to be helpful for adult carers included: regular respite, sitting service or day care, financial support (e.g. direct payments/personal budgets) advice and information about how to be a carer and the support available, and mental health support or counselling. This was not dissimilar to the support mentioned by young carers: regular respite to allow time for study and other activities, peer support, forums and regular group activities with other young carers to help share experiences, network and have fun. As well as mental health support/counselling, raising awareness amongst teachers and schools about young carers and help to be identified as a young carer. The intelligence gathered informed the Government's *National Carers Action Plan 2018 -2020: Supporting carers today*<sup>6</sup>.

This Action Plan builds on the National Carers Strategy 2008 which has been adopted by successive governments with reference to the legislation on carers' rights as determined in the Care Act 2014<sup>7</sup> which states all carers are entitled to a needs assessment in their own right. This right was also extended to young carers in the Children and Families Act 2014<sup>8</sup>.

The Action Plan has been developed with a view to: increasing the number of employers who are aware of responsibilities of caring and the impact this has on their workforce; support health and social care professionals to be better at identifying, valuing and working with carers; improve access to appropriate support for carers, including respite care and carers breaks; improve the evidence base to inform future policy and decisions; ensure that the needs of carers are recognised in relevant government strategies such as *Fuller Working Lives*<sup>9</sup> and *Improving Lives: the Future of Work, Health and Disability*

<sup>5</sup> DoHSC (2018) How can we improve support for carers? [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/713695/response-to-carers-call-for-evidence.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/713695/response-to-carers-call-for-evidence.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> DoHSC (2018) Carers Action Plan 2018-2020 [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/713781/carers-action-plan-2018-2020.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/713781/carers-action-plan-2018-2020.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> HM Gov.UK (2014) Care Act 2014 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents/enacted>

<sup>8</sup> HM Gov.UK (2014) Children and families Act 2014 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents/enacted>

<sup>9</sup> HM Gov. UK (2017) Fuller Working Lives: a partnership approach <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fuller-working-lives-a-partnership-approach>

<sup>10</sup> HM Gov.UK (2017) Improving Lives: the future of Work, Health and disability [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/663399/improving-lives-the-future-of-work-health-and-disability.PDF](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/663399/improving-lives-the-future-of-work-health-and-disability.PDF)

<sup>11</sup> Carersweek.org (2018) Supporting Carers to be Healthy and Connected [https://www.carersweek.org/images/Resources/CW18\\_Research\\_Report.pdf](https://www.carersweek.org/images/Resources/CW18_Research_Report.pdf)

The action plan will be at 'the heart of' the forthcoming social work green paper and is based around 5 key themes:

- Services and systems that work for carers
- Employment and financial well-being
- Supporting young carers
- Recognising and supporting carers in the wider community and society
- Building research and evidence to improve outcomes for carers

It is generally recognised that the health of carers is not as good as someone of a similar age who does not have a caring role. This is reflected in the physical and mental health of both adult and young carers, with those aged 18-24 most likely to say they have suffered from mental health problems and carers in paid work suffering from stress, anxiety and depression. Carers struggling to make ends meet were most likely to report a negative impact on their physical health together with those caring around the clock. Supporting Carers to be Healthy and Connected: Research Summary for Carers Week 2018<sup>11</sup> found:

- 72% of carers said they had suffered poor mental health as a result of caring
- 61% of carers said they had suffered physical ill health as a result of caring
- 57% of carers expect their mental health to get worse in the next 2 years
- 58% expect their physical health to get worse in the next 2 years
- 35% of carers anticipate that they will be able to provide less or no care in the future because of poor mental health
- 43% of carers expect that they will be able to provide less or no care in the future because of poor physical health

The Care Act 2014 put in place significant new rights for carers in England including:

- A focus on promoting wellbeing.
- A duty on local councils to prevent, reduce and delay need for support, including the needs of carers.
- A right to a [carer's assessment](#) based on the appearance of need.
- A right for carers' eligible needs to be met.
- A duty on local councils to provide information and advice to carers in relation to their caring role and their own needs.
- A duty on NHS bodies (NHS England, clinical commissioning groups, NHS trusts and NHS foundation trusts) to co-operate with local authorities in delivering the Care Act functions.

## NATIONAL CONTEXT: YOUNG CARERS

The Children and Families Act 2014 amended the Children Act to make it easier for young carers to get an assessment of their needs and to introduce 'whole family' approaches to assessment and support. Local authorities must offer an assessment where it appears that a child is involved in providing care. A 'young carer' is defined as 'a person under 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person'<sup>12</sup>.

On a national level, in recent years there has been a significant drive to raise the profile of young carers within our communities. Recognition of the value and importance of the caring role has been reflected in government legislation and policies. WBC draws upon the national context to inform its' own strategic policies.

The lives of young carers in England (Department for Education: January 2017<sup>13</sup>) research report builds on previous reports on young carers aged 5 – 17 years of age which have identified the long term impact that caring can have on a young person's transition to adulthood and their overall life chances.

The study evaluated data provided by parents of young carers in comparison to, wherever possible, data provided directly by the young carer themselves and a control group (children/young people who are not carers). The report was commissioned by the DfE to measure the impact that recent legislative changes have had on the lives of young carers across the country, the findings suggest:

- 64% were receiving no support, whether informal or formal
- 19% of young carers aged 11-17 reported having trouble making friends (compared to 12% in the comparison survey)
- 16% were more likely to be bullied (compared to 3% in the comparison survey)
- 74% of young carers had been absent from school at least a few times in the last 12 months compared to 49% in the comparison group
- There were notable effects for some young carers in terms of physical and emotional well-being. There were positive impacts of caring in terms of happiness, whilst feelings of anger on a more regular basis in comparison to their peers who were not carers.
- Where schools were providing support to young carers who were being bullied this was seen as effective, however only one in ten young carers were being helped in this way

In 2016 the Children's Commissioner issued a survey to all local authorities in England to request data on referrals relating to children and young people providing care. Data was received from 86% of local authorities. The report notes<sup>14</sup>.

- It is estimated that 4 out of 5 young carers may not be receiving support from their local authority
- Identification of young carers is still a concern. Professionals such as G.P's and teachers are often unaware of the challenges young carers face.
- Providers commissioned by local authorities of young carers' services reported that a focus on delivering assessments had stretched their capacity to provide support activities.
- Young carers want to enjoy their childhood and for services to listen to them and respect their views.
- It is estimated that only 32% of young carers are identified and supported across the South East of England

## LOCAL CONTEXT

Our ASC Strategy details the people who are receiving services, whilst they have an eligible care need and receive formal support, in many cases this will be supplemented and enhanced by a carer and from the VCS

to stop people from deteriorating. It is important to note:

- In 2018/19 1,860 people received care and support provided by WBC throughout the year
- most people (1,320) received care and support in their own home with around 540 people receiving care via residential and nursing facilities
- 57% of all people were aged 65 and over, and this has been lower than in recent years (58% in 2017/18 and 59% in 2016/17)
- There has been a significant increase in 18-64 year olds supported in the community
- For 18-64 year olds the majority have a learning disability support need and for 65 and over the majority require physical support

The number of carers however in Wokingham Borough are significantly higher. 14,000 people identified themselves as a carer in the 2011 census providing unpaid care to a partner, family member or friend/neighbour. This is an increase on the 2001 census figures of 8.2% (this is 1,142 additional carers) and shows that unpaid care has increase at a faster pace than population growth over the last decade. This reflects the picture nationally.

Of the 14,000 carers in Wokingham Borough:

- 10, 500 carers are of working age, 8,200 are in some form of employment
- 2,300 people provide 50 hours or more unpaid care per week
- 553 people are registered as an unpaid carer with WBC, 425 have a carers assessment.
- Month on month a significant amount of carers refuse an assessment. This ranges from a refusal rate of 79% - 21%
- 3,000 carers are over the age of 65. This is predicted to rise by 35% by 2030 and over 80's to rise by 70%
- 230 carers are aged 16 or below, 489 are aged 16-24. These figures are recognised as being extremely conservative. This is because young carers do not provide the information themselves and are dependent on parents providing this information in the census.
- 11% of young carers we currently work with have been referred to statutory services suffering with mental health issues

The future design of carer services must take into account the likely needs of the residents that will be cared for and supported by carers. The [Wokingham Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#) (JSNA) highlights the main indicators of

health needs amongst the boroughs population. Our ASC Strategy 2020-25 also sets out the key health and social care issues likely to be experienced in the Wokingham Borough.

For example within the next five years the number of people aged 65 and over living in the borough will increase by approximately 3,800, particularly those who are aged 90 and above. The evidence suggests that social isolation and loneliness will be an issue amongst these groups and therefore we must look at different ways of addressing this including the use of technology. We are likely to see an increase in people with conditions that include support with learning disability, dementia, stroke and obesity. It is crucial that carers are supported to be able to provide appropriate care and support, whilst at the same time ensuring that their health does not suffer.

The Survey of Adult Carers in England (SACE) is sent out by local authorities every other year to all adult carers of 18 years and over. The survey seeks the opinions of carers aged 18 or over, caring for a person aged 18 or over, on a number of topics that are considered to be indicative of a balanced life alongside their unpaid caring role.

In 2016-17, 57.6% of known carers in Wokingham Borough responded to this survey, 67.3% were female and 32.7% were male.

Each respondent is assigned a score based on their answers to six questions. The higher the overall score the better the average social care related Quality of Life (QoL). The maximum score is 12.

	16-17UK	16-17SE	16-17WBC
Quality of life	7.7	7.6	7.9

The overall QoL score for Wokingham Borough was 7.9 this is higher than the overall score for the South East (7.6) and for England (7.7).

For carers who reported that they cared for someone with dementia the QoL score was 7.7, this compares favourably with the 7.5 overall score by both England and the South East Region.

Dementia	16-17UK	16-17SE	16-17WBC
Quality of life	7.5	7.5	7.7

The highest QoL score was for those who care for someone with a learning disability (8.6) whilst those who care for someone with a long standing illness, or problems connected with ageing have the lowest score (7.0)

A detailed analysis of the social and health care needs of our residents can be found in Appendix 1. Wokingham

<sup>12</sup> Children Act (1989) [inserted in Children and Families Act 2014] <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/section/96/enacted>

<sup>13</sup> DfE (2017) The Lives of Young Carers <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-lives-of-young-carers-in-england>

<sup>14</sup> HM Gov.UK (2016) The Support Provided to Young Carers in England <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/publication/the-support-provided-to-young-carers-in-england/>

Borough Population Profile and through the Wokingham JSNA.

## FUNDING AND CARERS' SERVICES IN WOKINGHAM BOROUGH

WBC commission a range of support services for carers. We currently commission or provide grants for 16 carers' services from 12 different providers. Supporting carers by investing in carers services reduces the demand in social care.

The services currently commissioned fall largely into four categories: information and advice, young carers, carers support groups and respite.

WBC currently spends £402,000 per year on carers' services under the following broad area of needs:

Area of need	Collective spend £
Support for carers of people with dementia	99,500
Information and advice	72,000
Young Carers	60,000
Learning disabilities	47,000
Support for carers of stroke survivors	46,000
Sitting services (emergency respite)	42,000
Carers Support Groups	2,750
Health & Well Being	2,000

Carers are able to access advice and information from Wokingham Outreach Service, this includes information on benefits, and carers support groups and how to access a carer's assessment. Carers who are registered with our Emergency Respite and Support Service regularly reported that knowing they had a contingency plan in place for if something happened to them had significantly reduced their stress and promoted their well-being.

In addition there is a Community Navigators scheme to signpost local residents to appropriate sources of social care support. This scheme has been located within the Royal Berkshire Hospital and Wokingham Hospital. Patients are directed to a community navigator on discharge. All carers within the borough are able to have a free flu jab and this is promoted widely.

There are a broad variety of services including support groups for people and their carers. Amongst these are 'Singing for the Brain' a singing group that provides support for people with Alzheimer's, 'Mencap' who provide activities for carers of people with learning disabilities and their families, 'Young People with Dementia' who provide education workshops for carers of people with early onset dementia, an 'Emergency

Respite and Support Service' service which provides short term care in situations where the primary carer cannot (for example if a carer has their own health related appointment) and a 'Flexible Sitting Service for Carers' to enable them to have a short break from their 24 hour a day caring responsibilities, enabling them to continue to care for their loved ones at home for longer. The Emergency Respite and Support Service and Flexible Sitting Service are almost 100% accessed by older people. Carers are also able to access a 'Gym & Swim' pass that enables them to access a number of our leisure centres at a nominal cost and there are free guided walks that both the carer, and if practical the cared for, can take part in. Carers with eligible needs may be entitled to statutory support services to help them in their caring role, carers can be eligible for support in their own right.

Our Young Carers Service provides support groups and activities to young carers to enable access to opportunities that their peers who are not in a caring role have access to, and so that they are able to take a break from their caring roles. Caring can have a significant impact on the emotional health and well-being of young carers leading to mental health issues. A significant amount of the young carers we work with have reported suffering from severe anxiety and other mental health problems.

Identification and support for young carers has increased significantly and has had a considerable impact on the lives of the young carers receiving support. There is a good uptake of young carers' to events and activities. Some adult carers support groups are underutilised and there is a lack of appetite for carers' week events and carers rights day events aimed at adult carers.

We also provide residential respite for carers. The table shows the number of people receiving respite, not the number of times they have had respite. People with learning disabilities accessed short term respite the most with 73 people receiving respite. This was followed by older people with 33 individuals accessing respite, 16 people with physical disabilities and 5 people with mental health issues having accessed respite in the last 12 months:

1 April 2018 – 28 Feb 2019	Number of individuals receiving respite	Cost
Learning disability	73	502,378
Mental Health	5	10,305
Older People	33	125,922
Physical disability	16	51,615

A VCS review concluded that all of the carers' services that we currently commission offered good governance and

were supported by qualified and professional staff. There was evidence of effective partnership working and across the board providers scored well in customer satisfaction surveys. Some services are being better utilised than others however. Whilst a large number of carers accessed a range of support services there was a significant number who did not use any carers' services at all. This was predominantly because: they self-fund services that they need, they are working carers who cannot access services due to them taking place when they are primarily at work, or they did not know about these services.

There is a good uptake with carers registering with our information and advice services and emergency respite service. However, there are some disparity in access to some services and which will be addressed as part of any future procurement.

## PRIORITIES

IDENTIFYING & RECOGNISING CARERS INCLUDING SELDOM HEARD CARERS (MILITARY, TRAVELLERS, LGBT, YOUNG CARERS, WORKING CARERS, BAME, MENTAL HEALTH, SUBSTANCE ABUSE)

### Identifying as a carer

In order to support carers it is essential that carers are identified at the earliest opportunity. Almost 14 000 people identified themselves as carers in the 2011 census; there are currently 553 who are registered with WBC. It is important to work with a cross section of health, social work professionals, VCS providers and the community in increasing identification.

Many people consulted with did not identify themselves as a carer. For instance people who cared for their partner whose health had deteriorated did not recognise that attending to their loved ones' personal needs, administering medication, doing the housework, shopping and other domestic chores was anything other than something they would expect to do given the circumstances. This was particularly the case where paid professional help was involved such as domiciliary care at some point during each day as they considered that it was the professional who was the carer, or if they were in receipt of carers' allowance.

### Recognising Carers

It is important to offer support to carers from groups that may not traditionally identify members of their communities as carers, as well as with carers from underrepresented groups. This is key to ensuring that the first point of contact with carers from these groups is not when they are at crisis point. During the process

of gathering information to inform the strategy we uncovered inconsistencies and gaps in how we recorded this data. 6% of carers that are known to WBC were from a BAME group, this does not reflect the demographics of Wokingham borough which at the census of 2011 was 12%. However less than 50% of carers known to WBC had their ethnicity recorded, and we do not currently record certain protected characteristics e.g. sexual orientation. This type of information can help us plan for the future to ensure we provide services to meet the needs of all our carers. We have updated our internal policies to support capturing this data more effectively.

Our independent care providers who provide care in peoples own homes and in the community reach carers that statutory services may not be able to. It is essential that we work closely with them, to enable them to be able to recognise carers and signpost them to appropriate sources of support including the Council and the VCS.

### Information and advice

We asked carers to rate their experience of using our services, 70% of carers rated the services they use as being satisfactory or above with 66% of these rating them good or excellent. As well as being one of the most utilised services, having access to information and advice was a recurring theme. Information & advice is key to ensuring people recognise themselves as carers and in terms of ongoing support for them. Our ASC strategy details the support we will provide everyone with regards to information and advice, and it is essential that carers are also able to access this.

Carers stressed the importance of having advice and information readily available in places where they may find themselves in their day to day lives, e.g. library, G.P. surgery, and supermarket. This was particularly relevant for working carers who could not attend support groups during the day. In the Survey of Adult Carers 2016 – 17, 62% of carers identified it as being easy to find information about services. 73% of carers who engaged with the Carers' Strategy Survey rated our information and advice service as either satisfactory or above. (Appendix 1. Wokingham Borough Population Profile).

"The advice and support received from Wokingham Borough Council throughout my husbands' illness was absolutely marvellous and I will always be grateful for the very personal and sympathetic service that we received."

Carers' responses identified that many carers were not aware of the support that was available to them. They felt that when they had first registered as a carer there was a lot of information to take in so at that point they may not always have known what their future needs may be. Carers who were in receipt of information and advice cited this as being their key priority in supporting them to care.

We asked carers if the carers services they have access to were the right type of services and if there was anything else that they felt would support them in their caring role, the majority of carers felt that they were. However even though carers support groups were the most utilised after information and advice services there were still a significant number of carers who didn't access them and carers identified as feeling isolated and needing someone to talk to. Reducing isolation is a corporate priority as outlined in the Adult Social Care Strategy, VCS Strategy, Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018-21 and also the Wokingham Leisure Strategy 2020-25.

### Actions

- To develop a local offer for carers so that they are better informed on what support they have access to.
- To actively promote identification of carers, and pathways to assessments in order to reduce the number of carers whose first point of contact with services is when they are in crisis.
- To develop strategies for publicising carers support services increasing the visibility of carers advice, support and information services so that carers can make informed choices.
- To review the assessment pathway including the process of self-assessment to ensure an efficient digital pathway to services.
- To develop our on line Care Act training for all staff to improve identification and recognition of carers
- To improve joined up working therefore reducing the delay of carers getting linked in to services quickly and ensure they get access to the right support at the right time:
  - across departments
  - with multi-agency
  - with the VCS
- To develop systems and processes for engaging with a broader spectrum of carers within our communities in order to enable equitable access to support:
  - Mental health issues
  - Substance misuse issues
  - LGBTQ+ community
  - Traveller community

- Ex- military
- Children and Young people
- To work collaboratively with partners in promoting services within BAMER communities to enable equitable access to support and foster broader representation on carers forums.
- To co-produce services that we commission with carers from a broad spectrum of the community, including those from underrepresented groups ensuring wider representation enabling us to develop services that will be more inclusive of carers who live in our community.
- To work with our independent care providers in identifying and signposting carers

### SUPPORTING YOUNG CARERS

#### Having someone to talk to

There are currently in excess of 205 young carers registered with our Young Carers' Service.

Having someone to talk to is particularly acute amongst young carers who often found themselves isolated from their peers and making friends often proved difficult when they were not afforded the opportunity to engage with social activities because of their caring responsibilities. Young carers' views were under represented in this consultation with only 8 responses. However, children and young people did access the young carers support groups and young carers' forum to informally feedback their views.

"I would like having someone to talk to when I feel down, or going to places that I can't go like the zoo or the beach, or making friends"  
(Young Carer aged 12)

Young carers are more likely to suffer mental health issues compared to their peers who do not have caring responsibilities (see page 10). In Wokingham 11% of young carers we currently work with have been referred to statutory services with mental health issues.

#### The opportunity to be children and young people

Young carers often take on roles and tasks that other children their age would not be expected to do. For example shopping, domestic chores, taking on responsibility for supporting a parent or a sibling and ensuring their needs are met. This can often leave them without the opportunity to play, socialise and get involved with activities which would be of interest to someone of their age. Young carers often have difficulty in accessing social activities due to a lack of transport available to them e.g. no driver in the family. Young carers who were able to access the young carers groups and activities appreciated these enormously.

Caring can have a significant impact on young carers' education and a number of our young carers have had attendance issues, or have been consistently late due to caring responsibilities. Our young carers' service has been working collaboratively with schools and we have seen a significant improvement in attendance.

Many young carers go unidentified even though ASC may already be working with their family. 3% of referrals come from ASC when they have carried out an assessment on their parents. 46% of referrals come from the Early Help Hub and 15% from the Duty Triage and Assessment Team in Childrens services. This is a significant difference in referral rate however, this can partially be explained as 57 % of our adults who have care and support needs are over 65 (see page 11) and may not have young children.

However, when completing an assessment our young carers' service often discovers that the adult family member is already known to our ASC team yet a referral has not been made to our young carers' service for the child. This is also a contributing factor to the difference in referral numbers. Currently, there is not a system wide approach to identifying and referring young carers.

Our young carers' service works with children and young people up to the age of 18, at this point they transition into adult services. This does not always happen in a planned, supported way. We have a new transitions team in place who are working to address this to ensure that this process begins much earlier on.

#### Action

- To develop a 'whole family approach' with clear pathways for assessment between Adult and Children's Social Care Teams. This will ensure that young carers have their needs assessed as part of a wider systems approach
- To continue to promote Young Carers Services in schools and in the wider community; ensuring young carers have access to support will improve outcomes for young carers

- To increase the number of young carers identified at WBC front door reducing the delay in them getting access to services
- To improve emotional well-being for young carers, improving mental health and reducing the need for statutory services
- To provide regular group activities and events throughout the year for young carers, in both school term time and in school holidays fostering a community of support and providing opportunities for them to have access to activities that other children and young people who are not carers may have
- To work with schools and VCS organisations in establishing drop in sessions and peer to peer support reducing social isolation and improving emotional health and well-being
- To undertake a review of the transport issues and services that prevent young carers accessing opportunities to engage in recreational and social opportunities and get the support they need
- To establish a young carers' forum, ensuring the voice of young carers' is heard enabling young carers to influence decisions that affect their lives and to support their active contribute to the carers' strategic group
- To work with schools to improve the transition between primary, secondary schools and colleges ensuring young carers have the support and understanding they need to be able to maximise their learning and achievement
- To establish a seamless pathway for transition from Childrens' to Adult services ensuring assessments reflect future aspirations for adult life.

### WORKING CARERS –EMPOWERING WORKING AGE CARERS

#### Support for working carers

There are 8,200 carers in employment within Wokingham Borough. It is important that they are afforded opportunities to access support, leisure and recreation and respite at times that are appropriate to meet their needs.

Working carers consistently reported not being able to access support groups or information and advice because they were working. They also noted that nearly all of the 'fun' activities intended to give carers some leisure time took part during the day. 47% of carers who responded to our survey were either in part-time or full time employment.

We recently refreshed our internal policies to be clear about our commitment to supporting carers who work at the Council. It is our intention to become affiliated to the Employment for Carers Scheme, which can support local authorities in becoming carer friendly places to work by offering training and advice on policies. This can then be rolled out to our providers and VCS, who can also become affiliated under our umbrella.

### Actions

- To create opportunities for working carers to access support, advice, and information and training in a variety of ways that fit in with their lifestyle, supporting them to care whilst remaining in employment
- To work with Supported Employment Services (SES) in helping carers who chose to access or remain in employment, enabling them to remain independent and reducing social isolation
- To affiliate to the Employers for Carers scheme to enable WBC to become a carer friendly work place
- To work with partners in developing opportunities for working carers to engage in social activities outside of the working day, supporting them to maintain their health and well-being and fostering peer support.

ENABLING CARERS TO HAVE A LIFE OUTSIDE OF CARING (RECREATION, HEALTH & WELL-BEING, LEARNING & EDUCATION)

### Improving the health of carers

Carers frequently state that being able to pursue an interest outside of caring is important in helping to maintain their health and well-being. Carers often neglect their own health needs and consequently have poorer health than people of the same age group who do not have caring responsibilities.

Adult carers cited visiting services and respite for the cared for as being the service they most valued.

### Taking a break

Having a break from caring is often cited as the number one priority for carers.– carers regularly reported that having a break from their caring role enables them to continue to care. Carers often reported feeling tired and needing time out to take care of their own physical and mental health and maintain their own friendships.

“I just seem to be too exhausted to think. Having a sitting service gives me ‘me’ time”  
(Carer aged 65-74)

Assistive technology can support carers in being able to take short breaks, this is something that is currently not used frequently and is generally directed at meeting the needs of the cared for.

Working carers stated that they need respite at appropriate times e.g. when they are not working.

### Actions

- To increase preventative measures to ensure carers can take a break including making better use of assistive technology (AT), and respite for the cared for
- To work collaboratively with partners to actively promote where free health checks/flu jabs are available throughout the borough, this will improve the health of carers
- To improve the uptake of carers engaging in activities outside of their caring role enabling carers opportunities for leisure activities and time away from their caring responsibilities to enhance their sense of well-being and reducing social isolation
- To support carers in developing strategies to enable them to feel able to take a break, or to have time for themselves, helping them to continue to care.

### HOW WE WILL MEASURE SUCCESS

We are planning to review how we commission some of our carers’ services over the next five years so that they reflect the current and future need that carers have within the community. The information we have received from carers and other stakeholders will help inform the type of services we commission.

In order to effectively monitor the strategy a detailed action plan will be developed which will run alongside it. This action plan will reflect the priorities which have been identified and determine: how these will be met, and agreed timescales and responsibilities for ensuring actions have been achieved. The action plan will be monitored by the Carers Strategic Group who evaluate the impact that it has had on the lives of carers in our communities. This group will be made up of representatives who directly work with carers in the community including social workers, health professionals and VCS organisations and

will meet quarterly. Carers will be able to feed into the strategic group through a number of mechanisms:

- Carers support groups –carers will be able to share their views with providers on how they feel the strategy is working. The providers can feed this information directly into the strategic group
- Carers Forum – carers will reflect on the strategy quarterly to determine if they can see changes that it has made to the services that they use and feed this back to providers to share with the wider group
- Young Carers Forum – young carers will input quarterly into how they feel the strategy is working to improve lives for young carers. The young carers worker will report this information directly into the carers strategic group

We will use the information we receive to develop and improve our support for carers. The Adult Social Care and Childrens Leadership Team’s will have respective governance of the strategy. This will be delivered by a quarterly report to both Leadership Teams, this will ensure oversight of the delivery of the respective aspects of the wider collective strategy.

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Wokingham Borough Council  
Strategy and Commissioning

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April 2020

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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:	31.1.2020
Service:	Carers
Project, policy or service EQIA relates to:	Wokingham Borough Council's Carers Strategy 2020-2025
Completed by:	Lesley Buckland
Has the EQIA been discussed at services team meeting:	The Carers strategy has been considered at Wokingham's ASCLT and by Children's Services and shared for final comment with organisations that support carers.
Signed off by:	Wesley Hedger
Sign off date:	

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**1. Policy, Project or service information:**

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

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

Wokingham supports almost 600 adult carers and over 200 young carers and the council predicts the number of people it supports will increase over the next 5 years. We have developed our carers strategy to explain how we will meet the needs of carers and young carers in Wokingham to 2025.

The strategy will support the council in meeting its statutory obligations under the Care Act 2014 and Children and Families Act 2014. These are to ensure carers and young carers have the support they need.

Adult carers will have:

- Support to look after their own health and well being.
- Receive services which will support them in their caring role to prevent , reduce or delay the need for other care and support for the person they care for
- Have a range of support and resources to enable them to have a life outside of caring
- Get the information and advice that they need relating to care. This includes breaks from caring and should be tailored to an individual following assessment
- Carers have a right to an assessment and where eligible support to meet their needs

Under the Children and Families Act 2014, local authorities must provide young carers with:

- An assessment whether they are currently caring or intend to care. Assessments must consider the impact of caring in relation to their education, employment, well being, personal development, physical, mental and emotional health. Their views must be taken into account about what they want to happen
- A transition assessment before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday

This strategy will drive our plans that will support making Wokingham to be one of the best boroughs for carers and young carers in need of support to live, where they feel safe, included and a key part of our community

The strategy is aligned to our Adult Social Care Strategy and Voluntary Sector Strategy which will form part of the borough plan:

- To deliver more efficient and effective services for vulnerable groups
- To prevent, reduce and delay the need for formal support
- To keep people safe

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

In producing this strategy we consulted with carers and young carers via an on line survey, postal survey and drop in sessions both in the day and the evening. Our on line survey was sent to all carers registered with Wokingham Borough Council and also disseminated via carers newsletters from various carer organisations. We had a 35% response rate to our survey.

We have held workshops with various carers groups, the carers forum and the carers strategic group which includes providers from many organisations as well as internal staff within Wokingham Borough Council.

Internally we have consulted with:

- ASC Leadership Teams which includes the Director of Adult Services and AD's
- Childrens Team
- Transitions Team
- Optalis
- Strategy & Commissioning
- Sports Development Team
- Community Engagement

The Council will further develop an action plan to take the strategy forward through the Carers Strategic Group. This action plan will be monitored and governed by the Adult Social Care leadership Team, and will also report into the Children Leadership Team.

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

This strategy will benefit carers and young carers. It also describes WBC's ambition for carers and young carers and what we will prioritise over the next 5 years:

- Identifying, recognising and engaging carers including seldom heard carers e.g. military, travellers, LGBT, young carers, working carers, BAMER, mental health, substance abuse
- Supporting Young Carers (Young adult carers)
- Enabling carers to have a life outside of caring (recreation, health & well-being, learning & education)

- Working carers – empowering working age carers to remain or gain employment by ensuring they have access to resources that support them to care

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

- To develop a local offer for carers so that they are better informed on what support they have access to.
- To improve the uptake of carers engaging in activities outside of their caring role enabling carers opportunities for leisure activities and time away from their caring responsibilities to enhance their sense of well-being and reducing social isolation.
- To work collaboratively with partners to actively promote carers advice, support and information services so that carers can make informed choices.
- To support carers in developing strategies to enable them to feel able to take a break, or to have time for themselves, helping them to continue to care.
- To create opportunities for working carers to access support, advice, and information and training in a variety of ways that fit in with their lifestyle, supporting them to care whilst remaining in employment.
- To develop systems and processes for engaging with a broader spectrum of carers within our communities in order to enable equitable access to support
- To develop clear pathways and assessments between Adult and Children's Social Care Teams. A whole family approach will ensure that young carers will have their needs met to enable them to remain with and continue caring in their family.
- To improve our monitoring information by developing robust processes for capturing protected characteristics
- To develop our on line Care Act training for all staff to improve identification and recognition of carers
- To affiliate to the Employers for Carers scheme to enable WBC to become a carer friendly work place and support our providers in becoming one too
- To increase preventative measures to ensure carers can take a break including assistive technology (AT) and respite for the cared for
- To provide regular group activities and events throughout the year for young carers, in both school term time and in school holidays fostering a community of support and providing opportunities for them to have access to activities that other children and young people who are not carers may have.
- To establish a young carers' forum ensuring the voice of young carers' is heard and they are able to influence decisions that may affect their lives and are able to actively contribute to the carers' strategic group.
- To improve emotional well-being for young carers, improving mental health and reducing the need for statutory services.
- To work with schools and colleges ensuring young carers have the support and understanding they need to be able to learn and achieve.
- To establish a seamless pathway for transition from Childrens' to Adult services ensuring assessments reflect future aspirations for adult life

- To co-produce services that we commission with carers from a broad spectrum of the community, including those from underrepresented groups ensuring wider representation enabling us to develop services that will be more inclusive of carers who live in our community.

## 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	The strategy will be promoting identification and inclusion of carers from a broader range of ethnic backgrounds
Gender:	No	
Disabilities:	No	
Age:	Positive	The strategy promotes identification and support for young carers
Sexual orientation:	Positive	The strategy promotes identification and inclusion from a broad range of people within our community
Religion/belief:	No	
Gender re-assignment:	No	
Pregnancy and Maternity:	No	
Marriage and civil partnership:	No	

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 Wesley Hedger

Date:

# *Appendix 1*

## **Wokingham Borough Population Profile Analysis**

**2020-25**



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## 1. Introduction

The data in this report is mainly from publicly available data sources mentioned below;

POPPI refers to Projecting Older People Population Information, this system provides population data by age band, gender, ethnic group, and tenure, for English local authorities. This is for people aged 65 and over.

Calculations are applied to population figures to estimate projected numbers of older people.

Prevalence rates from research have been used to estimate the impact of certain conditions

<https://www.poppi.org.uk/>

PANSI refers to Projecting Adult Needs and Service Information this system provides population data by age band, gender, and ethnic group. Prevalence rates from research have been used to estimate the impact of certain conditions. This is for people aged 18-64.

<https://www.pansi.org.uk/>

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

Where 'change 2019-2025 (%)' is mentioned, this refers to the growth or decline between the years 2019 and 2025.

The comparators are based on neighbouring local authorities, of which 3 are also CIPFA comparators.

## 2. Area Profile

Wokingham Borough is located in the centre of Berkshire. It covers an area of 69 square miles (17,898 hectares). Wokingham Borough is 30 miles from London and 7 miles south east of Reading. It's made up of 17 parishes and towns and is a diverse community. The borough is a collection of different and diverse places, from villages, to market towns, to urban areas. It has a town centre, with residential areas in all directions. It offers a unique blend of countryside and town, historic features and up-to-date facilities, big business and market town trading. The economic prosperity of the borough, pleasant environment and excellent transport links, make it an attractive place to live and work.

Population density is about double the South East average with 939 people per square kilometre, but it is much more dispersed than the local urban centre of Reading where population density is around 4,000 people per square kilometre<sup>1</sup>.

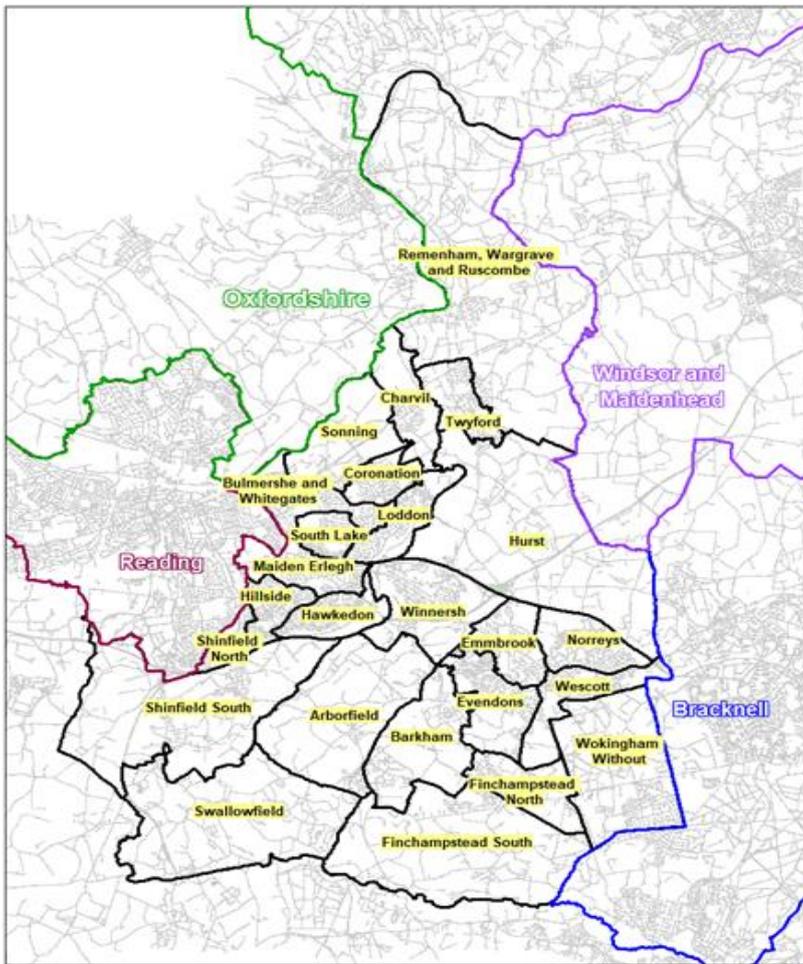
With a high standard of living, and plenty of green space, Wokingham Borough is a popular place to live which is reflected by net inwards migration. In 2016 Wokingham Borough was named the ninth best place to live in the UK<sup>1</sup> based on a range of indicators as well as a survey of local residents.

Wokingham Borough is the least deprived upper-tier authority in England and is one of the most affluent areas of the country. 83% of the borough's neighbourhoods are in the least deprived 20% of the country. Deprivation is recognised as one of the most influential factors on an individual's outcomes, including their health, wellbeing and ultimately life expectancy. Deprivation is not just associated with income or poverty, but can also be a measure of access to adequate education, skills and training, healthcare, housing and essential services. Low levels of deprivation means that the borough would be expected to achieve higher levels of outcomes than England.

Wokingham Borough has 25 electoral wards, 99 LSOAs, and 20 MSOAs. There are between 5,000 and 15,000 living in each ward. The borough has 1 hospital, 13 GP Practices, 24 pharmacies, 39 primary schools, 10 secondary schools and one Special Education Needs school.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: The Halifax Quality of Life survey - <https://www.getreading.co.uk/news/reading-berkshire-news/wokingham-named-one-top-places-12344701>



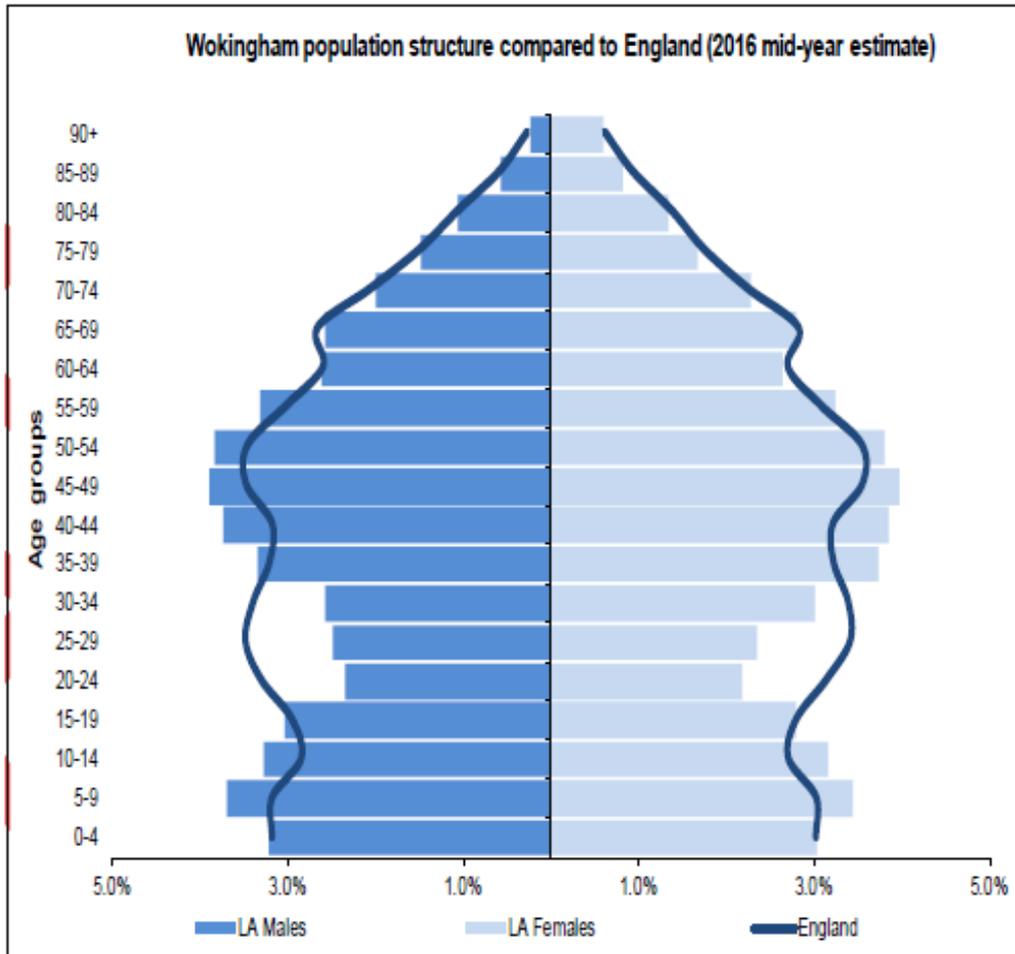
The borough has a strong regional economy dominated by the IT, communications and pharmaceutical sectors. Major international companies such as Oracle, Microsoft and BG Group, Johnson and Johnson, Jacobs, ING Direct, Foster Wheeler, and the University of Reading are located within the borough. Businesses are attracted by the excellent regional and national transport links with trains to London, Reading and Guildford, and easy access to the motorway network via the M4 that support the affluent regional economy. There is good provision of local public transport however some people using public transport find it a struggle to get around the local area.

### 3. Population and projections

There were approximately 164,890 people resident in Wokingham Borough in 2017, according to figures produced by the Office for National Statistics. The population density in Wokingham Borough is currently around 9.0 persons per hectare, which makes it the third least densely populated borough in Berkshire, after West Berkshire (2.2 persons per hectare) and Windsor and Maidenhead (7.4 persons per hectare).

The estimated Wokingham Borough population can be split down to look at the difference between gender and between age groups. When compared with the England average (see Figure below) it is clear that Wokingham Borough has a higher proportion of males between the younger ages of 5-14 years, and middle ages of 35-54 years. There is also a higher proportion of females aged 5-9 years and 35-49 years old when compared with the England average. The numbers of people aged 65 and over are similar with the numbers for England.

## Wokingham Borough population structure 2016 compared to England



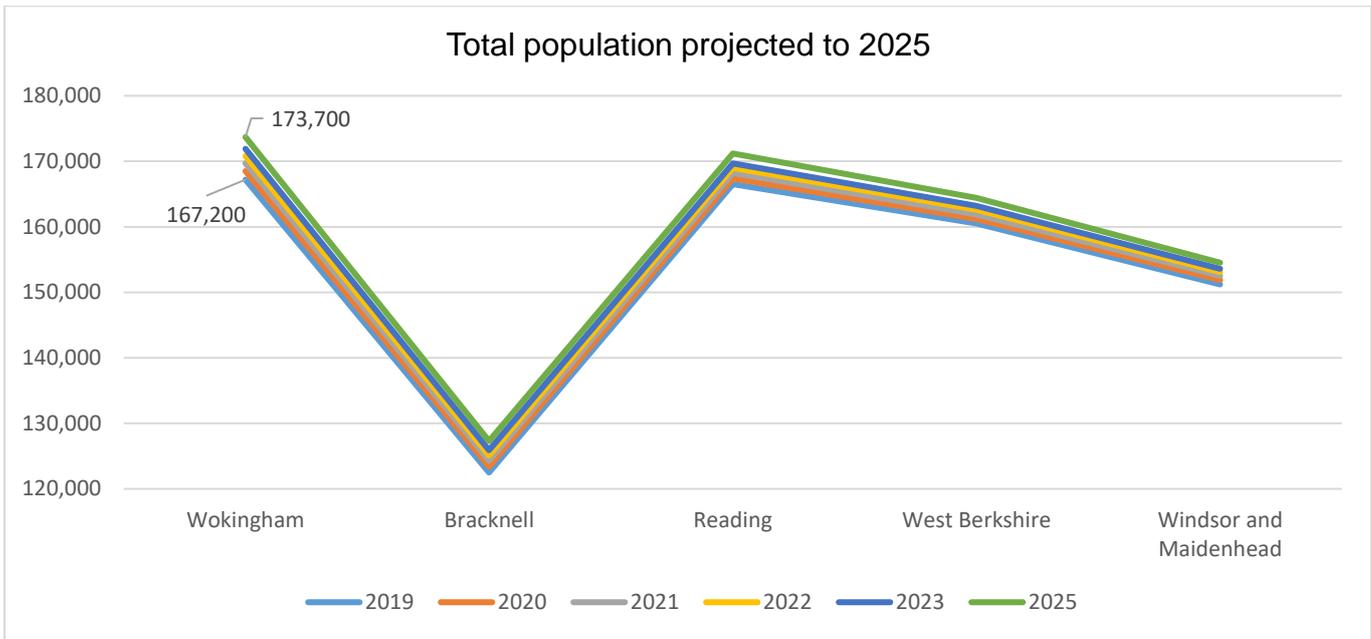
Source: JSNA

Wokingham Borough has had a population turnover substantially higher than the England average since 2010. That amounts to over 12,000 people moving into the area each year and around 11,000 moving out.

Of particular note is that, as a percentage of the total population, Wokingham Borough's proportion of young people (aged 20-35) is substantially lower, and the percentage of people in, or approaching retirement (aged 50+) is substantially higher compared to England. This is largely attributed to young adults moving out of the area, either going to university or moving to neighbouring local authorities which offer a more city type of environment.

This local phenomenon, when coupled with relatively low levels of deprivation and the associated cost of living in an affluent area, has a bearing on workforce economics.

Figure below shows the projected population between 2019 and 2025. There is expected to be a growth of 3.88%, and this is the highest growth after Bracknell (3.92%) when compared to neighboring authorities.



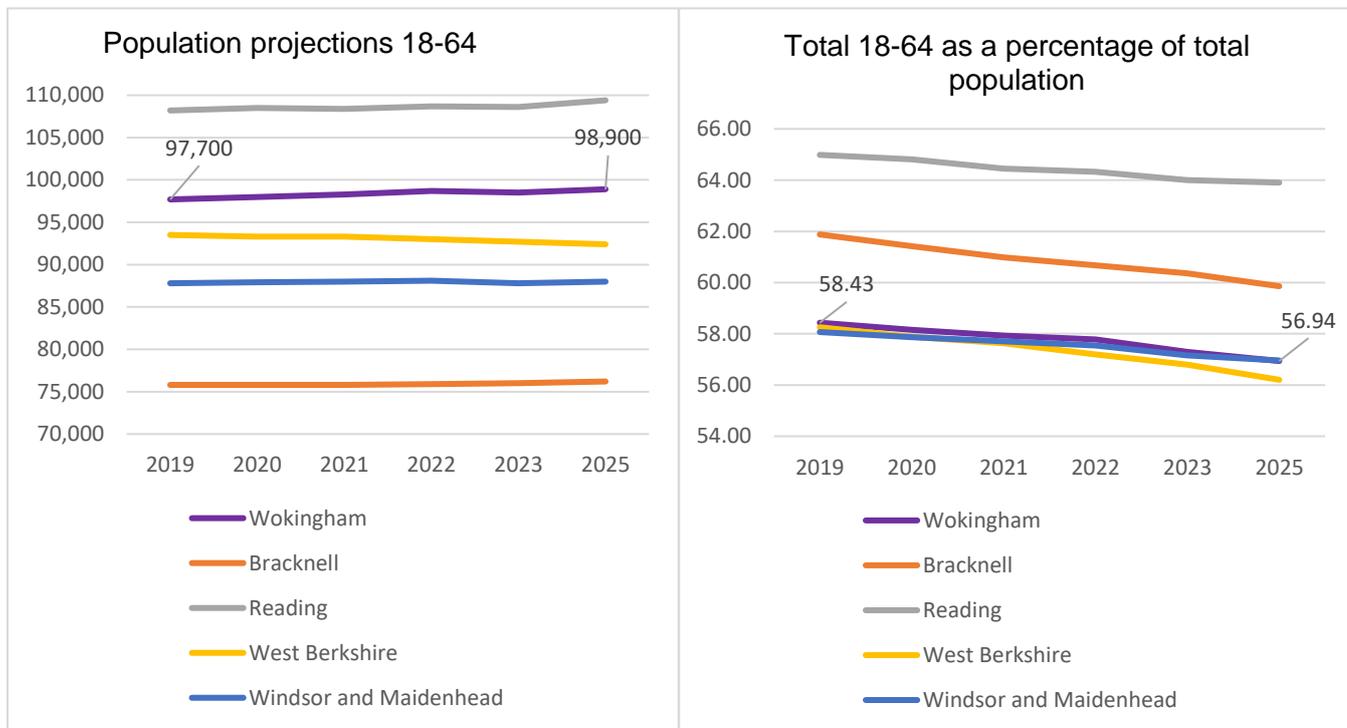
The national government's policy to drive more housing nationally, may impact on how population changes over time, with areas required to build comparatively more new homes seeing larger increases with this influx in housing the population projections produced by the ONS are likely to under represent the future populations.

The Councils current planning strategy directs the majority of development to four strategic locations: North and South Wokingham, Arborfield and Shinfield/Spencers Wood/Three Mile Cross.

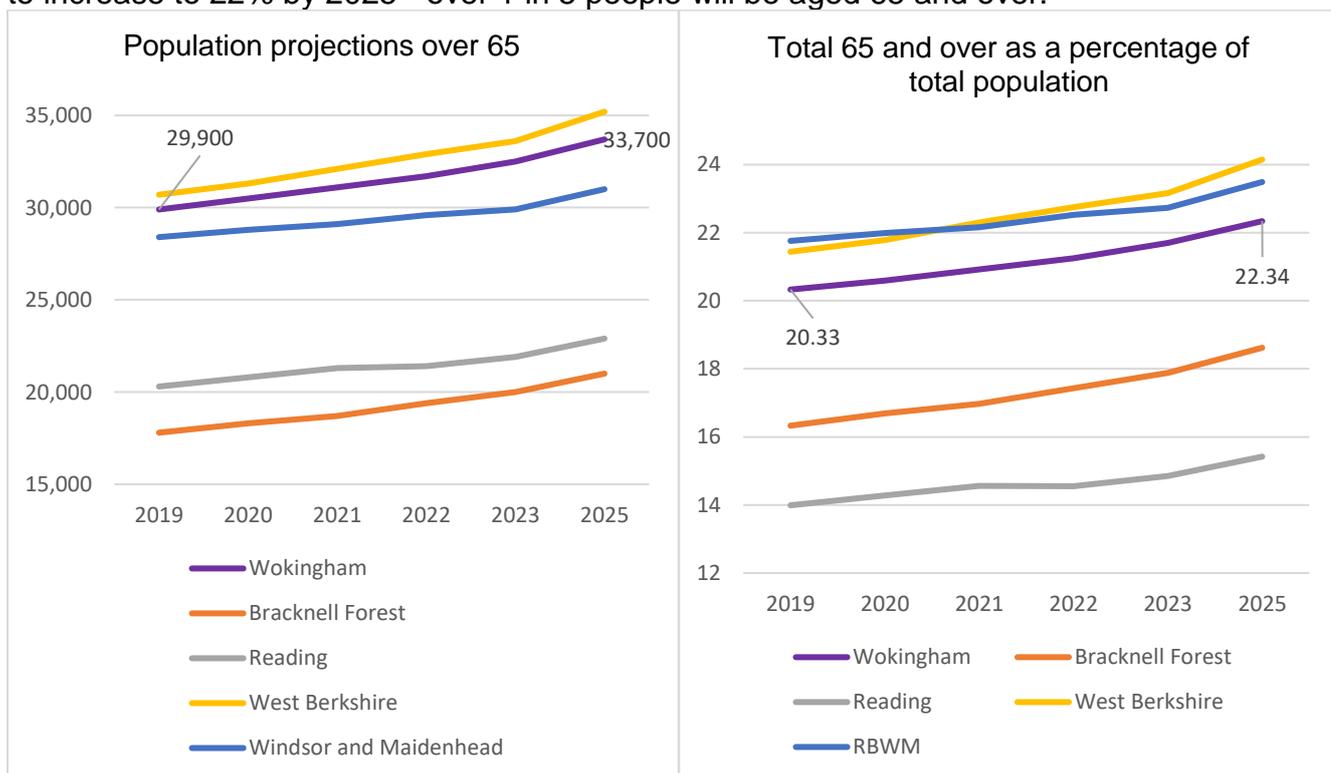
Further details of these Strategic Development Locations can be found at <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/major-developments/overview-of-major-developments/>

## 4. Age and projections

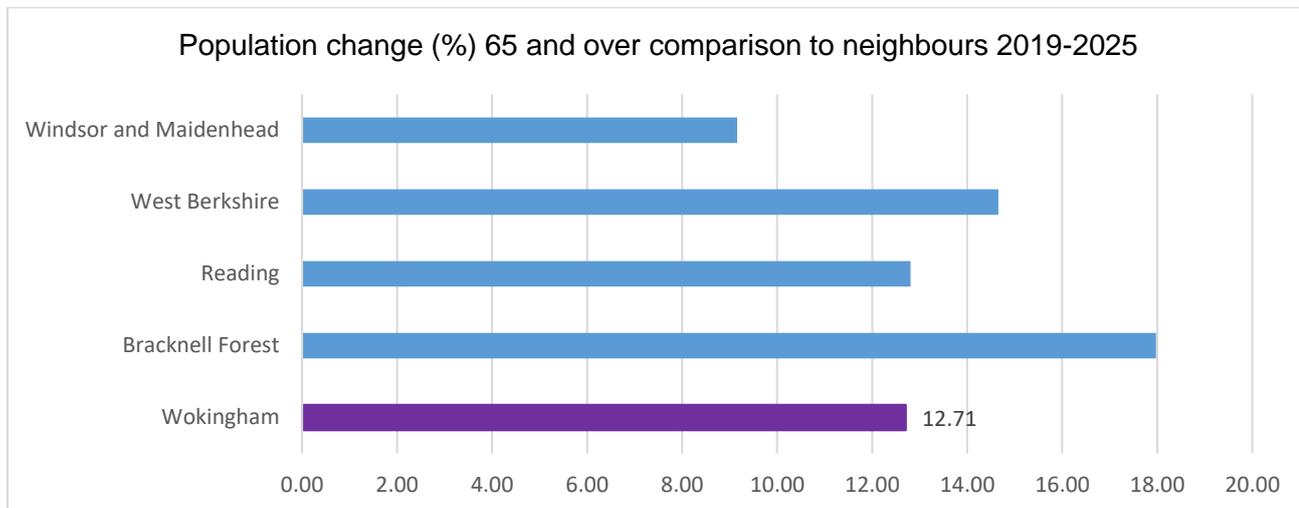
58% of the current total population is predicted to be aged 18-64 and this is expected to decrease to 57% by 2025 despite an increase of 1200 people aged in this range between 2019-25. This reduction is because of the increase in older and younger people below 18. This trend of the 18-64 population is consistent to neighbouring local authorities as seen below.



Wokingham Borough's population is aging with 18% of the population aged 65 and over in 2017, compared to 14% in 2007. 20% of residents are currently (2019) 65 and over and this is expected to increase to 22% by 2025 - over 1 in 5 people will be aged 65 and over.



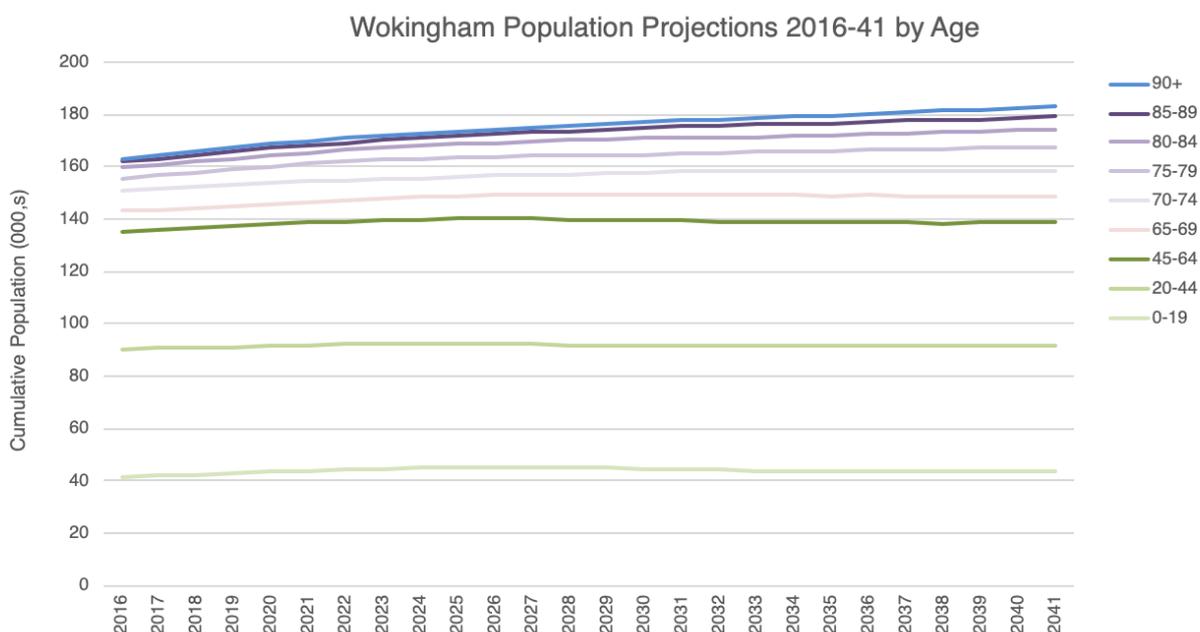
There is an expected increase of 3,800 people aged 65 and over between 2019-25. This is a 13% increase, and whilst significant is the lowest compared to neighbouring authorities except Windsor and Maidenhead. This suggests that Wokingham's population is aging slightly slower than most of our neighbouring authorities.



The Office for National Statistics projections forecasts changes in the population by age range. Longer term the local population to increase by about 20,000 between 2016 and 2041, however this is not the case across all age groups.

The projection shows almost no change in the younger population, while the population of older working age adults also looks set to remain stable.

Meanwhile the projections for older adults, particularly those aged over 75 are projected to double from just over 12,500 in 2016 to nearly 25,000 in 2041. There are likely to be around 4,000 additional residents aged up to the age of 64 years. But the number of additional people living in Wokingham Borough aged 65 and over is likely to be much higher, around 16,000.



The greatest increases are forecast in the older population, particularly the over 85s. As shown in the table below, the population is projected to double in most age groups, except the 90+ group where it is projected to increase three-fold. The complexity of their needs might also increase.

	Age Group	Magnitude of Projected Increase 2016-41	Projected Number of Additional Residents
Children and Young People	0-19	1.1	2,100
Adults of Working Age	20-44	1.0	-700
	45-64	1.1	2,700
Older Adults (a)	65-69	1.1	1,300
	70-74	1.4	2,700
	75-79	1.7	3,800
	80-84	1.8	3,000
	85-89	2.0	2,400
	90+	2.9	2,700
Older Adults (b)	<b>65+</b>	<b>1.6</b>	15,900
	<b>75+</b>	<b>1.9</b>	11,900
	<b>85+</b>	<b>2.4</b>	5,100

With increased complexity of needs is likely to come the need for more highly trained and more highly skilled staff delivering greater levels of intervention.

However the projected decline in the local working age population aged 20-44 will have implications for the availability of sufficient local workforce to look after the expanding elderly population

Using sophisticated modelling techniques Kingston et al (2018) estimated the numbers of people aged 65 years or older in England and the years lived in older age requiring care at different intensities up to 2035. Their article in *The Lancet* concludes:

“In the next 20 years, the English population aged 65 years or over will see increases in the number of individuals who are independent but also in those with complex care needs.

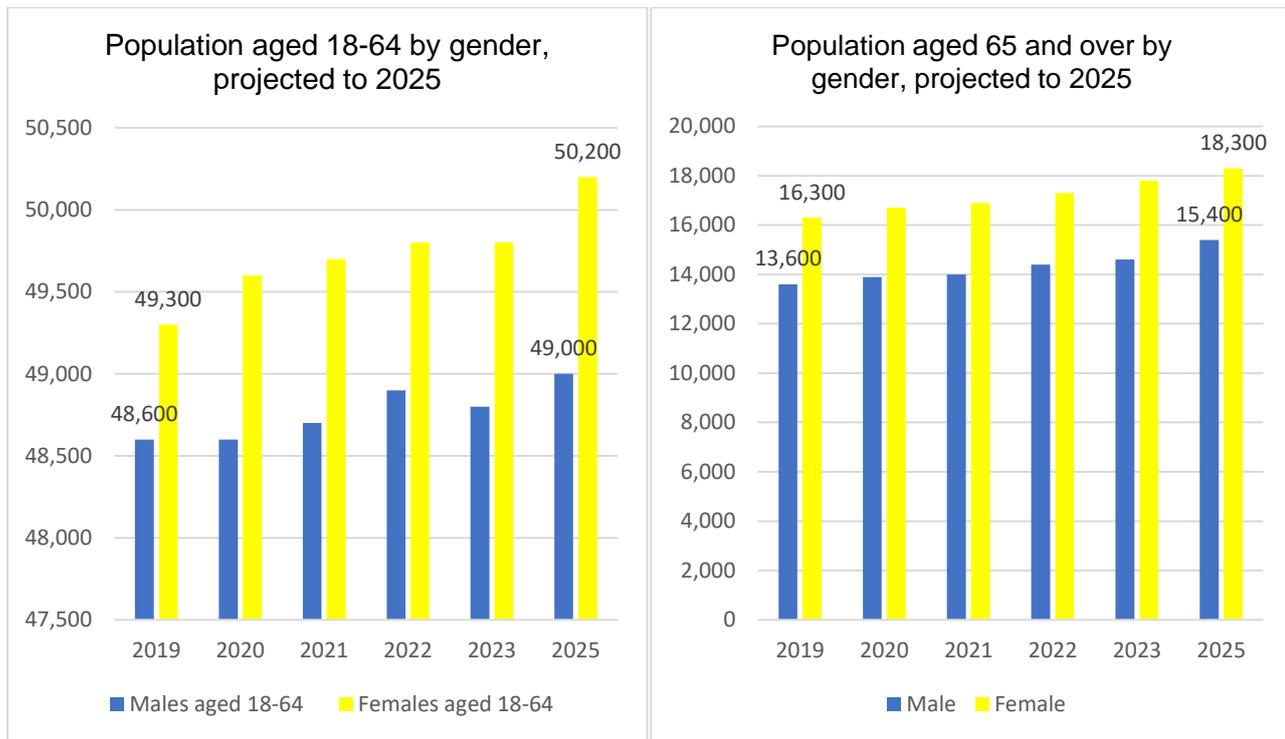
This increase is due to more individuals reaching 85 years or older who have higher levels of dependency, dementia, and comorbidity.

Health and social care services must adapt to the complex care needs of an increasing older population.”

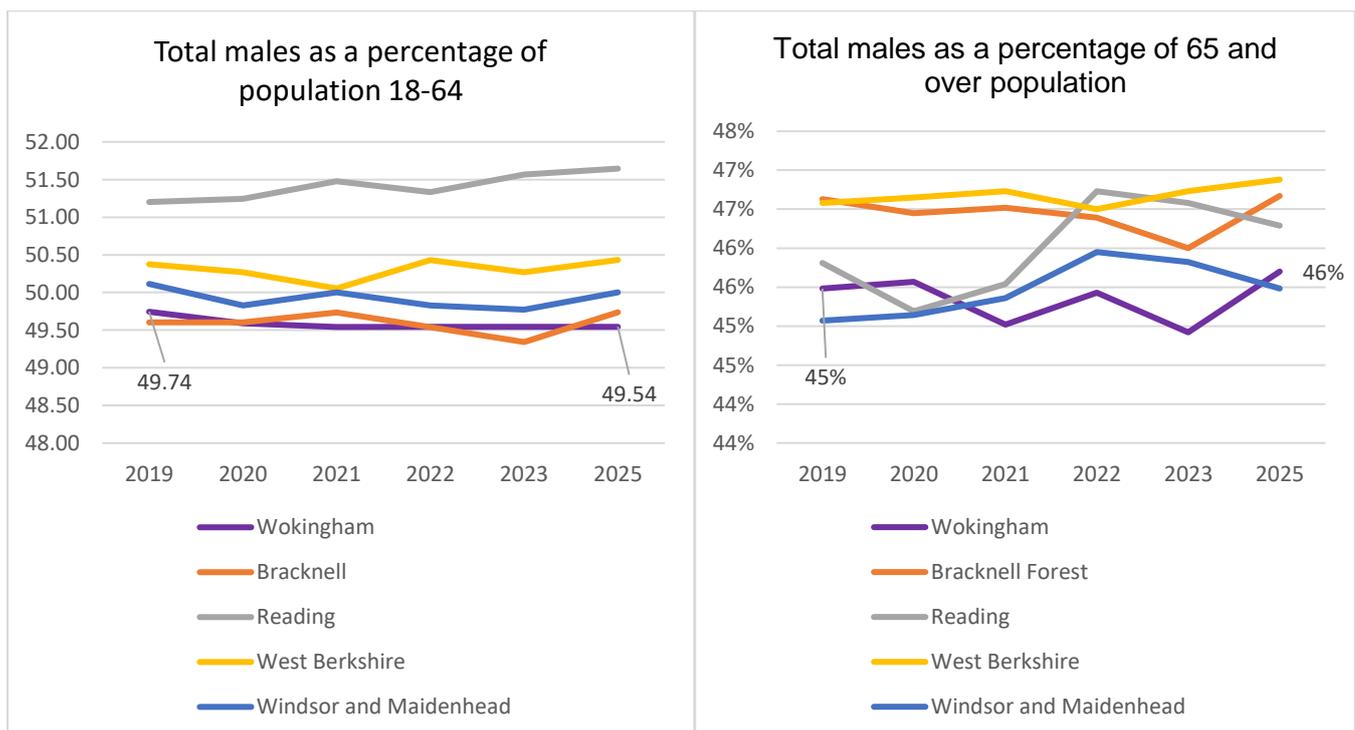
This phenomenon is likely to be felt particularly in areas like Wokingham Borough where the population of older adults is forecast to increase the most.

## 5. Gender

Wokingham Borough has a higher proportion of females than males in the 18-64 and over 65 age bands and this is expected to remain consistent until 2025.



The figures below show the population of Wokingham Borough and neighbouring local authorities by gender. All authorities have a higher percentage of females than males. For Wokingham Borough this is partly because there are more women than men in the total population aged 65 and also due to women's higher life expectancy. Please note the proportion of females can be derived from the proportion of males.

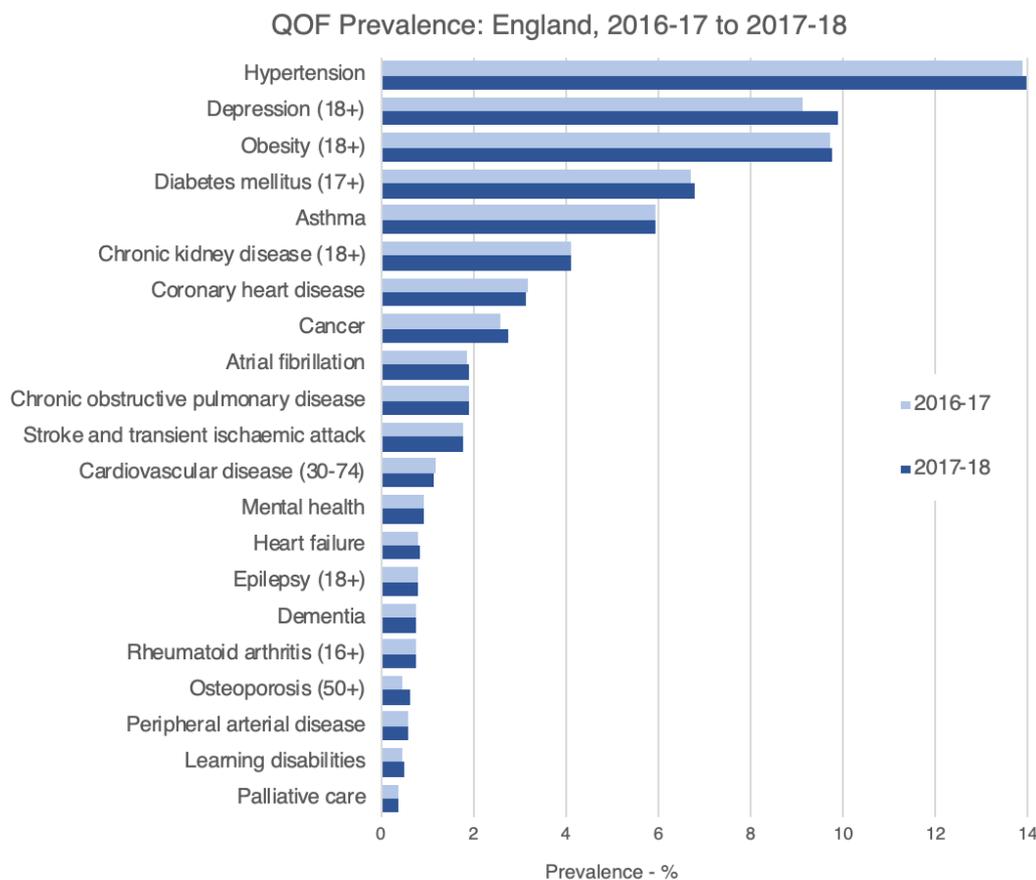


## 6. Ethnicity

The majority of the population (84%) in Wokingham Borough is classified as White. The 2011 Census counted 18,146 out of 154,380 people (11.8%) being from a Black and Ethnic minority (BME) group with the largest ethnic group being Asian or Asian British (7%). 3.5% (5,331 people) of these are Indian. Wokingham Borough has the third lowest proportion of BME population in Berkshire which is also lower than the national value of 14.6%. Wards bordering Reading have the greatest diversity.

## 7. Health overview of the population

Wokingham Borough rates better than the national and regional averages for most indicators of the health of the population<sup>2</sup>.



There are some indicators in particular which are of interest life expectancy and under 75's mortality rates are both better than the England average, as is hip fractures to the over 65s, alcohol, smoking, physical activity and excessive weight are all better than the national average.

However, diabetes diagnoses in the adult population is lower than the national average. The indicator shows % recorded diagnosis of diabetes as a proportion of the estimated number with diabetes. Thus, a poor score could mean either diagnostic rates are low compared to the prevalence of diabetes, or, assuming diagnosis rates are comparable to elsewhere, it could mean that there are fewer people with diabetes than expected. Given the higher than average scores on

<sup>2</sup> Based on ['Wokingham Local Authority Health Profile 2018; Public Health England', 3 July 2018](#)

other indicators normally associated with diabetes the latter seems more likely (see section 15 on diabetes).

The prevalence of dementia for any age as well as for over 65s is in line with the national average, as is the ratio of inpatient service use to recorded diagnoses (see section 23 on dementia).

At 57.9%, 27.1 points higher than the England average of 30.8%, Wokingham Borough has a significantly worse rate of excess winter deaths for the over 85s<sup>3,4</sup>.

However, overall health related quality of life for older people is significantly better than the England average meaning older people stay healthy further into old age<sup>5</sup>.

Nationally, depression is one of the most prevalent conditions, second only to hypertension. The prevalence of most other conditions in the adult population of England is stable, whereas the prevalence of depression has increased from 6% in 2012-13 to nearly 10% in 2017-18. Other mental health conditions also increased in prevalence across England in the last year, a trend that, if it continues into the future, will have a bearing on the level and nature of care that will be needed by future clients of the social care system (see section 21 on mental health)

Other conditions increasing in prevalence are hypertension, obesity, heart failure, cancer, atrial fibrillation, and osteoporosis (in the over 50s).

The prevalence of most other conditions remained stable, including learning disabilities (see section 19). Coronary heart disease and cardiovascular disease both saw slight decreases in prevalence.

There is, however, growing evidence of associations between conditions. For instance, as many as 40%<sup>6</sup> of people with diabetes have said they struggled with their psychological wellbeing since being diagnosed. Though diabetes does not directly cause depression, the nature of diabetes can be a factor in developing it. As it is always present, it can be exhausting to deal with.

Furthermore, according to findings announced at the Diabetes UK Professional Conference in 2018<sup>7</sup>, people who are at high risk of developing type 2 diabetes and who also have depression, are nearly three times more likely to develop dementia in later life, compared to those with neither condition.

“More research is now needed to understand why this potential connection could exist, and what can be done to reduce the risk of dementia in as many people as possible. There are steps people can take to reduce their risk of both Type 2 diabetes and dementia. These include maintaining a healthy weight, eating a healthy balanced diet, limiting alcohol intake, avoiding smoking, keeping blood pressure in check and doing regular exercise.”

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<sup>3</sup> Source: [Overview of Health Indicators, Public Health England](#)

<sup>4</sup> indicator 4.15ii

<sup>5</sup> indicator 4.13

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.diabetes.org.uk/guide-to-diabetes/emotions/depression?qclid=EAlalQobChMliZ6D46nh4wlV0OR3Ch29pwOeEAAYASAAEqIWbPD\\_BwE](https://www.diabetes.org.uk/guide-to-diabetes/emotions/depression?qclid=EAlalQobChMliZ6D46nh4wlV0OR3Ch29pwOeEAAYASAAEqIWbPD_BwE)

<sup>7</sup> Cited on <https://diabetestimes.co.uk/type-2-diabetes-and-depression-linked-to-dementia-risk/>

Depression is the most common mental health problem for people aged 65, nationally an estimated 22% of men and 28% of women and 40% of older people in care homes are affected<sup>8</sup>. Furthermore, older people in residential and nursing homes are two to three times more likely to experience depression than older people in the community<sup>9</sup>.

But complexity does not end there. Many older people experience loneliness and social isolation (See section 9 on living alone).

As reported by Griffiths (2017)<sup>10</sup>, research by Holt-Lunstad finds that ‘weak social connections carry a health risk that is more harmful than not exercising, twice as harmful as obesity, and is comparable to smoking 15 cigarettes a day or being an alcoholic’.

**The London School of Economics<sup>11</sup> estimate loneliness costs health and social care services £6,000 per person over a ten year period but for every £1 spent in preventing loneliness there are £3 of savings**

Local statistics<sup>12</sup> indicate that of the 29,000 residents who were over 65 at the time, 9,705 (32%) were living alone. This is estimated to rise to 11,221 by 2025, to 33% as a percentage of the expected population over 65.

By 2025 as a percentage of the total population over 65, Wokingham Borough is predicted to have the largest proportion of people living alone compared to its neighbours after Windsor and Maidenhead.

Loneliness is indeed an issue as reported by residents in the Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework. The proportion of people who use services who reported that they had as much social contact as they would like reduced has from 48.1 in 2017/18 to 42.1 in 2018/19. This is below the England average of 45.9.

The proportion of carers who use services who reported that they had as much social contact as they would like fares better, with Wokingham performing at 37.1 for 2018/19 compared to England average of 32.5.

According to Sutin et al (2018)<sup>13</sup> Loneliness has been associated with a 40% increased risk of dementia and it is expected to increase in line with the population increases expected in the borough.

## 8. Tenure

The terms used to describe tenure are defined as: Owned - either owned outright, owned with a mortgage or loan, or paying part rent and part mortgage (shared ownership); Other social rented - includes rented from Registered Social Landlord, Housing association, Housing Co-operative and Charitable Trust; Private rented - renting from a private landlord or letting agency, employer of a

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<sup>8</sup> Age UK, 2016). [https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/docs/default-source/improving-care/better-mh-policy/college-reports/college-report-cr221.pdf?sfvrsn=bef8f65d\\_2](https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/docs/default-source/improving-care/better-mh-policy/college-reports/college-report-cr221.pdf?sfvrsn=bef8f65d_2)

<sup>9</sup> Godfrey and Denby (2004) Depression and older people: Towards securing well-being in later life, London: Help the Aged

<sup>10</sup> <https://iotuk.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Social-Isolation-and-Loneliness-Landscape-UK.pdf>

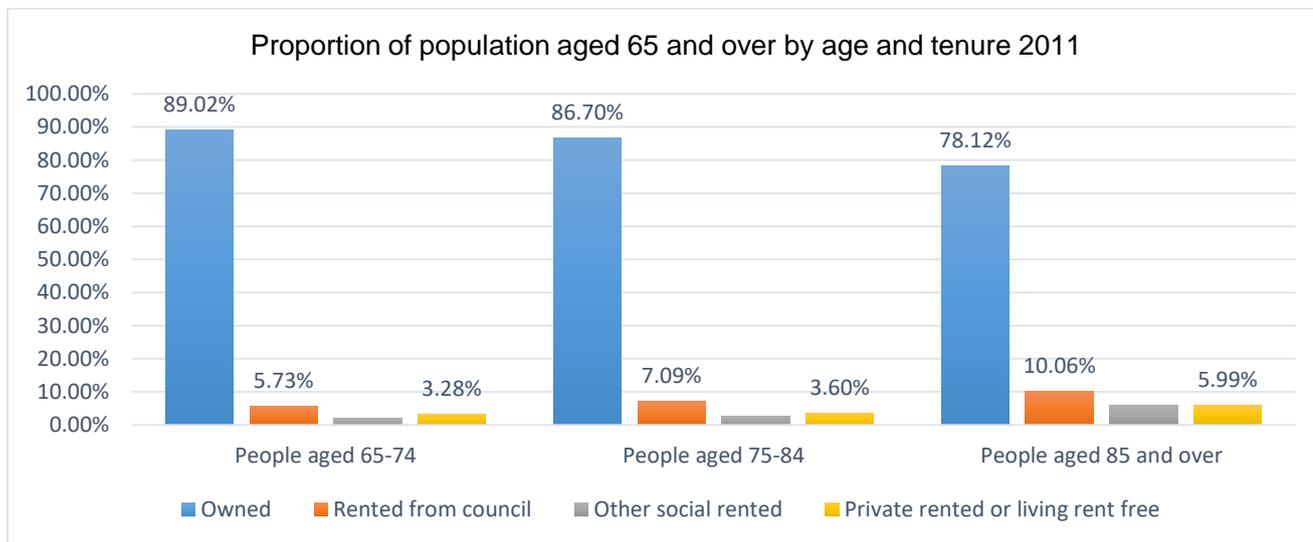
<sup>11</sup> <http://www.lse.ac.uk/business-and-consultancy/consulting/assets/documents/making-the-economic-case-for-investing-in-actions-to-prevent-and-or-tackle-loneliness-a-systematic-review.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> POPPI 2017 - [Projecting Older People Population Information System](#)

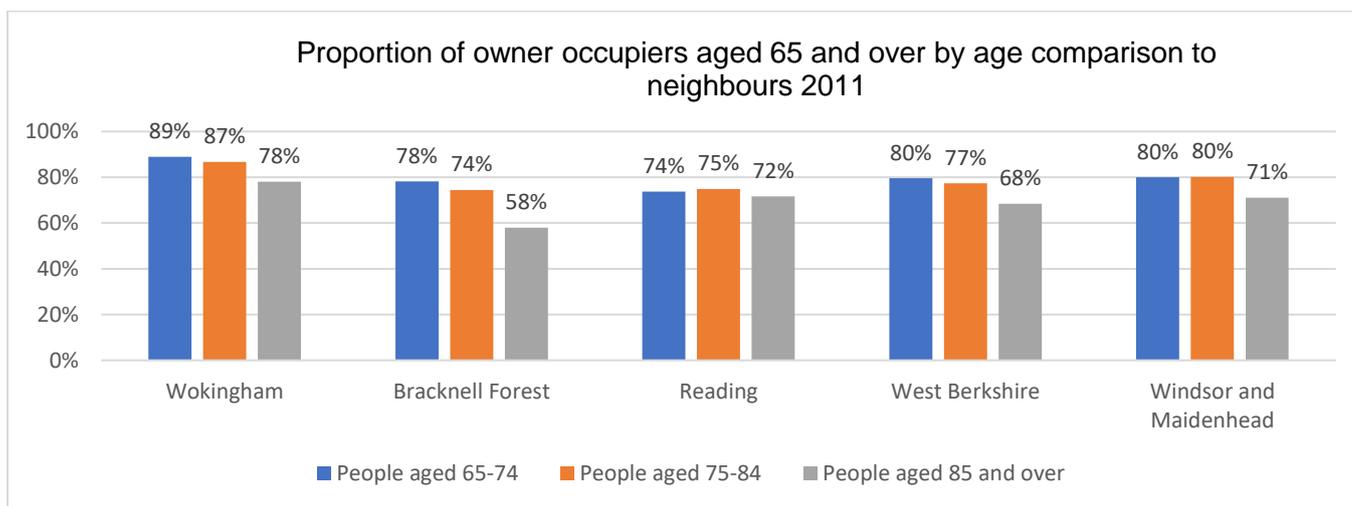
<sup>13</sup> [https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/reports-and-publications/late\\_life\\_uk\\_factsheet.pdf](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/reports-and-publications/late_life_uk_factsheet.pdf) – page 11

household member, or relative or friend of a household member or other person; Living rent free - could include households living in accommodation other than private rented.

The numbers below show that there are a significant number of people in Wokingham Borough who own their own homes reflecting the affluence of the area, but that this reduces as people grow older. The England average has a similar pattern although the numbers are considerably lower (76.34% aged 65-74 and 68.2% 85 and over<sup>14</sup>).



Wokingham Borough has the highest percentage of people owning their own homes compared to our neighbouring local authorities. This also extends into the higher age ranges. Given that house prices are high in Wokingham Borough we can assume that people who are eligible for care and support could pay for it themselves for longer. However as they become increasingly older they may become depleted self-funders and are then the responsibility of the local authority, as seen through the higher numbers renting from the Council aged over 85.



## 9. Living alone

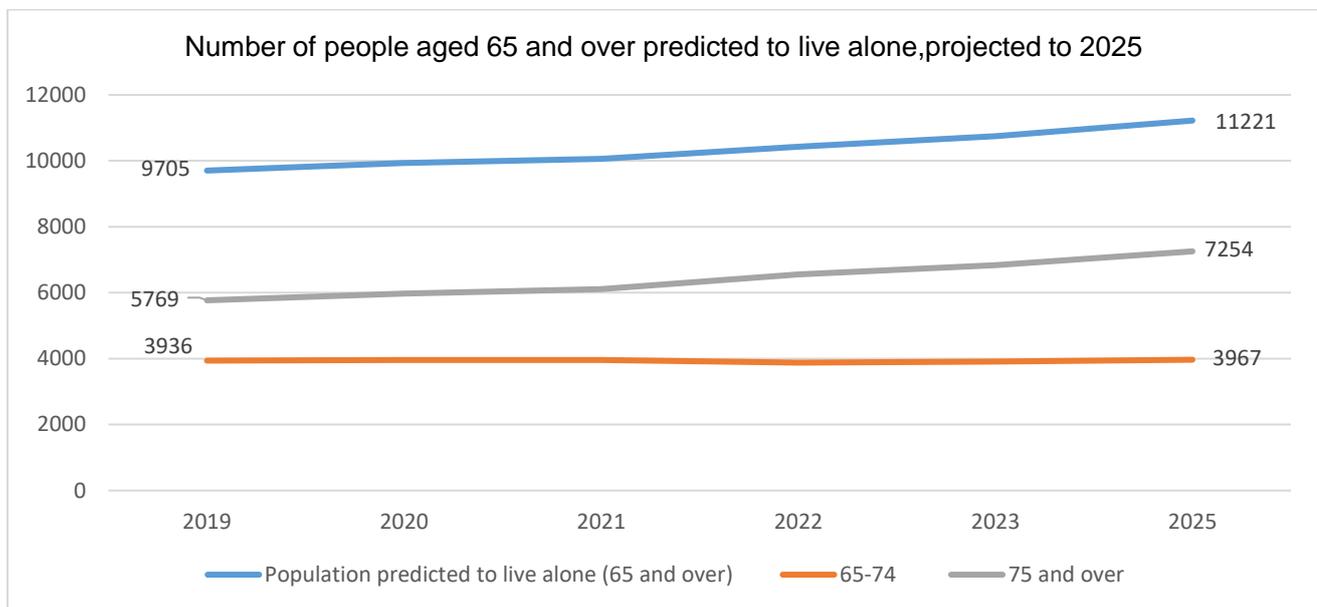
In 2011, nearly 23% of households in Wokingham Borough were occupied by people living alone. This equated to 14,084 people (9% of the population). 44% of these households were people

<sup>14</sup> Correct as at 27 March 2011. They have not been projected forward as the figures would not be reliable

aged 65 and over, which made up 26% of the total population aged 65 and over. 1 in 4 people aged 65 and over therefore lived alone in 2011.

POPPI data predicts that currently (2019) 9,705 people aged over 65 are living alone (32% of the entire 65 and over population). This means that one in approximately three people aged 65 and over are predicted to live alone. By 2025 this will increase by 15.6% (or 1,516 people) to 11,221 people (33.2% of the entire 65 and over population).

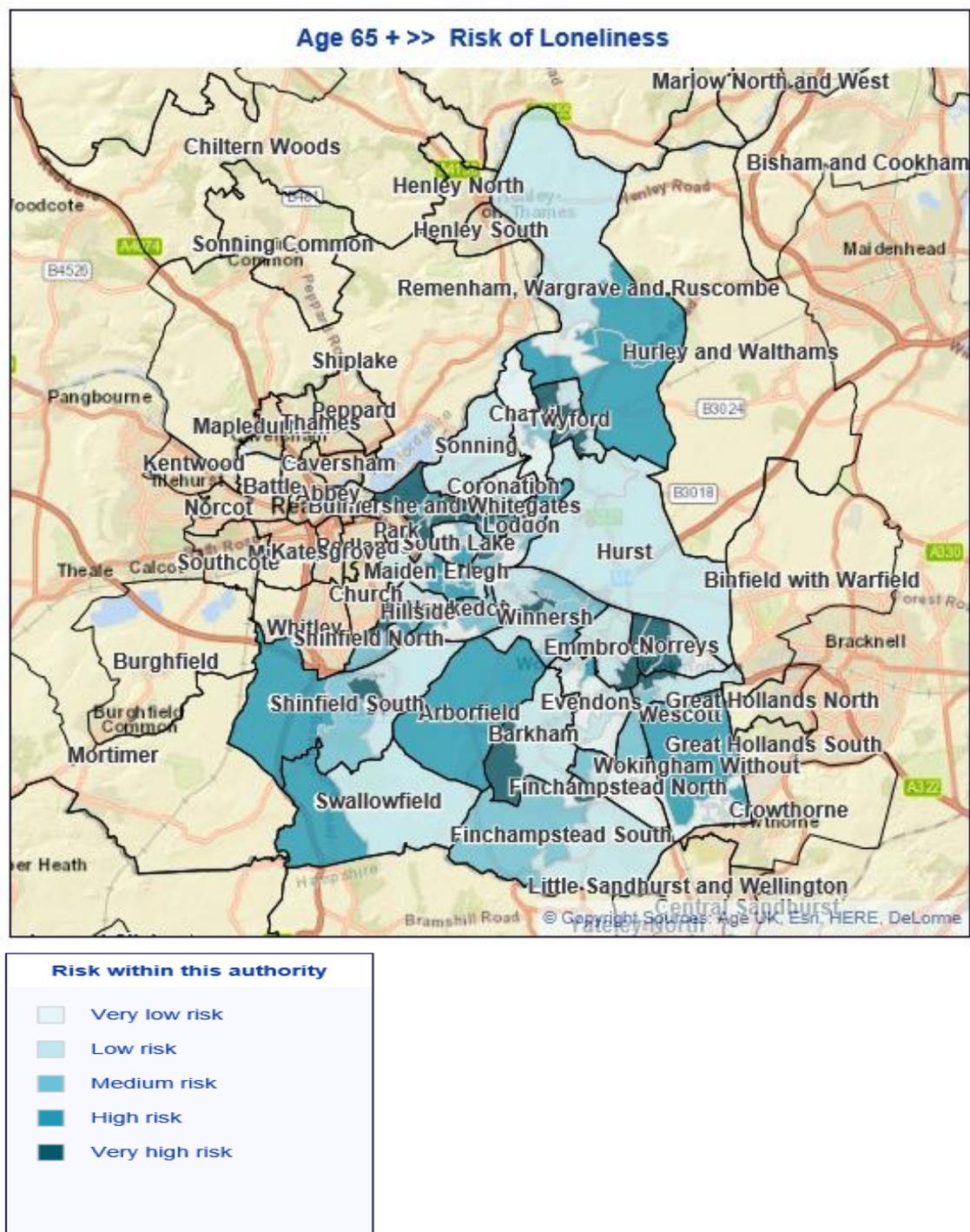
For those aged 65 and over, the larger proportion of those living alone were female (66.5%). This is partly because there are more women than men in the total population aged 65 and over due to women’s higher life expectancy. By the age of 65, most women have been married and husbands are typically older than their wives. These two factors mean that more women than men become widowed, which may lead to living alone. In spite of this, the number of widowed women is falling due to life expectancy increasing faster for men compared with women.



Loneliness can be experienced at any age and by any member of society. Characteristics such as age or gender, ethnic background or religious beliefs do not in themselves cause loneliness. Loneliness occurs when people’s ability to have meaningful conversations and interactions is inhibited, and helping people cope with and overcome these feelings can require more than social activities. Some of the indications that someone is lonely or isolated can include being in poor health, being widowed or living alone.

The Age UK heat map in figure 16 below shows the risk of loneliness at neighbourhood level within Wokingham Borough. The relative risk of loneliness is based on the Census 2011 figures for the factors: marital status, self-reported health status, age and household size. At ward level Bulmershe and Whitegates and Twyford wards had the highest proportion of one-person households aged 65 and over according to the 2011 census.

The risk of loneliness at neighbourhood level within Wokingham

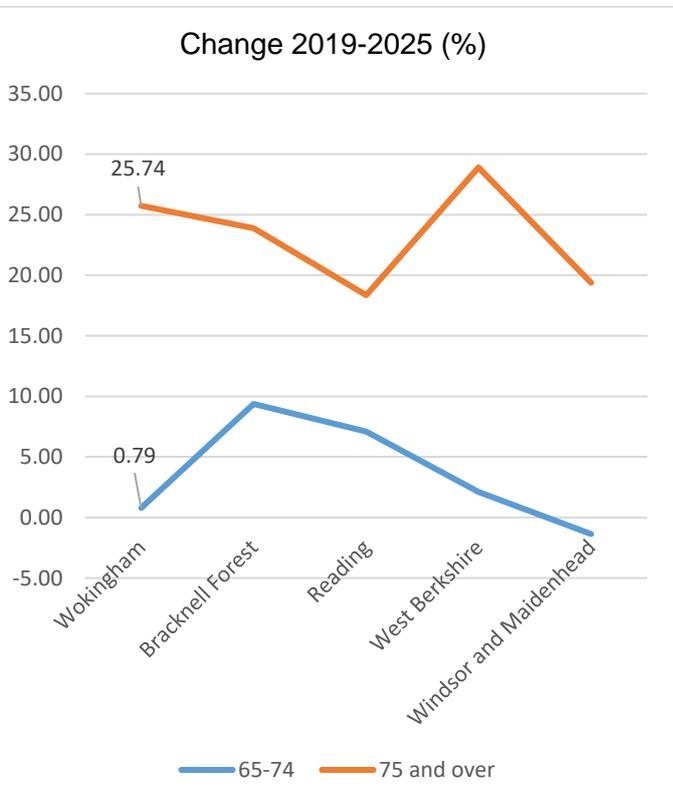
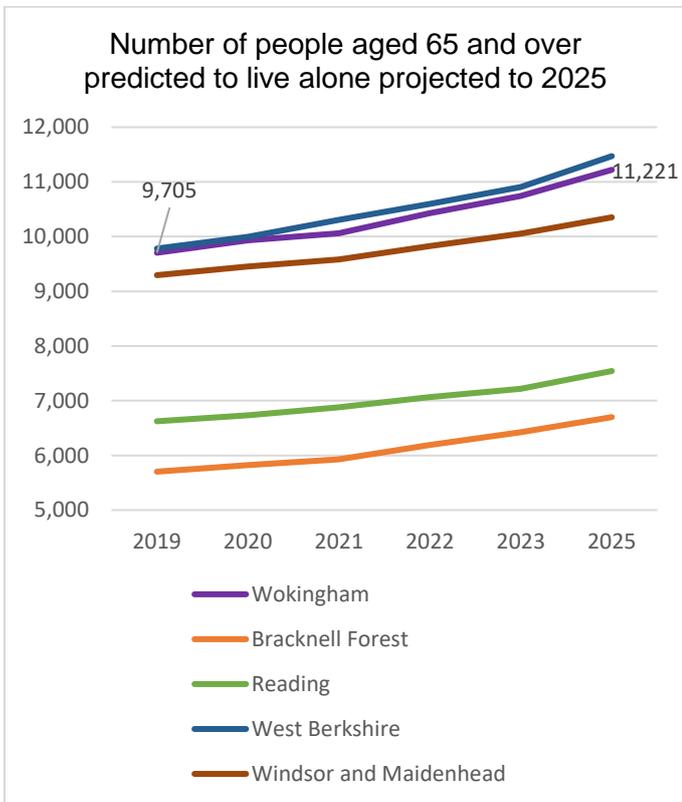
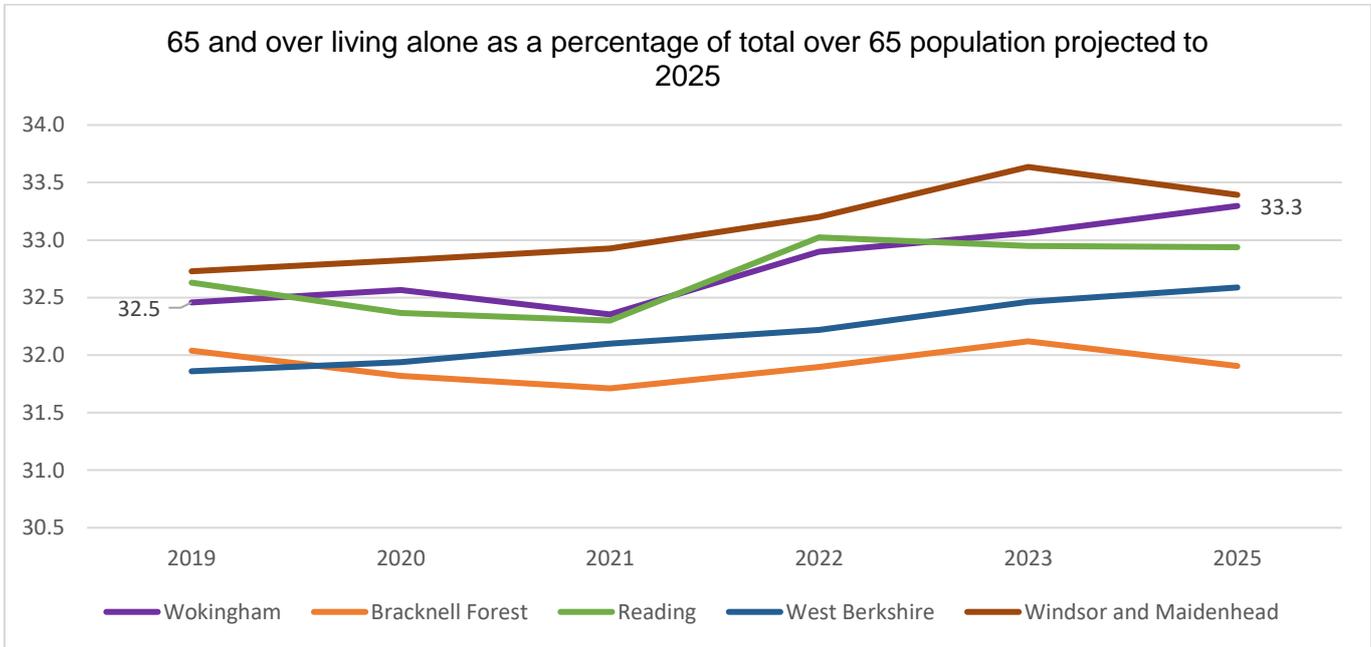


Research evidences that ‘weak social connections carry a health risk that is more harmful than not exercising, twice as harmful as obesity, and is comparable to smoking 15 cigarettes a day or being an alcoholic.’ Specifically, socially isolated people are 3.4 times more likely to suffer depression and 1.9 times more likely to develop dementia in the following 15 years. Loneliness has been found to increase the likelihood of mortality by 26% as well as more frequent use of public services due to lack of support networks. Individuals that are socially isolated are:

- 1.8 times more likely to visit a GP
- 1.6 times more likely to visit A&E
- 1.3 times more likely to have emergency admissions

- 3.5 times more likely to enter local authority funded residential care

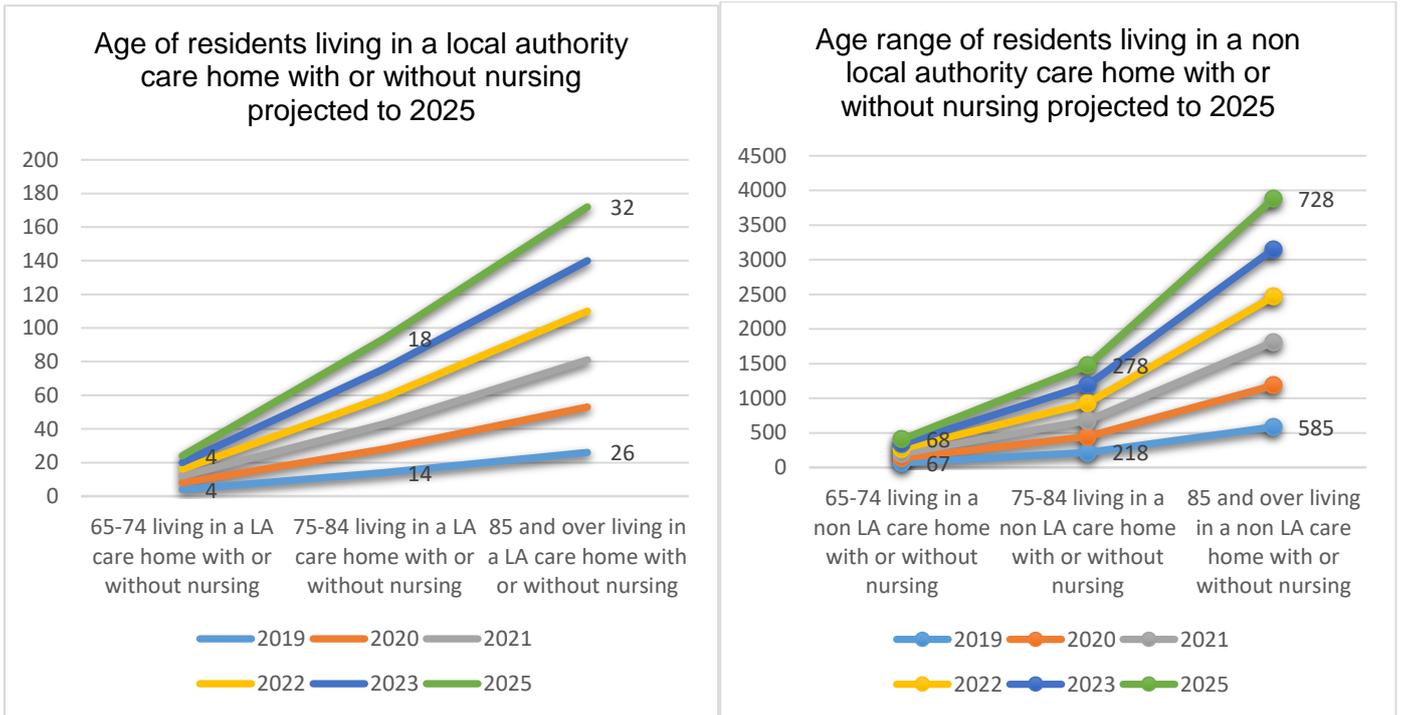
Older people living alone are significantly more likely to be socially isolated and unable to access support or services easily. By 2025 as a percentage of the total population over 65, Wokingham Borough is predicted to have the largest proportion of people living alone compared to its neighbours after Windsor and Maidenhead. It is therefore important that this is taken into account in the planning of services.



## 10. Care homes

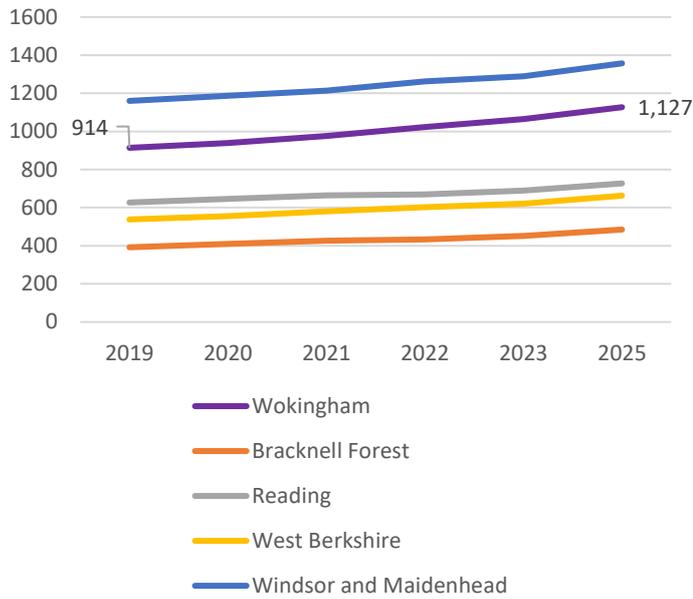
Approximately 416,000 people in England live in care homes (Laing and Buisson survey 2016). This is 4% of the population aged 65 years and over. In 2019 3% of people aged 65 and over are predicted to live in care homes in Wokingham Borough and by 2025 it is expected that this will slightly increase to 3.34%. Aged 85 and over the number living in care homes in England (2016) increases to 16%, Wokingham Borough is significantly higher than this at 22%.

The majority of people are living in a non-local authority care home. Between 2019-2025 there is expected to be a 27% increase (60 people) in those aged 75-84 year old living in a non-local authority care home and a 24% increase (143 people) aged 85 and over. This could to some extent explain the increase in people living alone and likely to experience isolation.

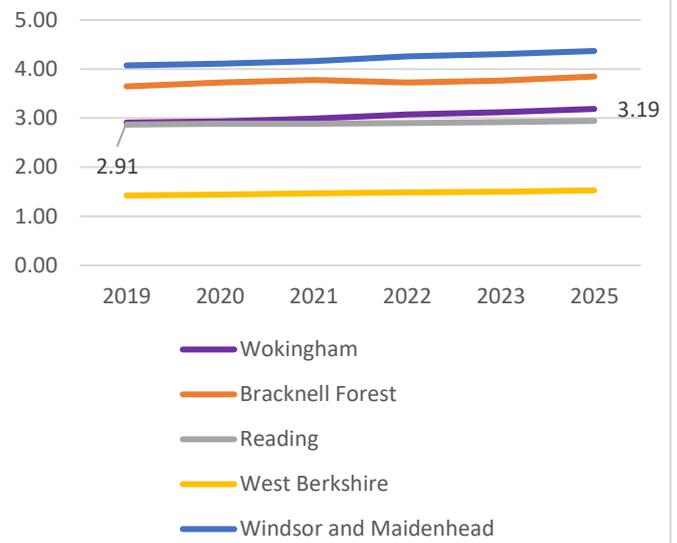


After Windsor and Maidenhead, Wokingham Borough has the higher number of population aged 65 and over living in a care home with or without nursing but as a proportion of all 65 and over this is lower generally.

Number of people aged 65 and over living in a care home with or without nursing projected to 2025



People aged 65+ living in a non LA care home with or without nursing as a percentage of all aged 65 and over projected to 2025



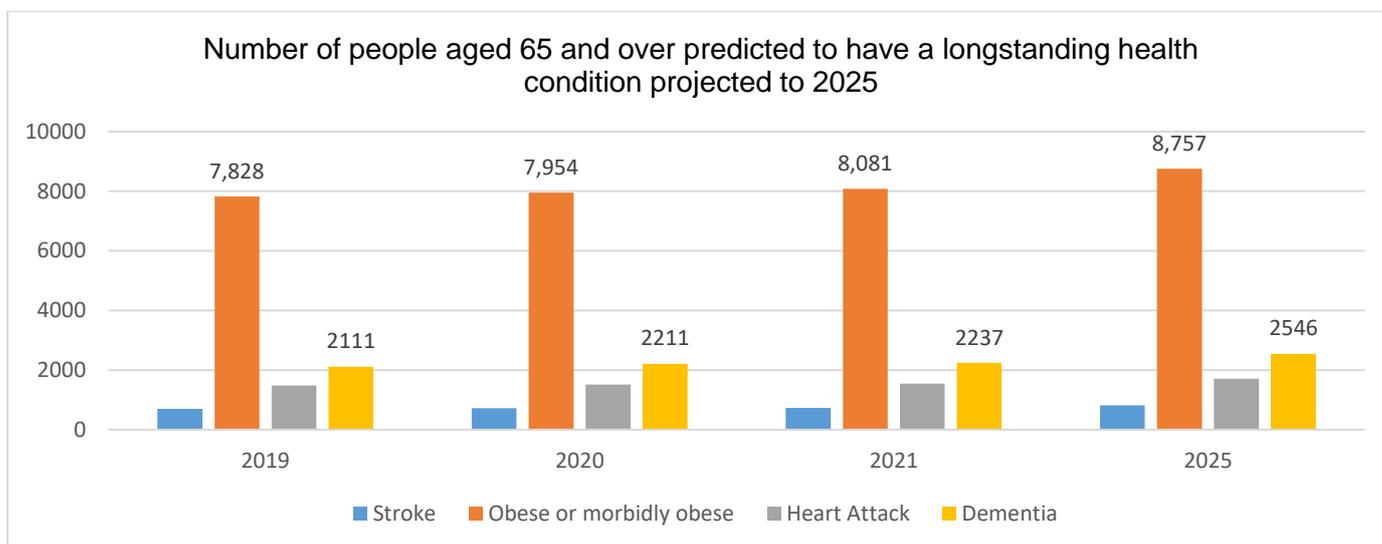
## 11. Longstanding health conditions

Residents of Wokingham Borough enjoy amongst the highest life expectancies in the country, a full 2 years extra for both women and men. Men aged 65 years living in Wokingham Borough can expect to live to 81.9 years old, while women aged 65 can expect to live to 84.9 years old. Healthy life expectancy (the average number of years a person would expect to live in good health) is also significantly higher than England's, with Wokingham Borough having the highest female healthy life expectancy in the country at 71 years of age, and the men are only slightly behind at 70. However there are internal inequalities with men from the most deprived 20% living 4.5 years less than those in the least deprived. For women the gap is wider, at 5.5 years

The JSNA is a local assessment of the current and future health, social care and wellbeing needs of the local population in Wokingham Borough, and looks at a wider range of factors that help shape the health and wellbeing of individuals, families and local communities such as education, employment and the environment. The JSNA uses data and evidence to highlight needs of the whole community. It is a key source of information which is used by the Health and Wellbeing Board to agree the priorities that will inform the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

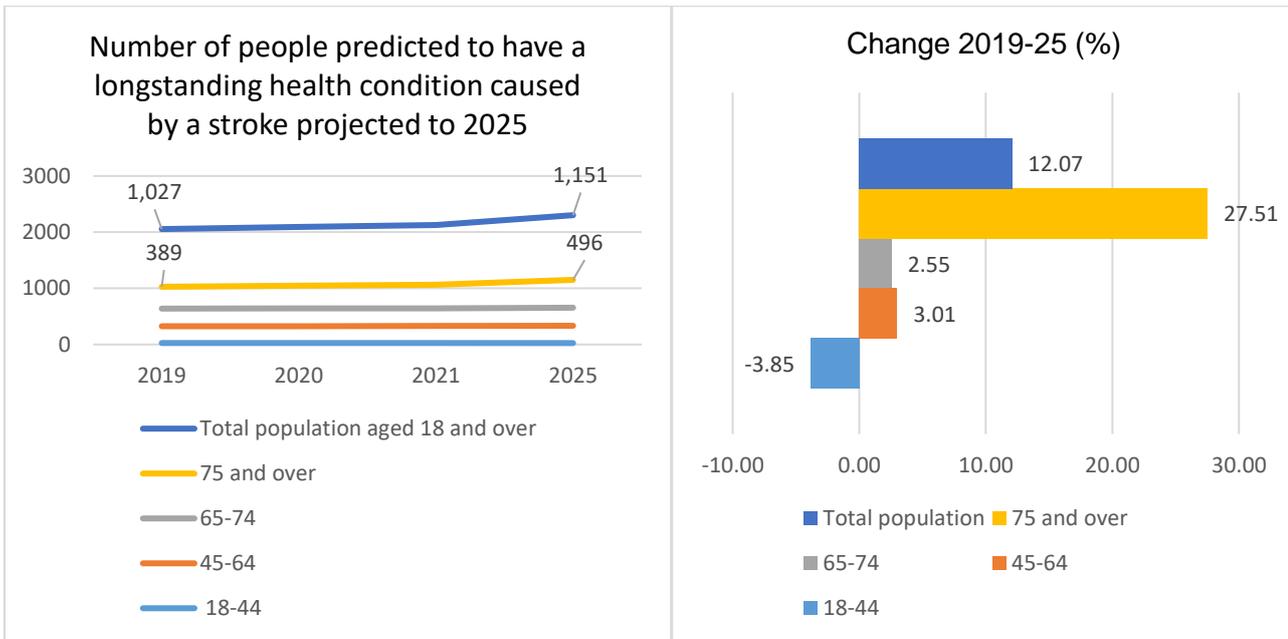
<http://jsna.wokingham.gov.uk/>

An increasing and aging population means that there will be greater numbers of people developing long-term conditions who will need more complex support. This is likely to result in a substantial increase in costs to the health and social care system and primary and secondary prevention of conditions such as diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and heart disease is increasingly important to reduce the costs to the health and social care system. It is important to work closely with Public Health to ensure appropriate preventative measures to minimise these.

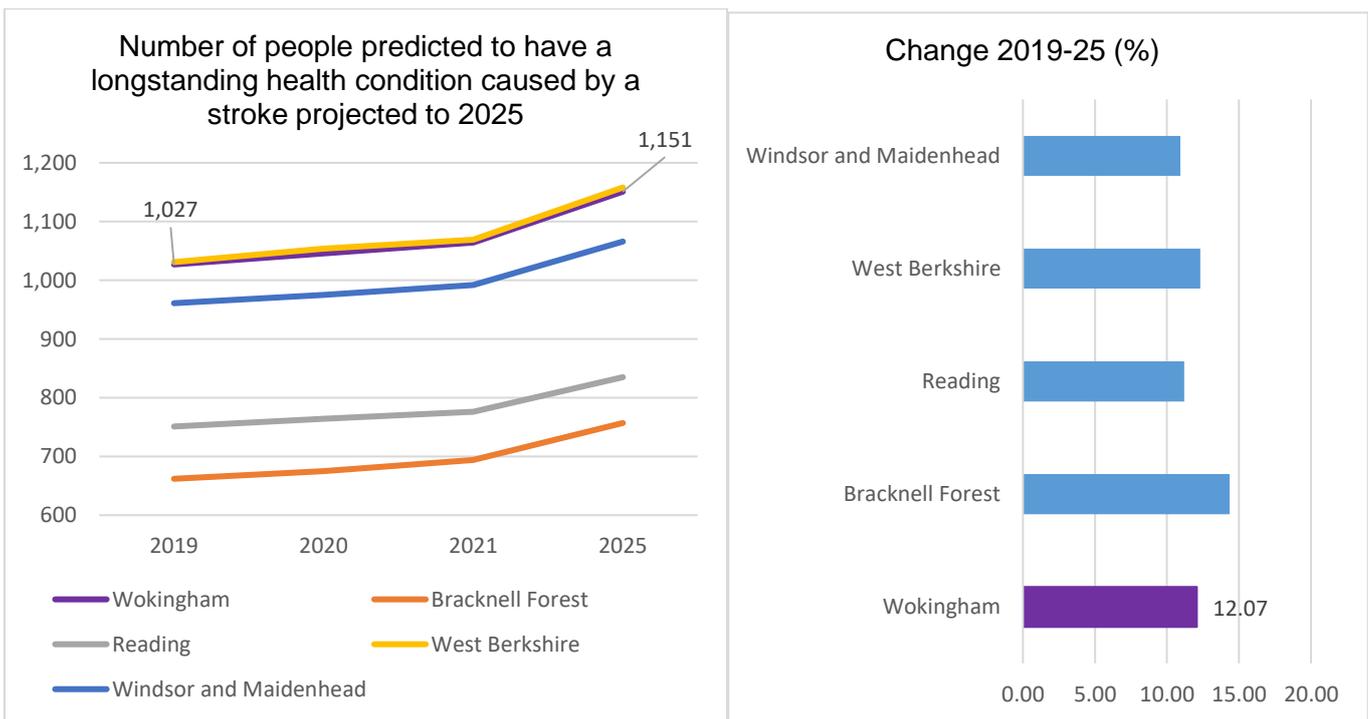


## 12. Stroke

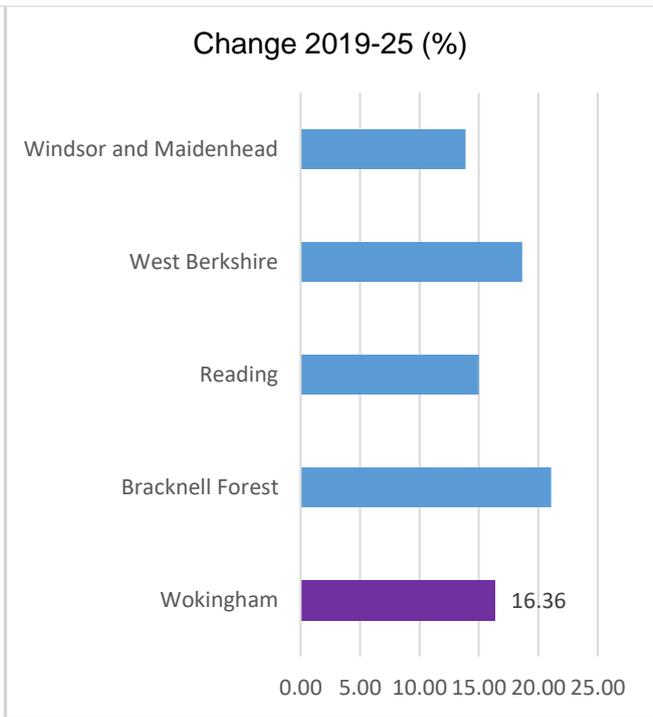
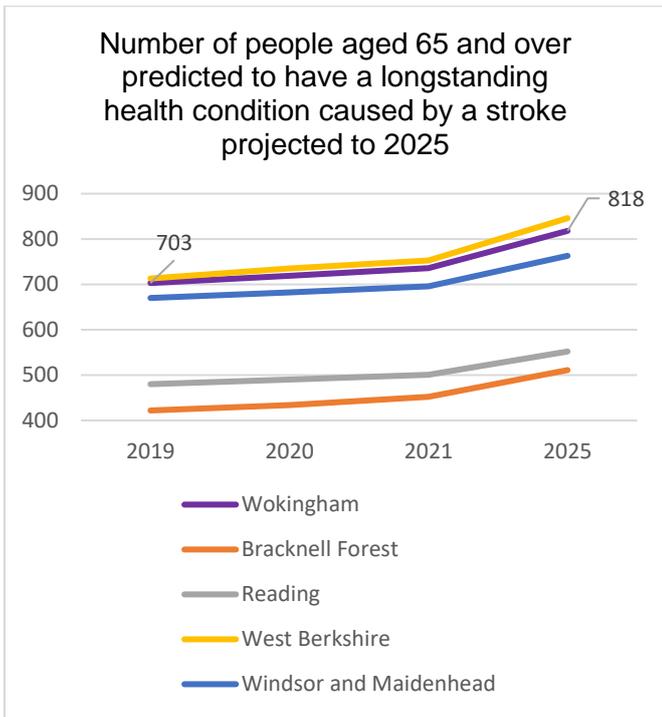
The number of people predicted to have to have a health condition caused by a stroke will increase by almost 100 people. There is predicted to be an increase of stroke overall but the majority of these people will be aged 65 and over. There is a particularly significant increase in those aged 75 and over.



Compared to other local authorities Wokingham Borough has amongst the highest number of people predicted to have a long-standing health condition caused by a stroke projected to 2025. As seen below, the rate at which this is predicted to increase is in line with neighbouring authorities – an increase of 12.07% between 2019-2025.

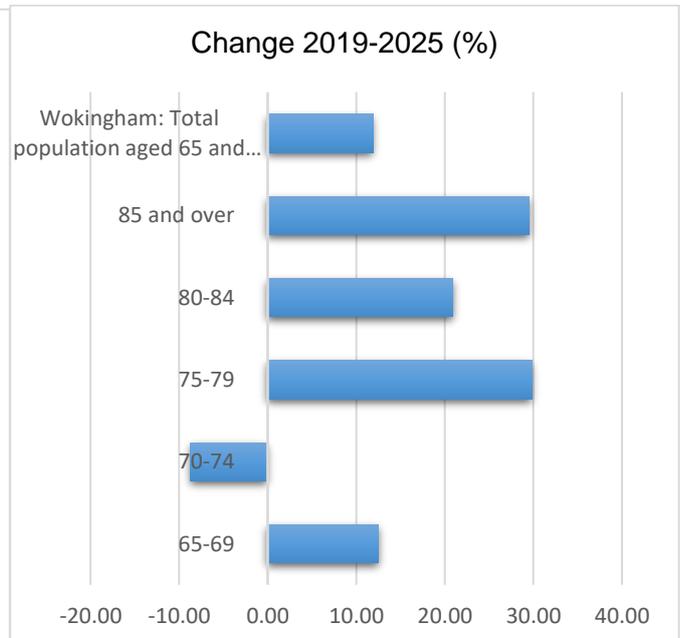
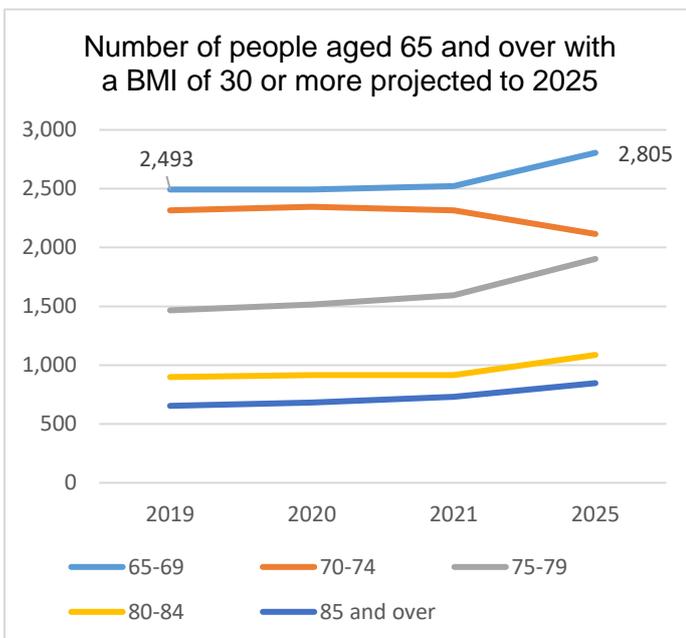


The rate for those over 65 follows a similar pattern, however there is expected to be 16% increase in the population aged 65 and over predicted to have a long-standing health condition caused by a stroke.

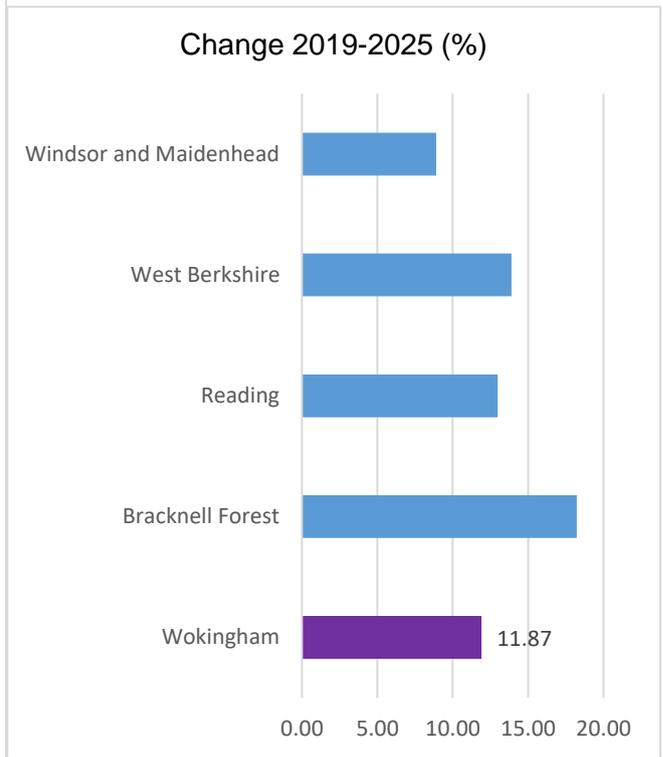
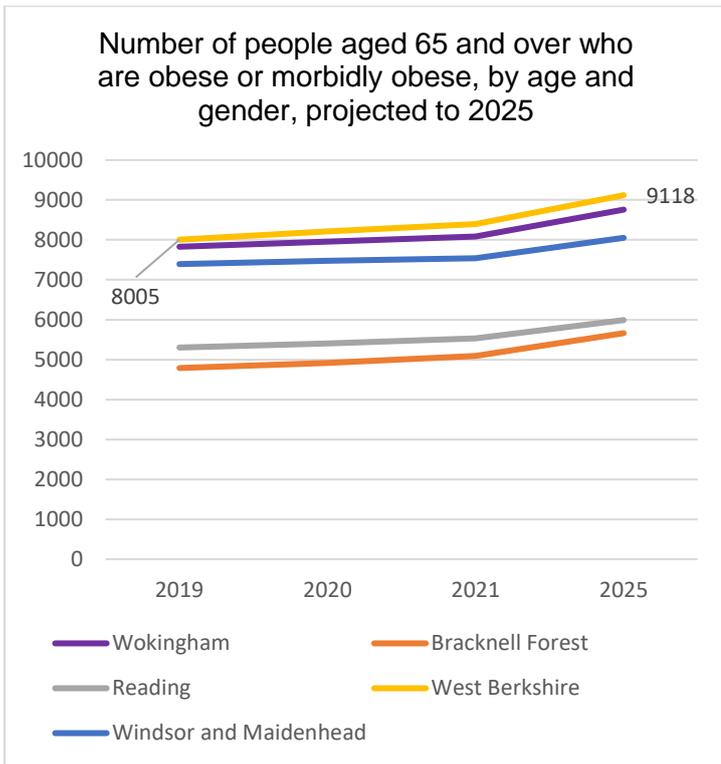


### 13. Obesity

The number of people in Wokingham Borough aged 65 and over predicted to be obese or morbidly obese will continue to increase year by year and rise from 7,828 in 2019 to 8,757 by 2025 (increase of 11.86%). This means that almost 26% of the population aged over 65 will be obese or morbidly obese. However the biggest growth (30%) of these will be those who are 85 and over.

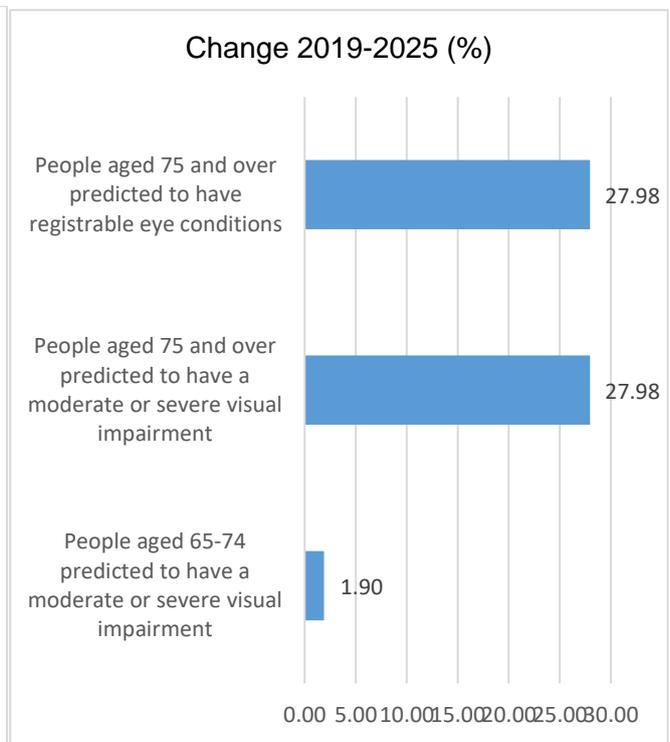
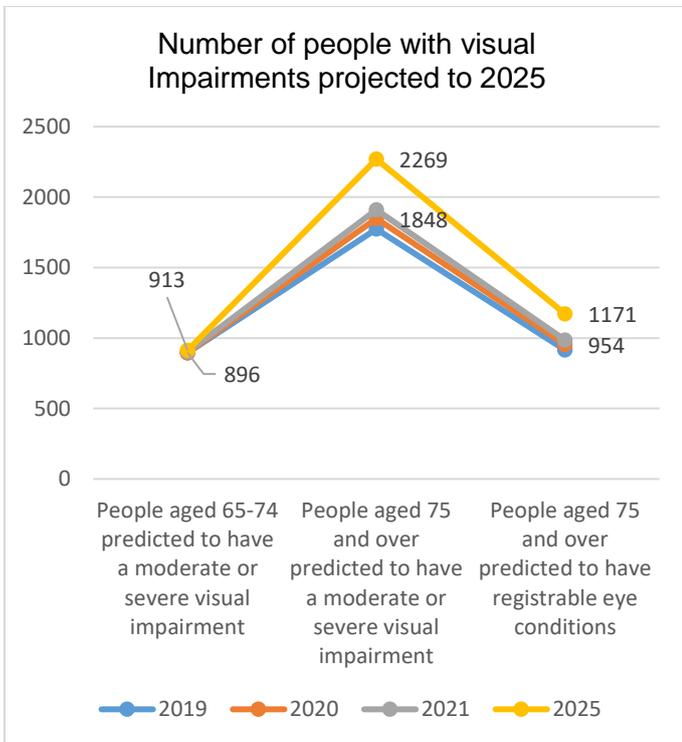


Compared to other neighbouring local authorities the trend is generally the same, however over the next 5 years the growth in this type of health condition is lower than neighbouring authorities.



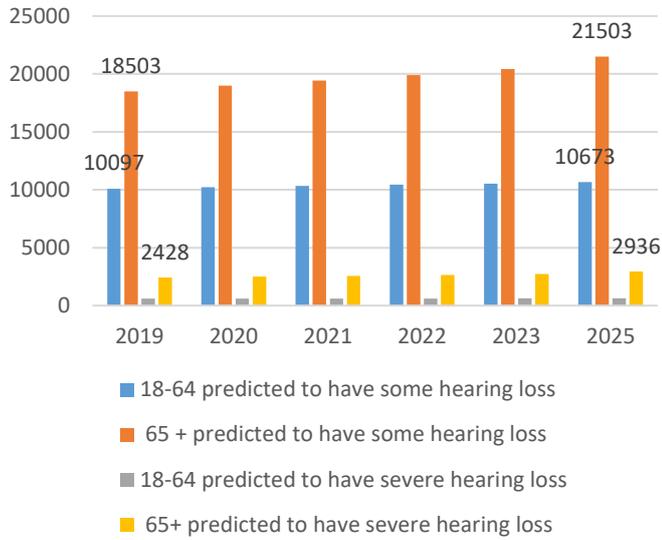
## 14. Visual and sensory impairments

3,584 people aged 65 and over are currently predicted to have a visual impairment. By 2025 this is expected to increase to 4,353. This is an increase of 21.4% over the period,

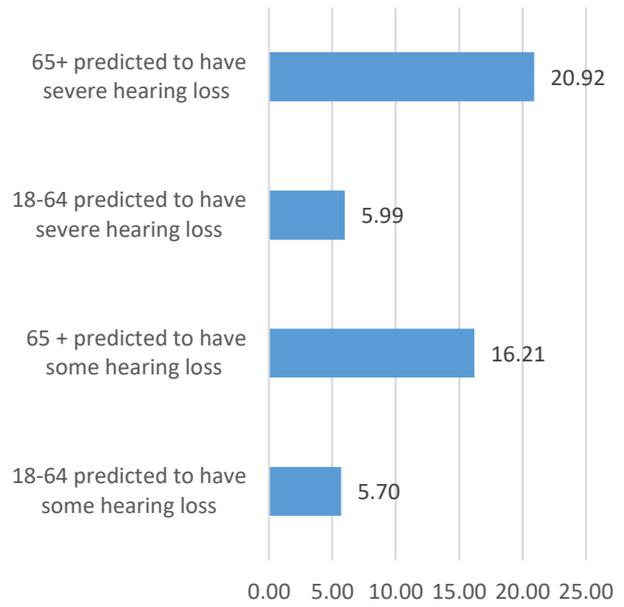


The biggest change is expected to be in the 65 and over predicted to have severe hearing loss. This accounts for 508 people.

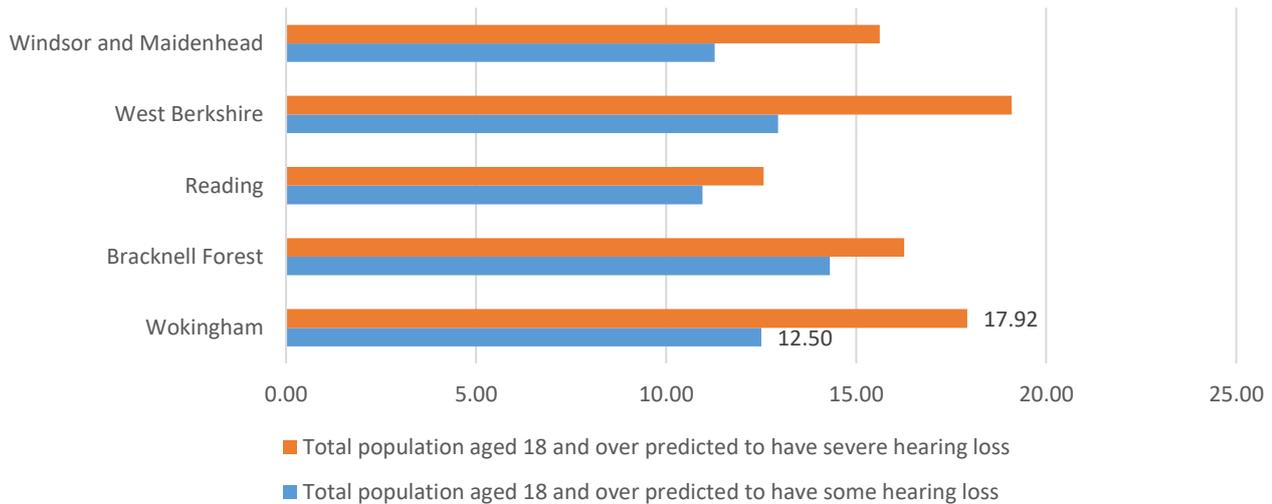
Number of people predicted to have some, or severe, hearing loss, by age, projected to 2025



Change 2019-25 (%)



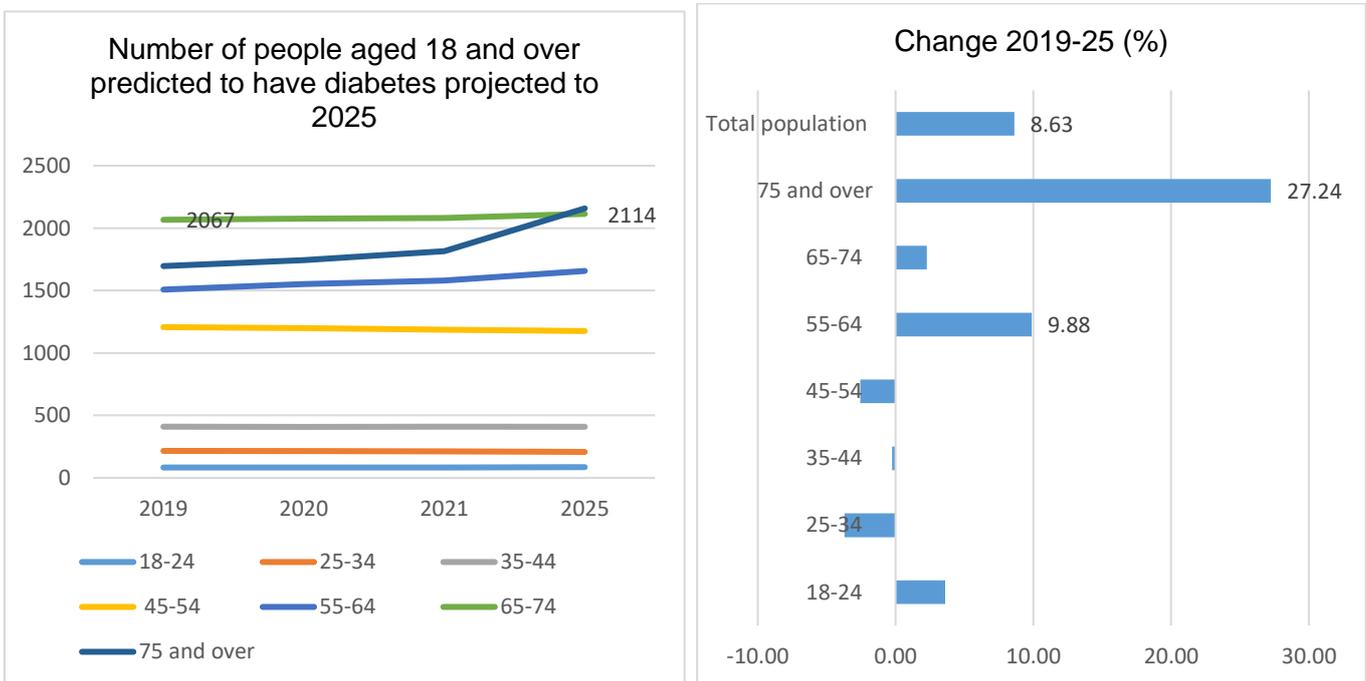
Percentage change in hearing impairment



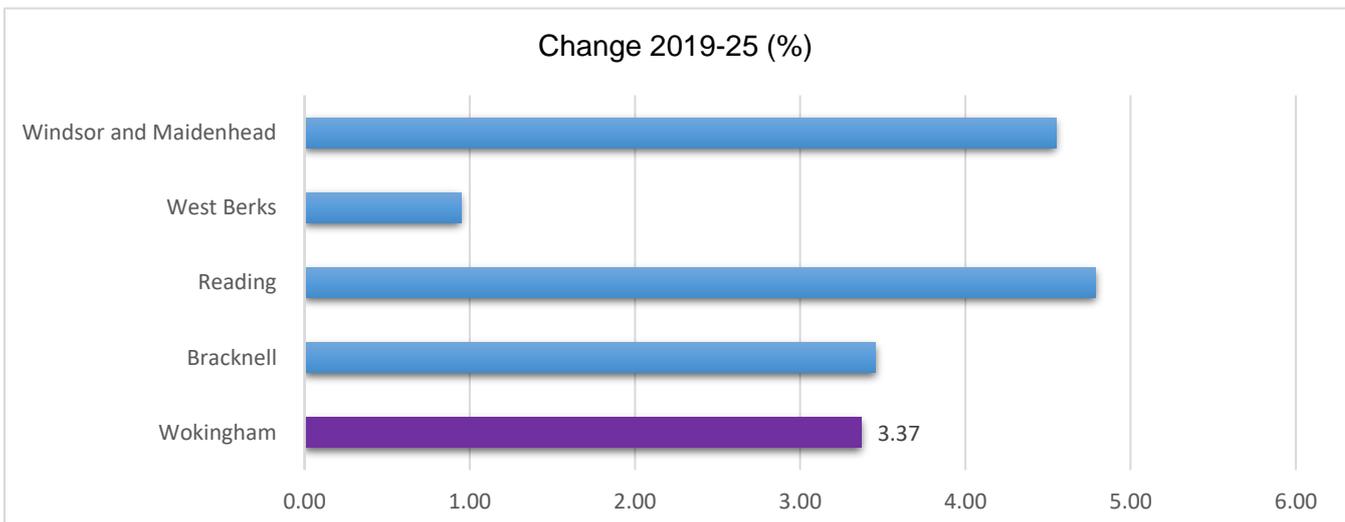
## 15. Diabetes

For Wokingham Borough the number of people aged 65 and over predicted to have diabetes will rise from 3,763 to 4,272 (increase of 13.52%). The estimated prevalence of diabetes in the Wokingham CCG is 6.4% which is below the England prevalence of 7.3%. Some preventable conditions, such as obesity and physical activity are associated with the development of type 2 diabetes, and can result in reduced quality of life, health and life expectancy. There is an increasing rate of diagnosis in children, and it is more common in those of African, African-Caribbean and South Asian origin.

The most significant factors for the onset of Type 2 diabetes are age and weight. It is expected that diabetes will increase by 8.6% across the total population but particularly in those aged 75 and over which is likely to see an increase of 27% or 462 people. This is a similar trend to obesity as we have seen above.

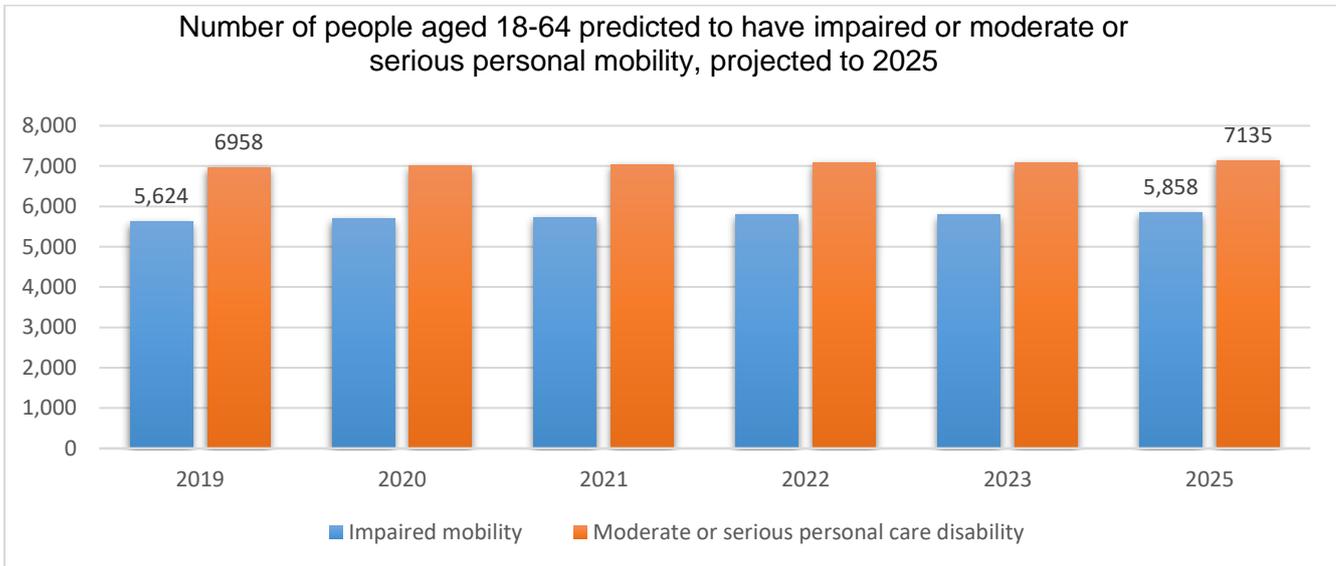


The increase in people predicted to have either Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes is slightly lower than many neighbouring local authorities.

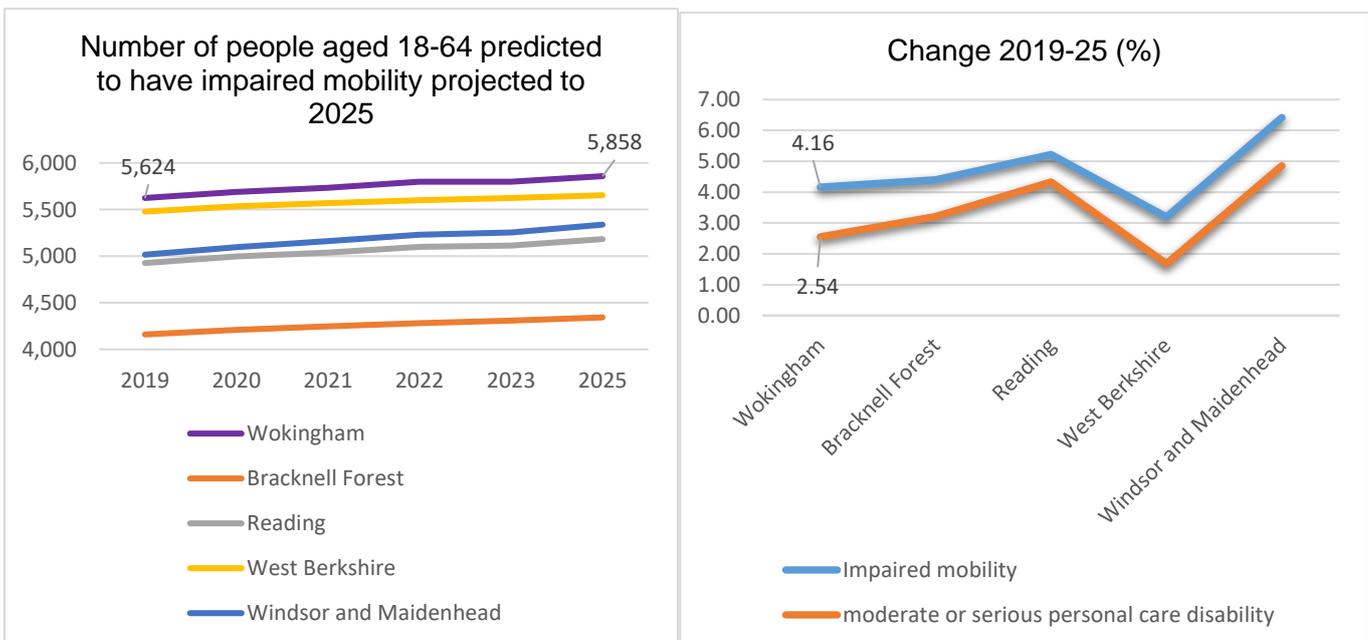


## 16. Physical Disabilities

The data below is from the Life Opportunities Survey Office for Disability Issues (2011) HM Government. Despite the survey being dated the prevalence rates have been applied to ONS population projections of the population to give estimated numbers predicted to have impaired mobility. A respondent is defined as having a mobility impairment if they indicated that they experience either moderate, severe or complete difficulty with mobility, and certain activities are limited in any way as a result, such as walking or climbing stairs.



Wokingham Borough is predicted to have the highest people with impaired mobility and this is likely to remain steady over the next 5 years. The figures below predict a 4.1% increase in those with impaired mobility that is amongst the lowest compared to neighboring authorities and a 2.5% increase in moderate or serious personal mobility.

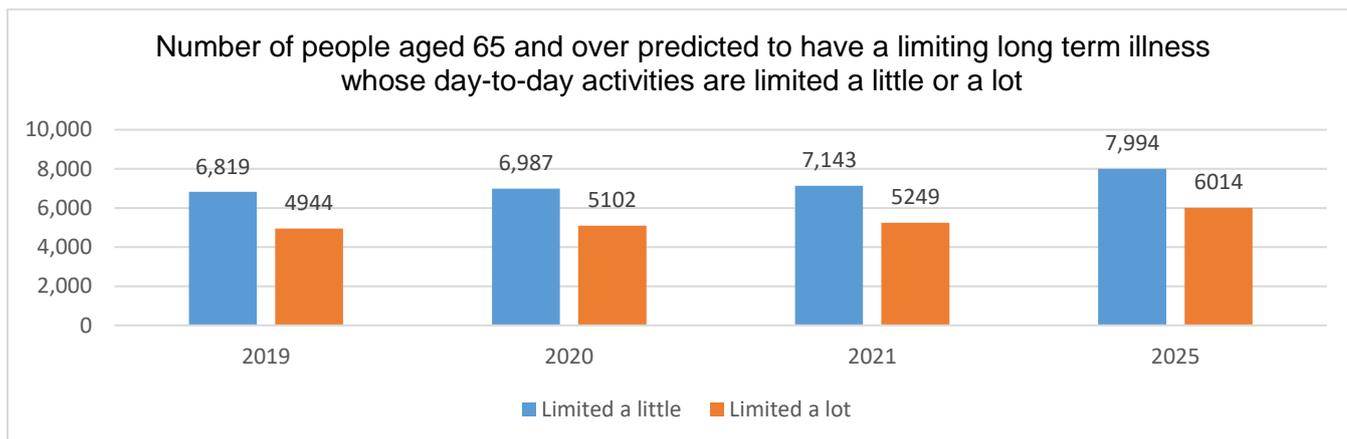


Two items in the national Census asked people to report on their general health and whether they felt that they were limited at all in performing day-to-day activities due to health reasons. Almost 90% of respondents living in Wokingham Borough said that their day to day activities were not

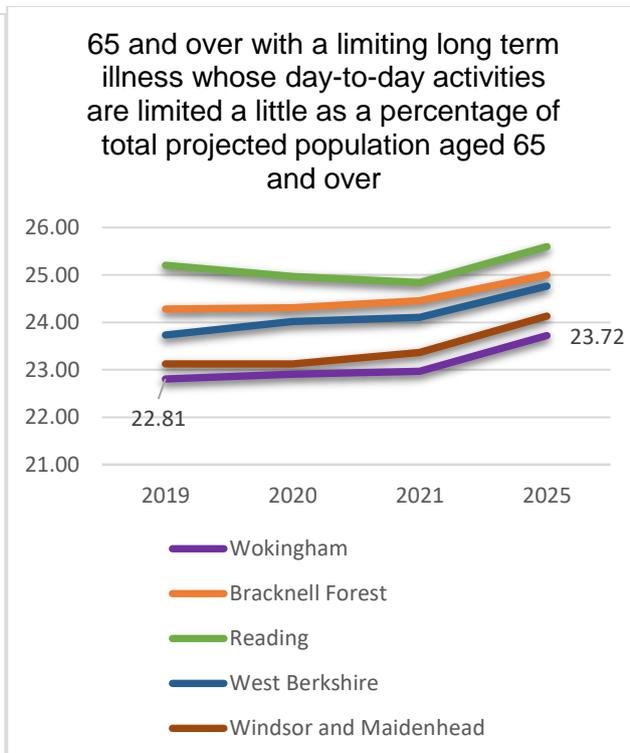
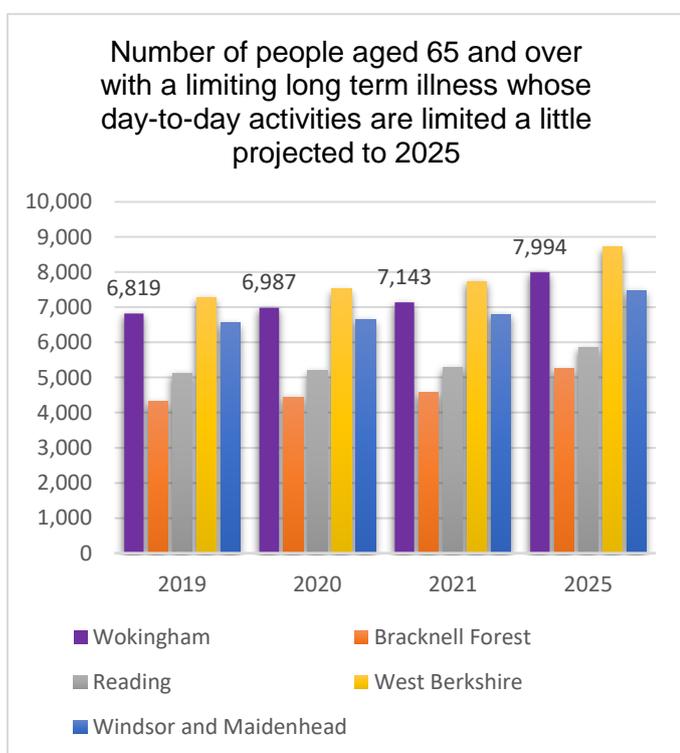
limited at all. This is higher than the national average and the average for the South East Region. Around 55% of people living in the borough felt that they were in very good health with a further 30% feeling that they were in good health. Again, this is higher than the national and South East average with fewer people from the Wokingham Borough reporting that they were in poor health.

### 17. Limiting long term illness

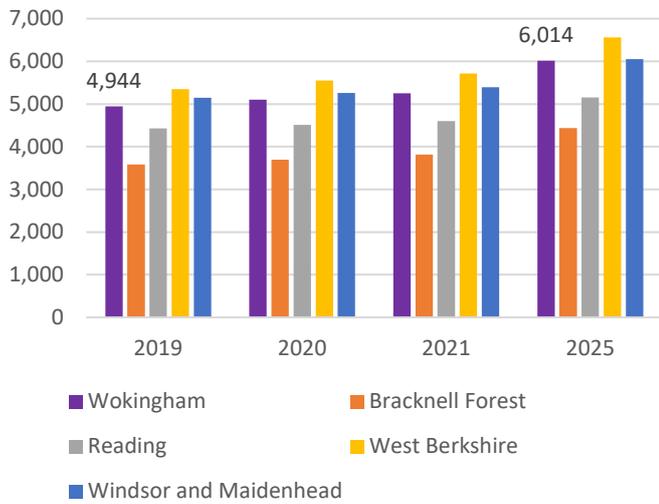
The numbers of people predicted to have a limiting long term illness whose day to day activities are limited a little or a lot are expected to increase from approximately 37% of people aged over 65 in 2019 to 42% by 2025. This equates to 2,245 people



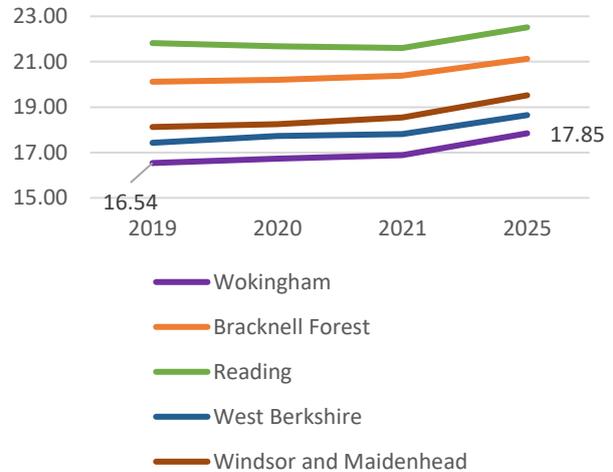
Wokingham Borough has the lowest percentage of the total population aged 65 and over with a limiting long term illness compared to neighboring authorities and this is predicted to remain consistent until 2025, this reinforces that the population has a higher healthy life expectancy.



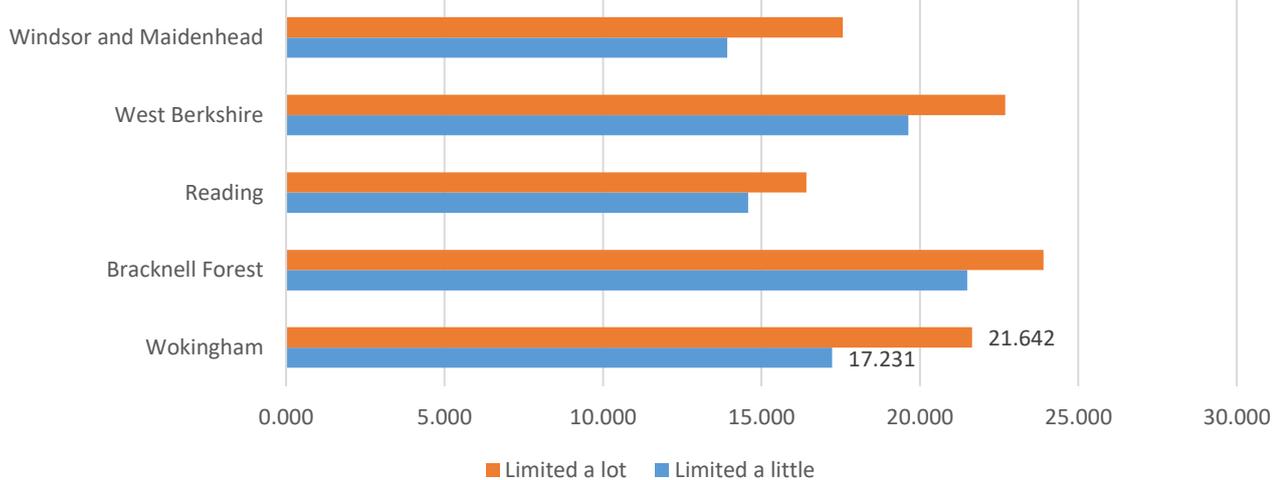
Number of people aged 65 and over with a limiting long term illness whose day-to-day activities are limited a lot projected to 2025



65 and over with a limiting long term illness whose day-to-day activities are limited a lot as a percentage of total projected population aged 65 and over

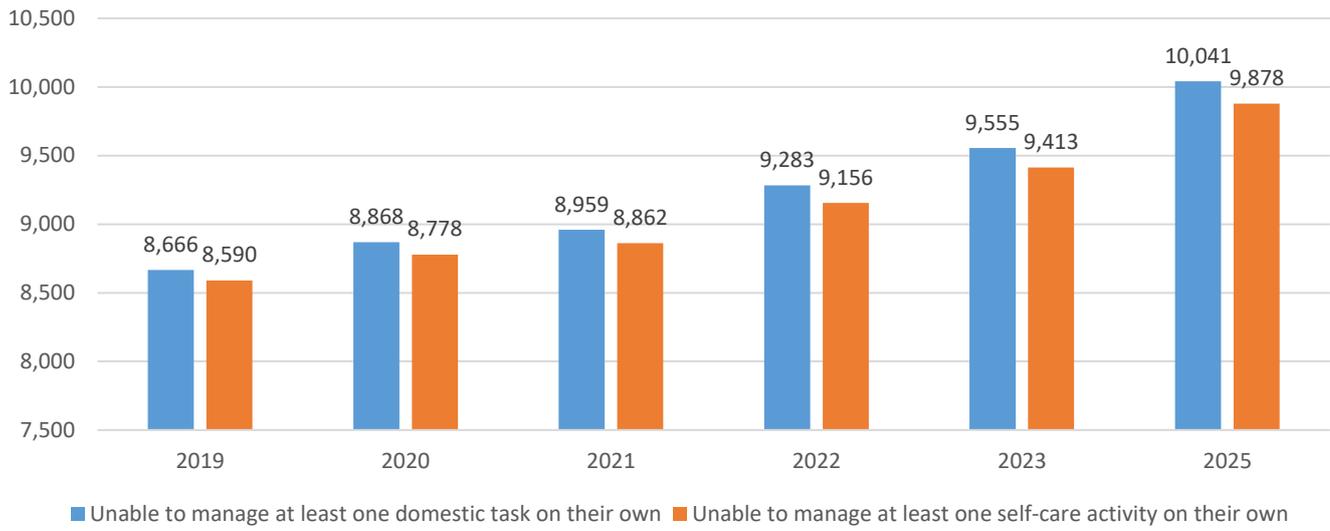


Change 2019-25 (%)



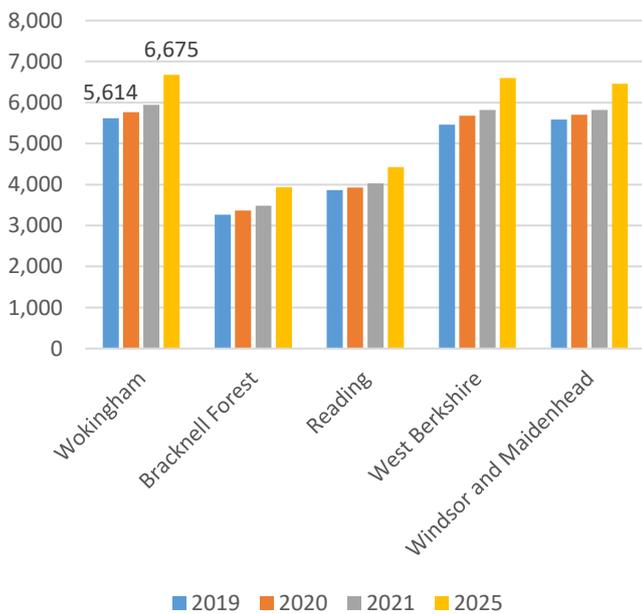
There are expected to be an increase of 2,663 people by 2025 aged 65 and over unable to manage at least one domestic task, (household shopping, wash and dry dishes, clean windows inside, jobs involving climbing, use a vacuum cleaner to clean floors, wash clothing by hand, open screw tops, deal with personal affairs, do practical activities) or manage at least one self-care activity on their own, (bathe, shower or wash all over, dress and undress, wash their face and hands, feed, cut their toenails, take medicines). As a proportion of all people aged 65 and over, by 2025 this is expected to increase to 59% (from 57% in 2019)

Number of people over 65 unable to manage at least one domestic task or self care task projected to 2025

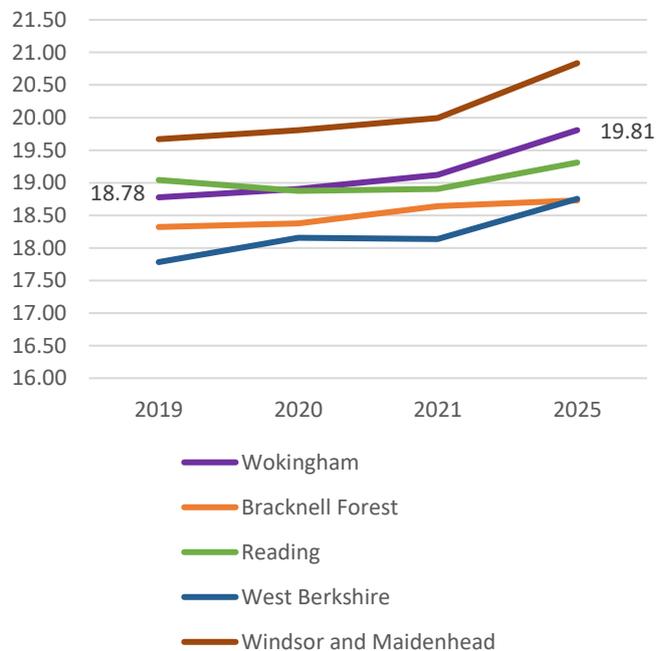


There is predicted to be a 19% increase in people aged 65 and over unable to manage at least one mobility activity on their own. Activities include: going out of doors and walking down the road; getting up and down stairs; getting around the house on the level; getting to the toilet; getting in and out of bed.

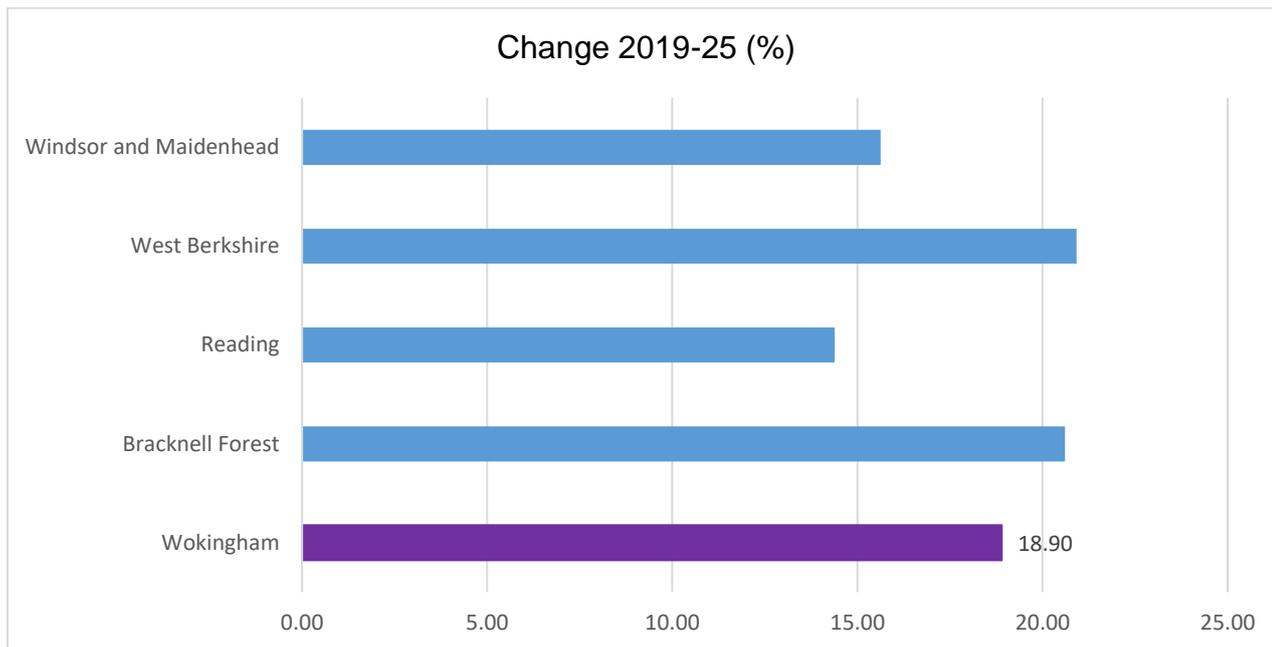
Number of people aged 65 and over unable to manage at least one mobility activity on their own projected to 2025



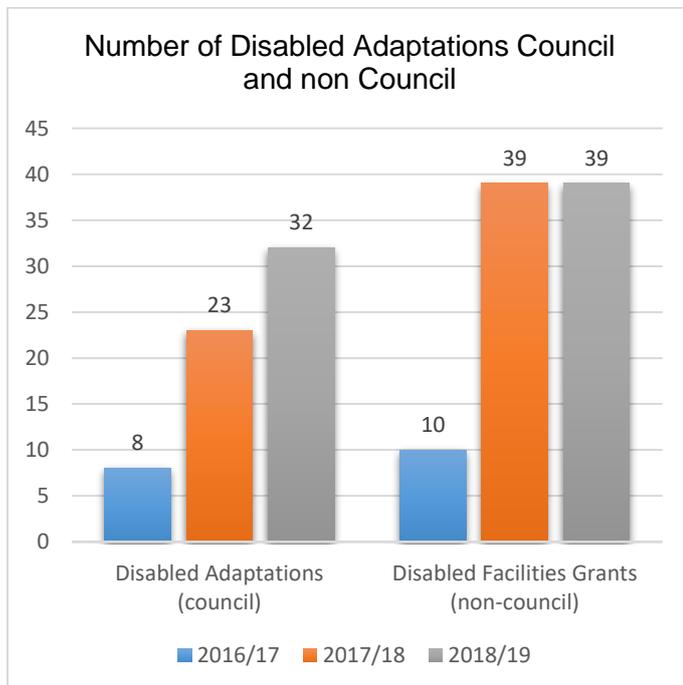
Percentage of total projected population aged 65 and over projected to 2025



Compared to neighbouring authorities this increase is as below:

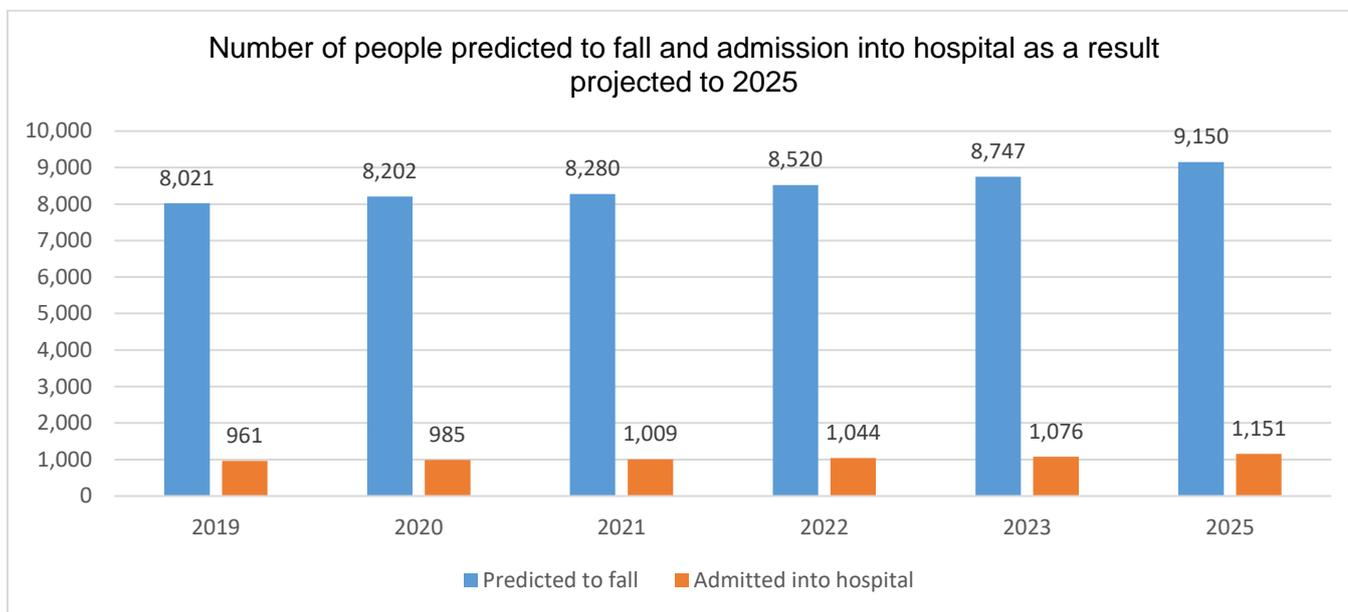


The figures below show the number of disabled adaptations carried out by the Council, they have increased from 18 in 2016/17 to 71 in 2018/19. This is an increase of almost 300%. It is expected that the demand for this will be even greater in the future given that projected numbers of people with mobility issues and day to day activities being limited.



## 18. Falls and hospital admissions

Much of the falls data that is reported comes from the hospital data. They record falls that result in hospital admissions, and rely on a fall being recorded as the reason for hospital admission in all cases where they were indeed the cause. This does not consider falls that don't lead to hospitalisation. Oxford Brooks University have produced estimates of the total number of falls occurring in the population using self-reported falls from the Health Survey for England (2005).

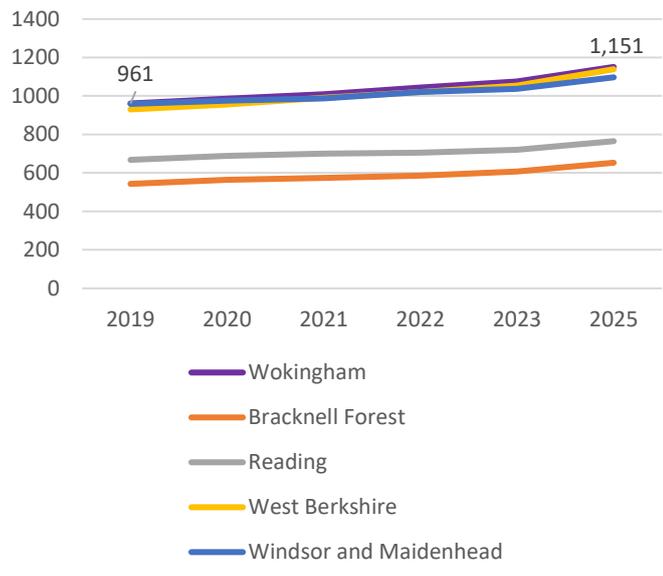


There is predicted to be an increase of 20% (or 190 people) being admitted into hospital as a result of a fall. The chart above shows that in 2019 of people predicted to fall 11.98% of these would be admitted into hospital. By 2025 this is expected to increase to 12.5%. In real terms this is an increase of 90 admissions, an increase in percentage terms of 19.77%

- Falls are the most common cause of death from injury in the over 65s, and many falls result in fractures and/or head injuries. Falls cost the NHS more than £2 billion per year and also have a knock-on effect on productivity costs in terms of carer time and absence from work (Snooks et al 2011).
- After a fall an older person has a 50% probability of having their mobility seriously impaired and a 10% probability of dying within a year (Help the Aged, 2008).
- Falls within the older population is a big health risk, not only for those that suffer the fall but also for the healthcare system, falls and fractures within the over 65 years population account for over 4 million hospital bed days each year in England alone (Royal College of Physicians, 2010)
- One in three people aged over 65, and half of those aged over 80, fall at least once a year (Todd and Skelton 2004). The results for England show that females are at a greater risk of falling when compared with men, and that as age increases as does the number of falls

The projections for the increase in hospital admissions as a result of falls is in line with neighbouring authorities

Number of people aged 65 and over predicted numbers of hospital admissions due to falls projected to 2025

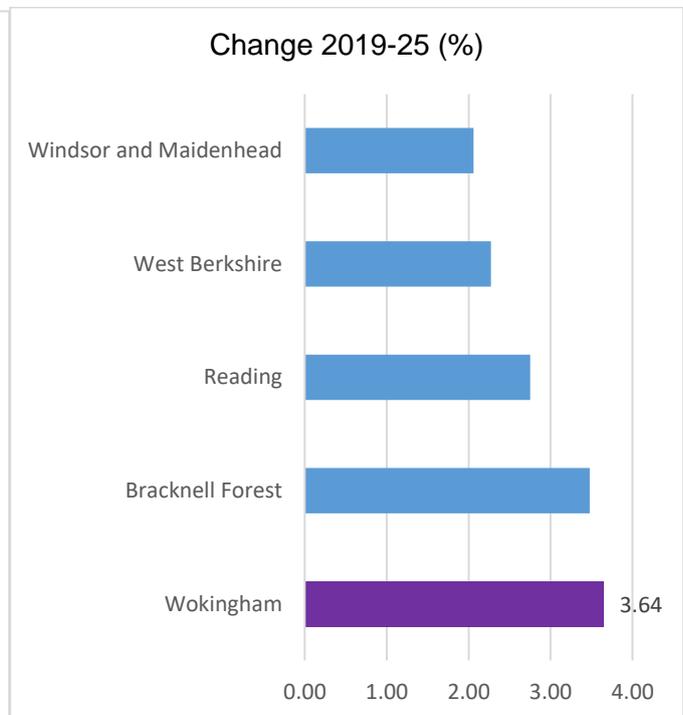
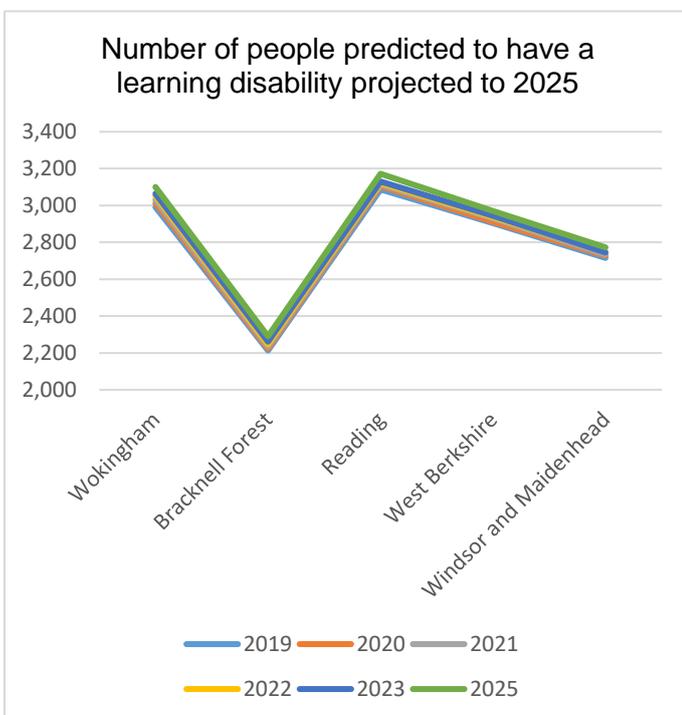
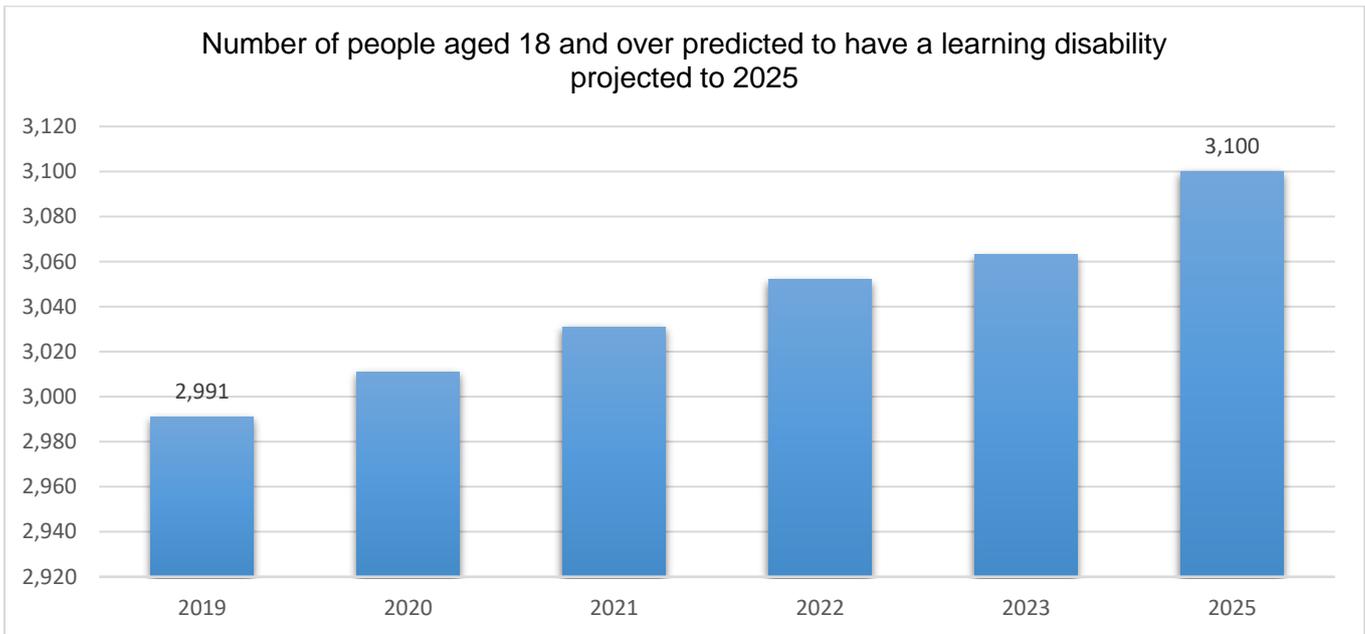


Change 2019-25 (%)



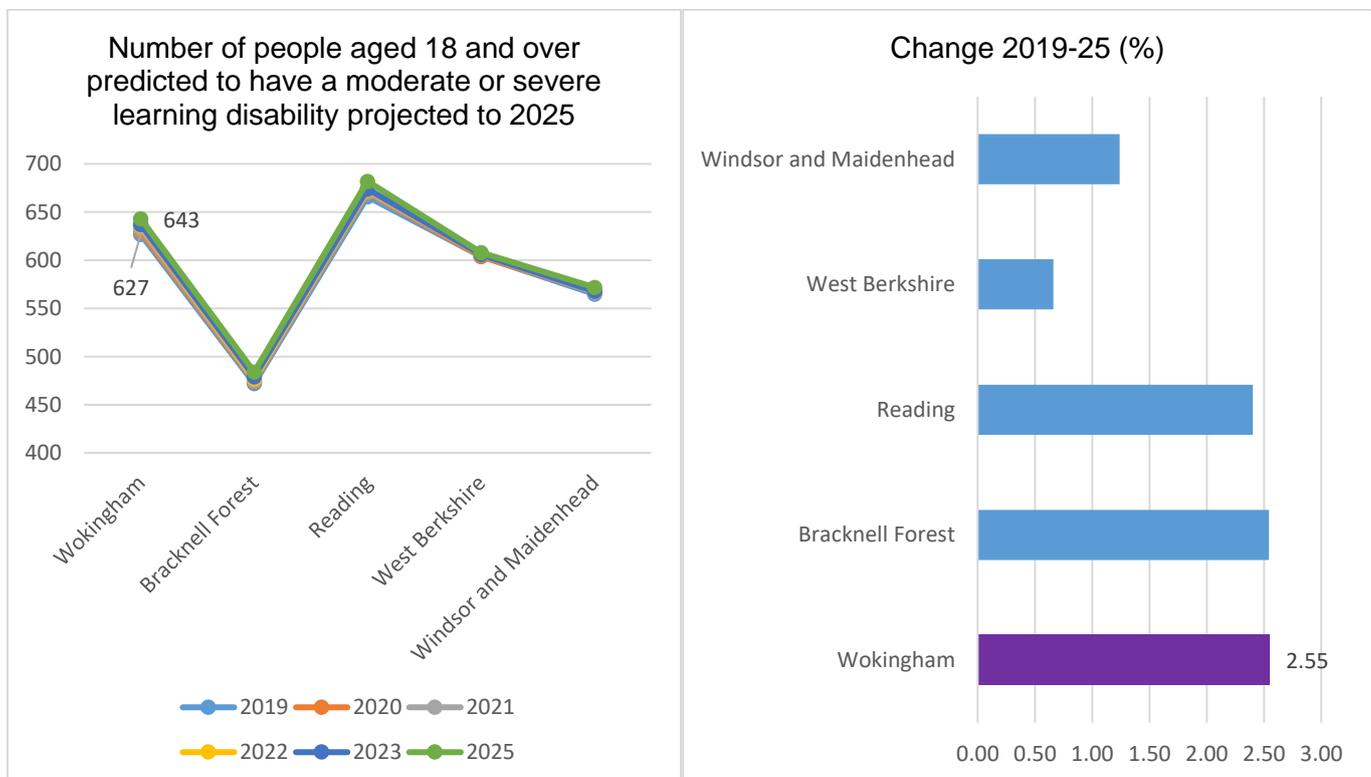
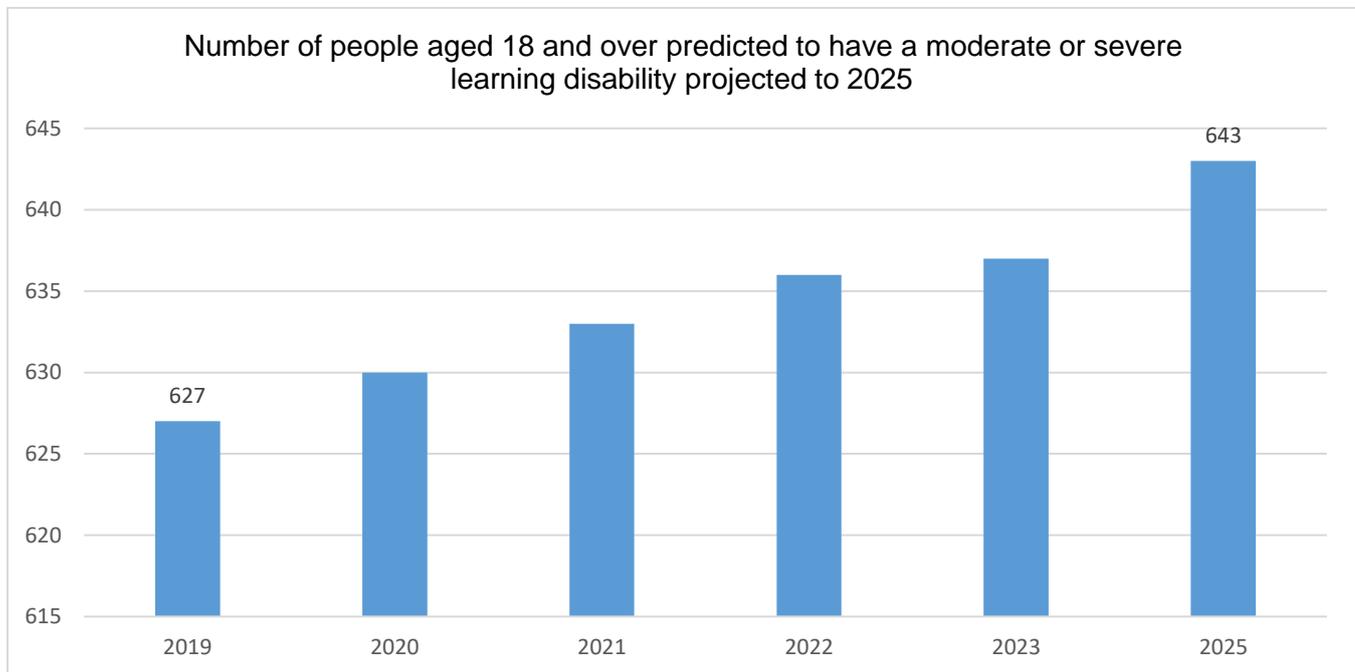
## 19. Learning Disability

Over the next five years we will see an increase in the number of people with learning disabilities from 2991 in 2019 to 3100 in 2025, an increase of 3.6%. This is expected to be accompanied by an increase in the complexity of needs as young people with learning disabilities with extremely complex needs are now living well into adulthood. Wokingham Borough's increase in the number of people with learning disabilities is the highest compared to neighbours, however when looking at actual numbers of people Reading will have the highest number of individuals with a learning disability.



## 20. Moderate or severe learning disabilities

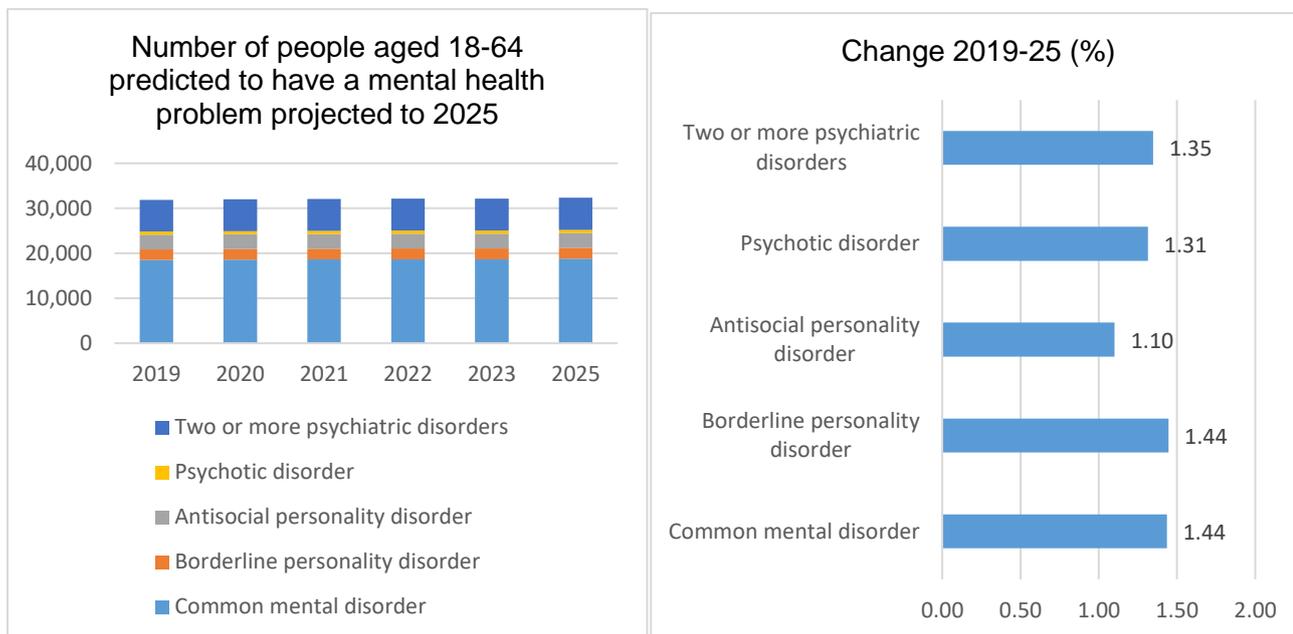
People aged 18 and over predicted to have a severe learning disability, and hence likely to be in receipt of services, by age, projected to 2025 is expected to remain consistent with growth of 2.55% in this area according to the PANSI information. This is consistent throughout the other neighbouring authorities but again numbers are higher for Reading.



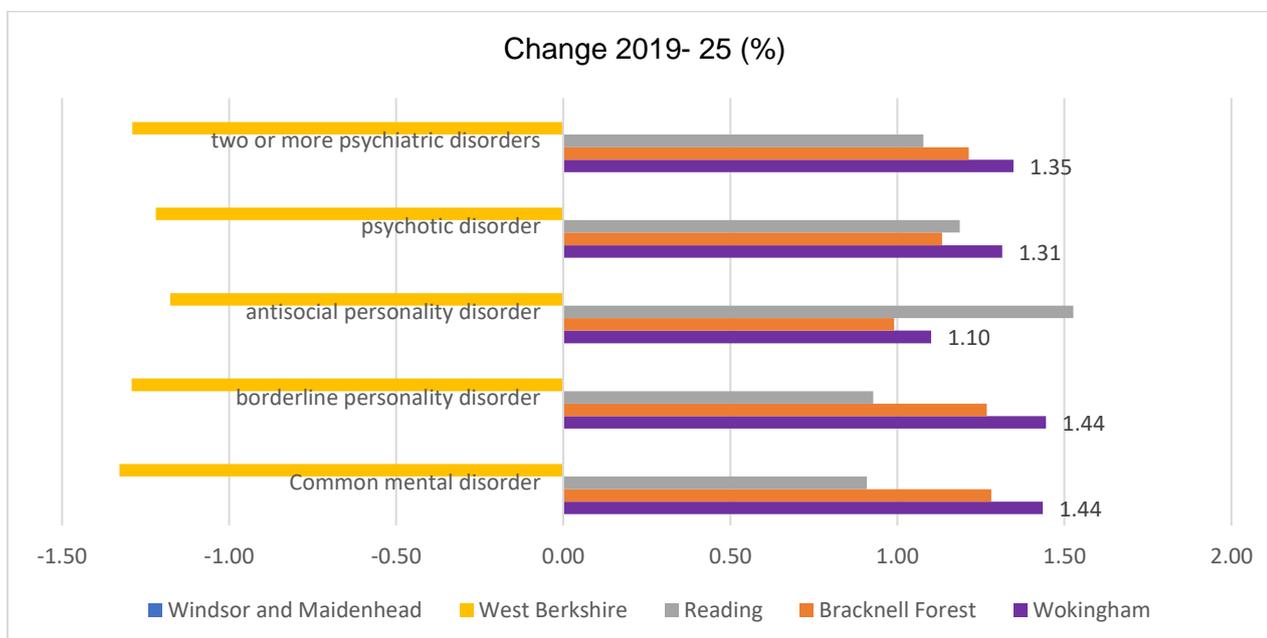
Please see our learning disability strategy for more information about the current and future anticipated needs and demands.

## 21. Mental Health

Mental health is particularly important in determining quality of life and wellbeing. The total number of people aged 18-64 with a mental health problem (including personality disorders) living in the borough will increase from 31,891 to 32,331 an increase of 1.37%.



Compared to other local authorities, the figure below shows that apart from antisocial personality disorder, Wokingham Borough is predicted to have a higher increase in all other mental health conditions for 18-64 year olds.



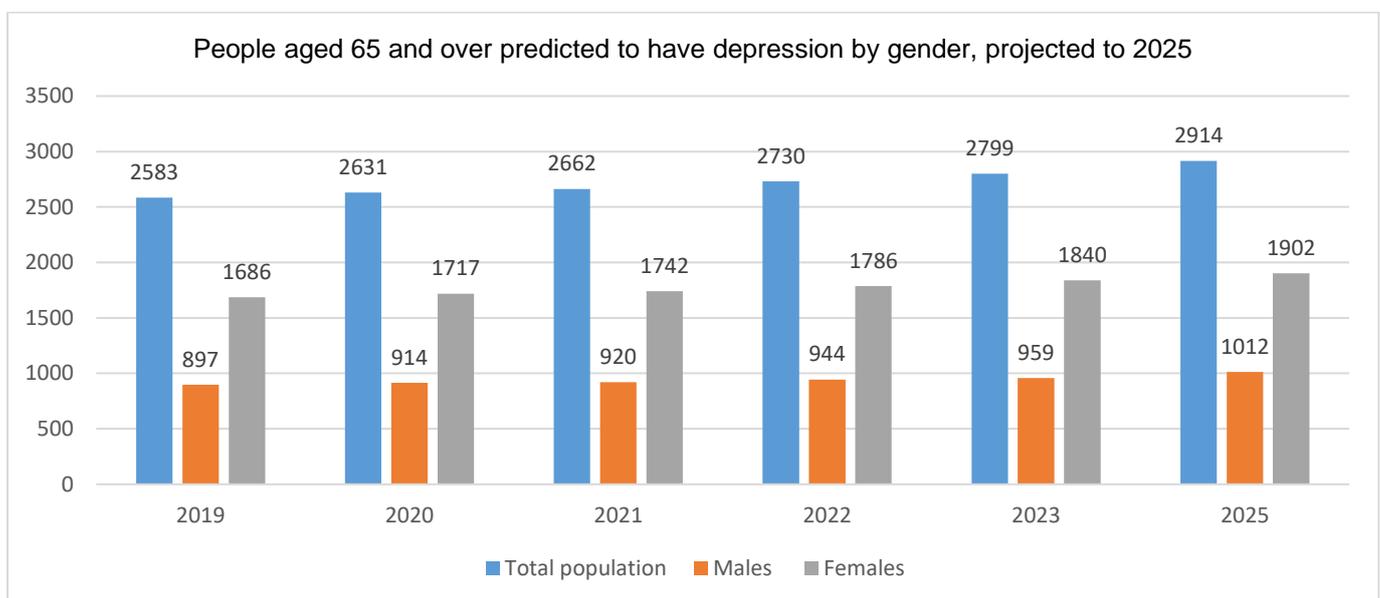
POPPI information predicting the number of people aged 30-64 predicted to have early onset dementia, shows that there is little growth between 2019-2025. However, the prevalence of early-onset dementia is likely to be systematically underestimated as case ascertainment relies upon service contact). However the underlying assumption is that not all of those with early-onset dementia seek help and are identified by services early in the disease course.

## 22. Depression

Depression is the most common mental health problem for people aged 65, nationally an estimated 22% of men and 28% of women and 40% of older people in care homes are affected<sup>15</sup>. Furthermore, older people in residential and nursing homes are two to three times more likely to experience depression than older people in the community<sup>16</sup>.

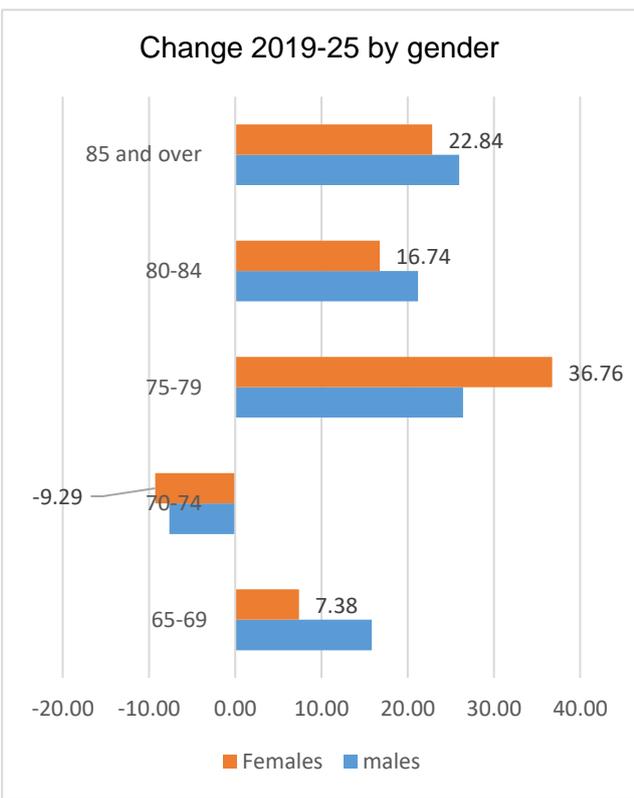
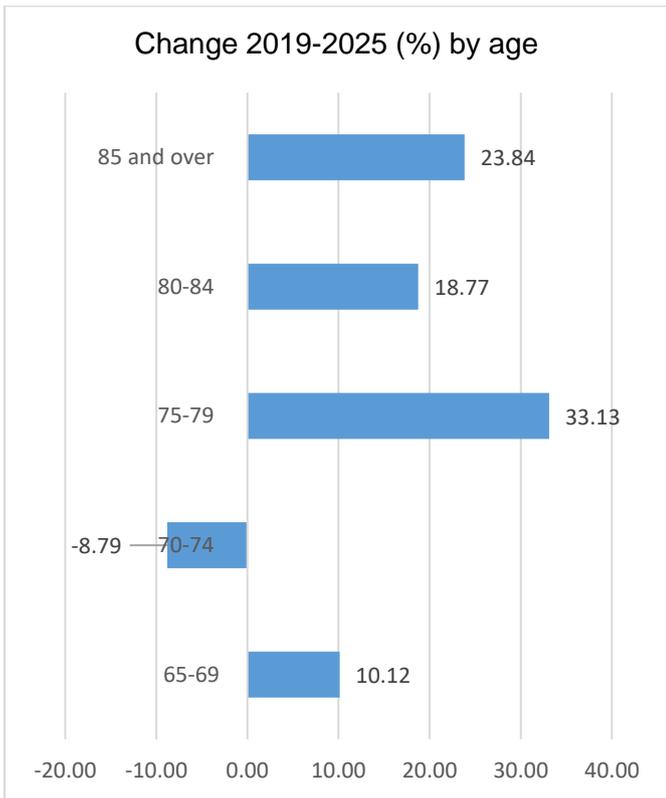
Nationally, depression is one of the most prevalent conditions, second only to hypertension. The prevalence of most other conditions in the adult population of England is stable, whereas the prevalence of depression has increased from 6% in 2012-13 to nearly 10% in 2017-18. Other mental health conditions also increased in prevalence across England in the last year, a trend that, if it continues into the future, will have a bearing on the level and nature of care that will be needed by future clients of the social care system.

The chart below demonstrates that the prevalence of depression will increase amongst both males and females, the biggest increases are expected to be in those aged 75-79 and 85 and over.

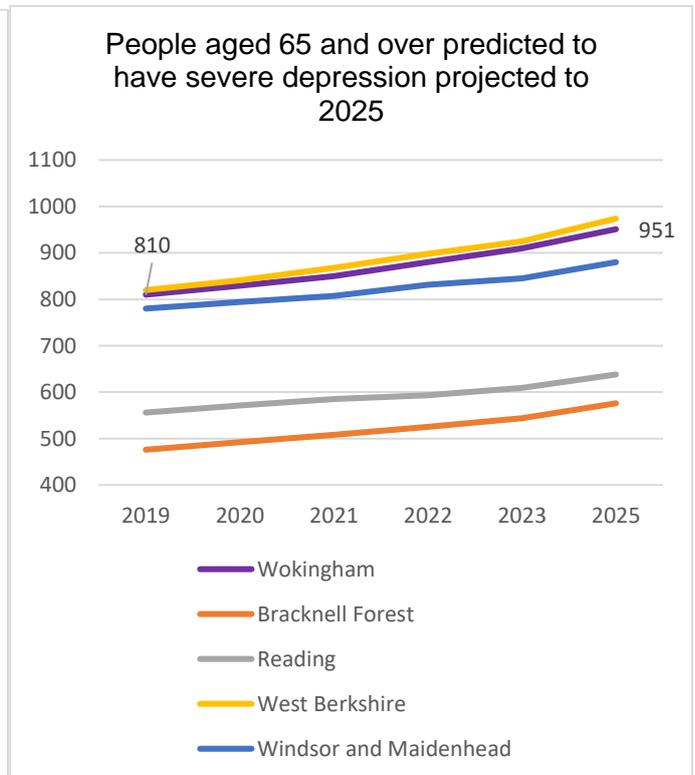
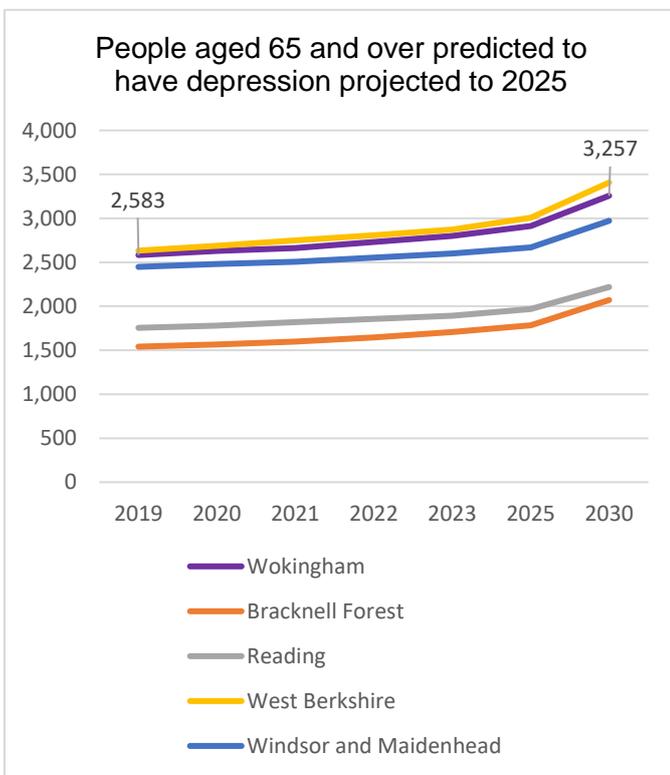


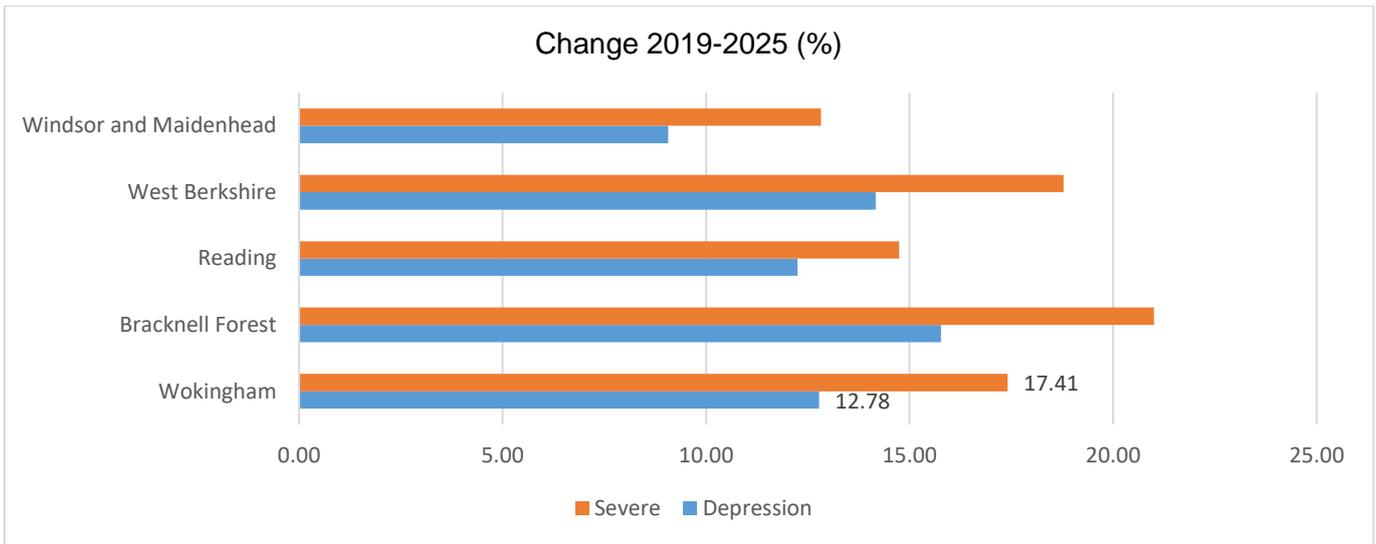
<sup>15</sup> Age UK, (2016). [https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/docs/default-source/improving-care/better-mh-policy/college-reports/college-report-cr221.pdf?sfvrsn=bef8f65d\\_2](https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/docs/default-source/improving-care/better-mh-policy/college-reports/college-report-cr221.pdf?sfvrsn=bef8f65d_2)

<sup>16</sup> Godfrey and Denby (2004) Depression and older people: Towards securing well-being in later life, London: Help the Aged



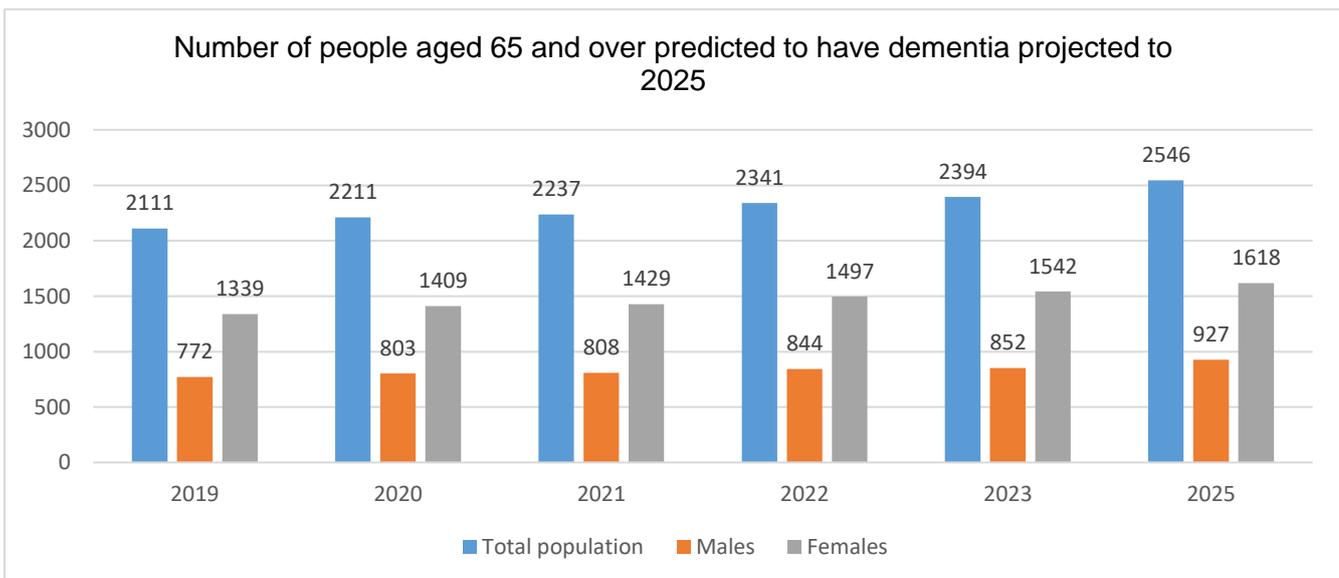
After West Berkshire, Wokingham Borough has the highest number of people aged 65 and over with depression and this is predicted to continue to 2025.



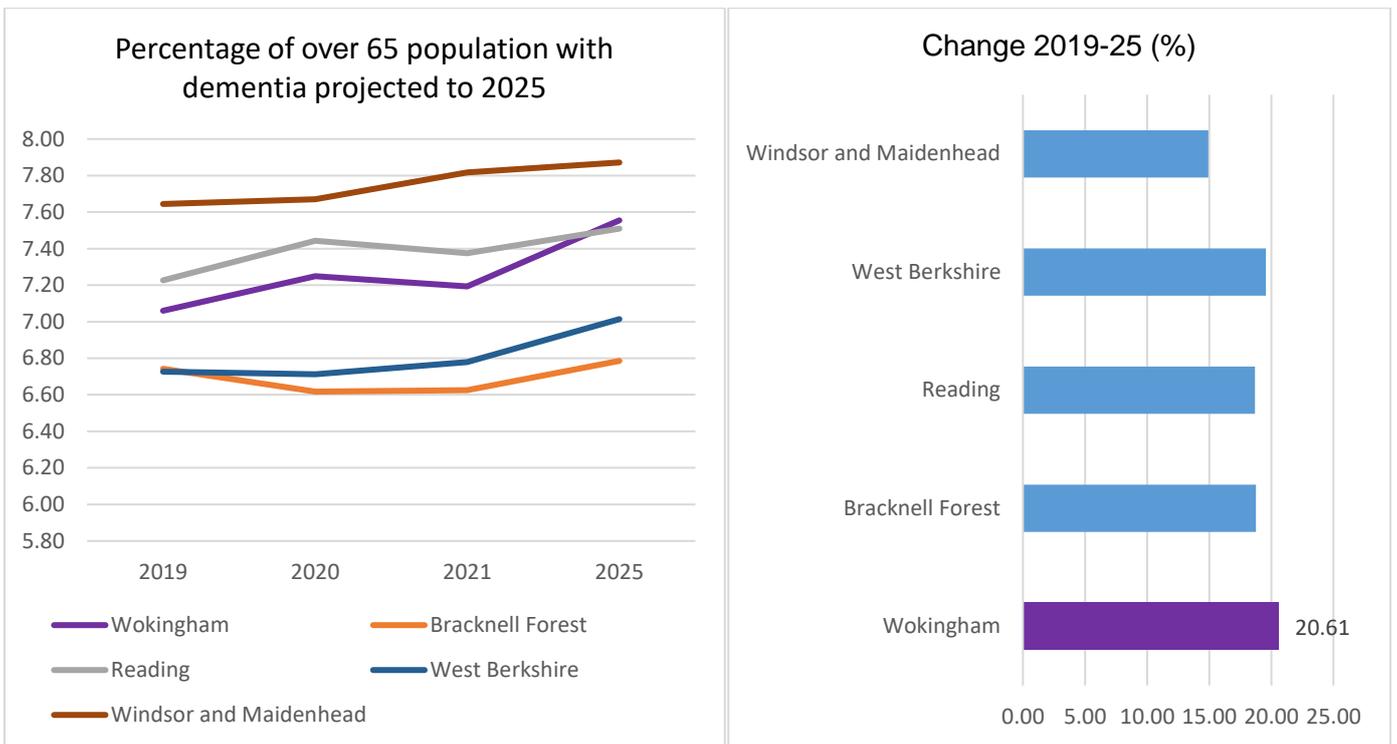


### 23. Dementia

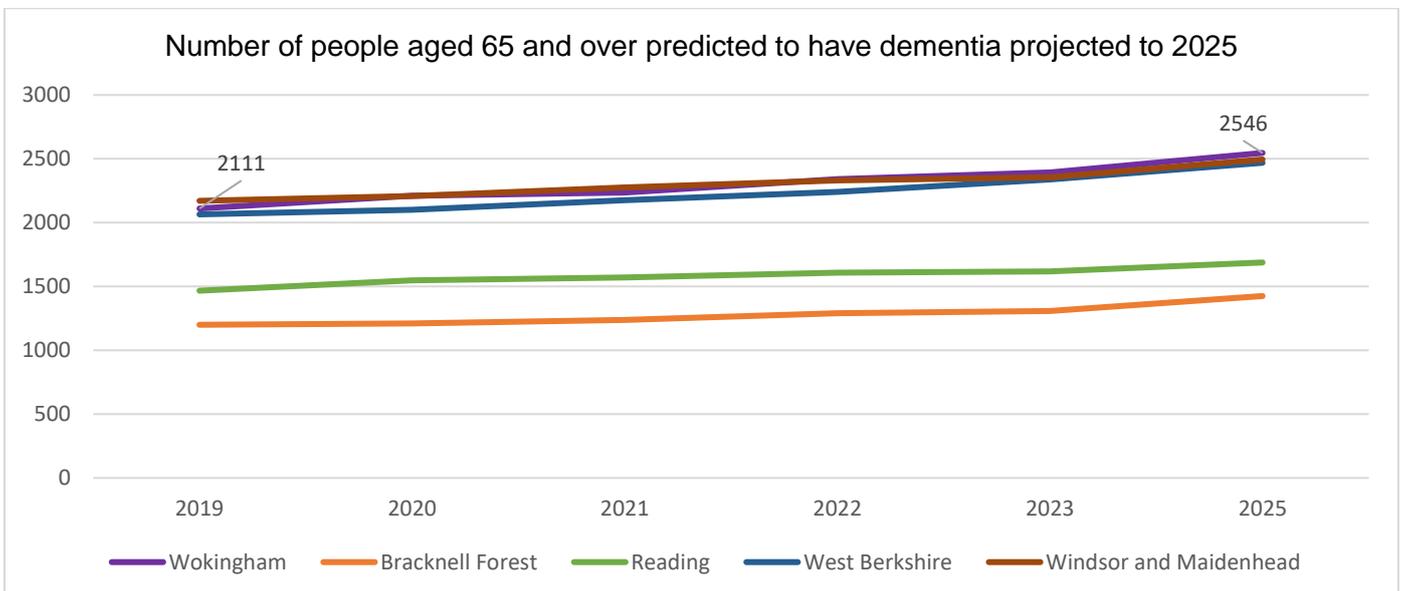
The number of people aged 65 and over predicted to have dementia will be almost 8% (or 2546 people) higher from 2,111 in 2019. The majority of these will be female in line with the make-up of the local population.



The total people with dementia as a proportion of all people over 65 in the borough is expected to increase from 7.06% in 2019 to 7.55% by 2025. The rate of the change will be faster than other authorities in the area with a 20.6% increase, this alongside the projections above demonstrate that mental health will be a key challenge over the next 5 years. Making certain lifestyle choices can increase or decrease our chances of developing dementia. Exercise, mental stimulation, maintaining a healthy weight and socialising might help to protect us from dementia. Smoking and drinking too much alcohol can increase our chances of developing dementia.

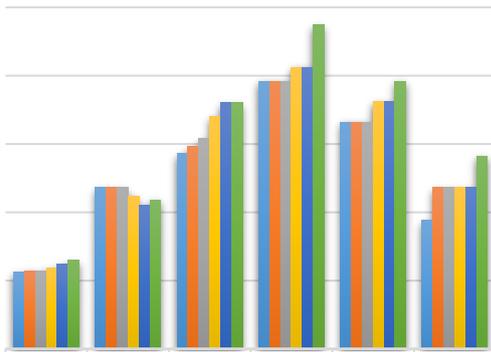


The figure below shows the actual numbers of people predicted to have dementia. At present Windsor and Maidenhead have the highest number of people aged 65 and over with dementia. However by 2025 Wokingham Borough is predicted to have more people with this condition mainly because of an increasing number of people aged 65 than Windsor and Maidenhead - the majority who are female.



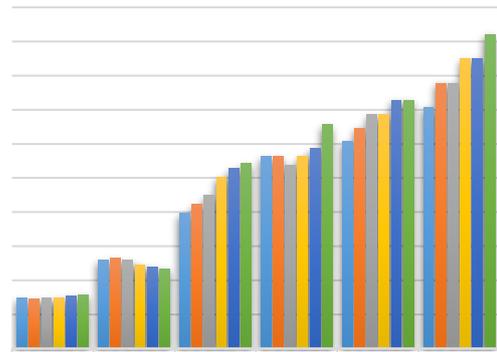
As stated more females are predicted to have dementia than males as per the population make up. Full details of age and gender bands are below. The JSNA states that nearly a fifth of women die of dementia (including Alzheimer's disease), while 10% of men die of this cause. Much of this difference is because women live longer, and dementia is very strongly related to age. Public Health England estimate that mortality rates for dementia will overtake heart disease for men by 2020.

Number of males predicted to have dementia by age 2019-2025



	65-69	70-74	75-79	80-85	85-89	90 and over
2019	56	118	143	196	166	94
2020	57	118	148	196	166	118
2021	57	118	154	196	166	118
2022	59	112	170	206	181	118
2023	62	105	180	206	181	118
2025	65	109	180	237	196	141

Number of females predicted to have dementia by age 2019-2025

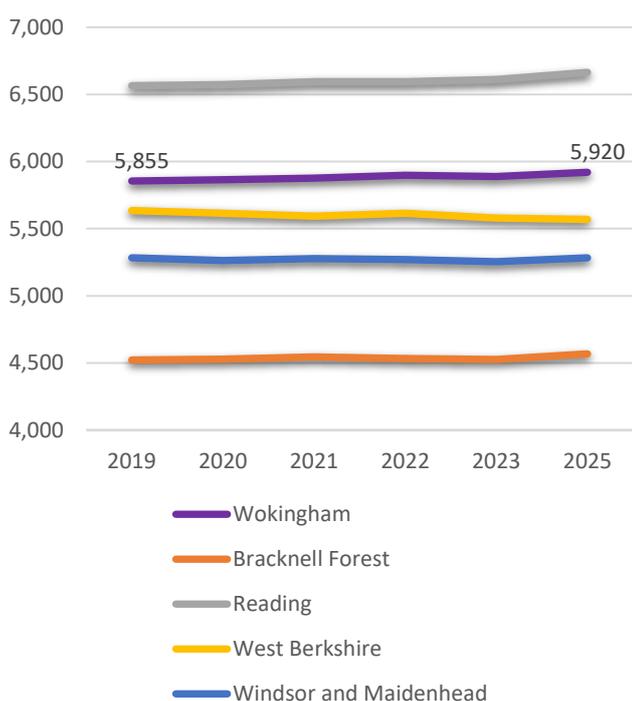


	65-69	70-74	75-79	80-85	85-89	90 and over
2019	74	129	198	281	303	354
2020	72	132	211	281	323	389
2021	74	129	224	269	343	389
2022	74	123	251	281	343	425
2023	77	120	264	293	364	425
2025	79	117	271	328	364	460

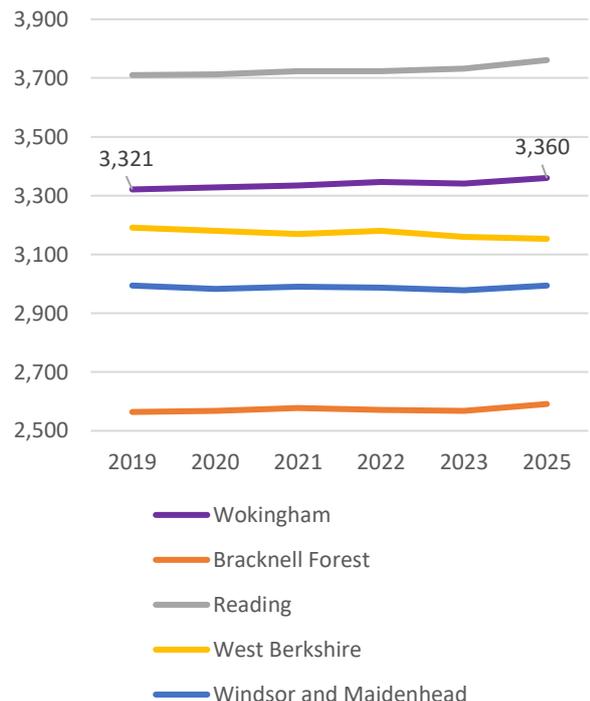
## 24. Drug and alcohol dependency

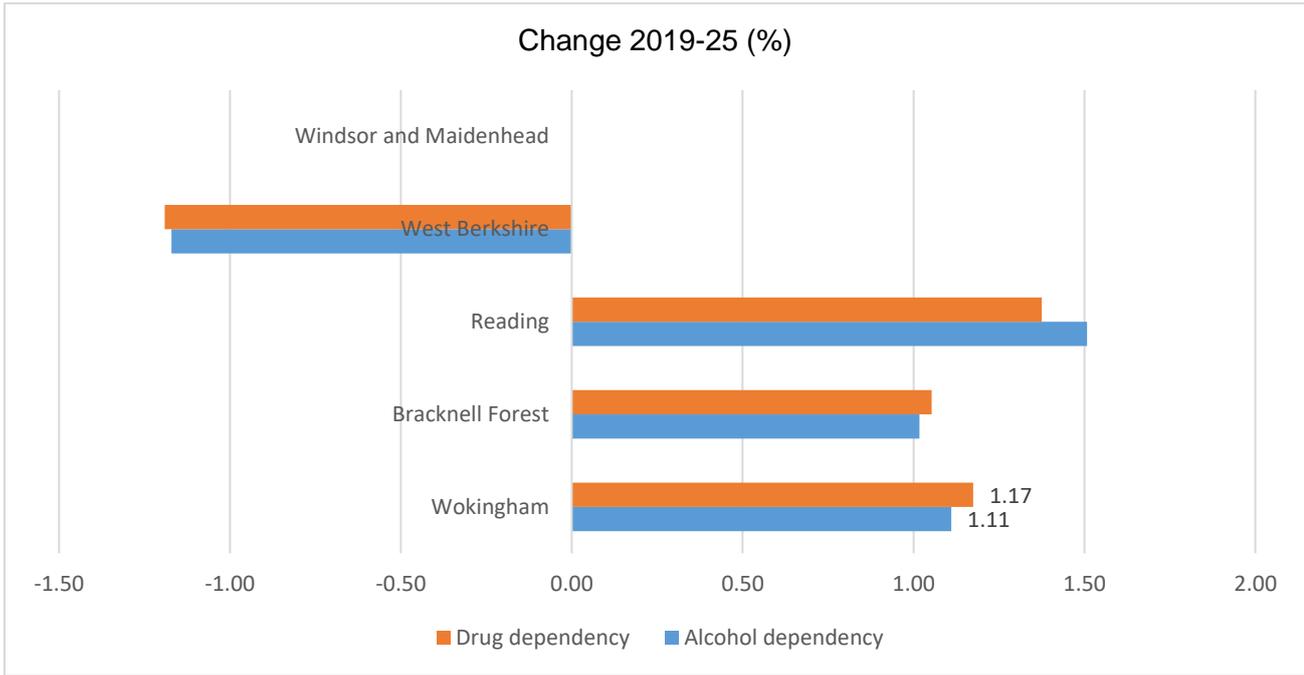
After Reading, Wokingham Borough has the highest number of people who have an alcohol or drug dependence. This is projected to increase gradually over the next five years.

Number of people aged 18-64 predicted to have alcohol dependence projected to 2025

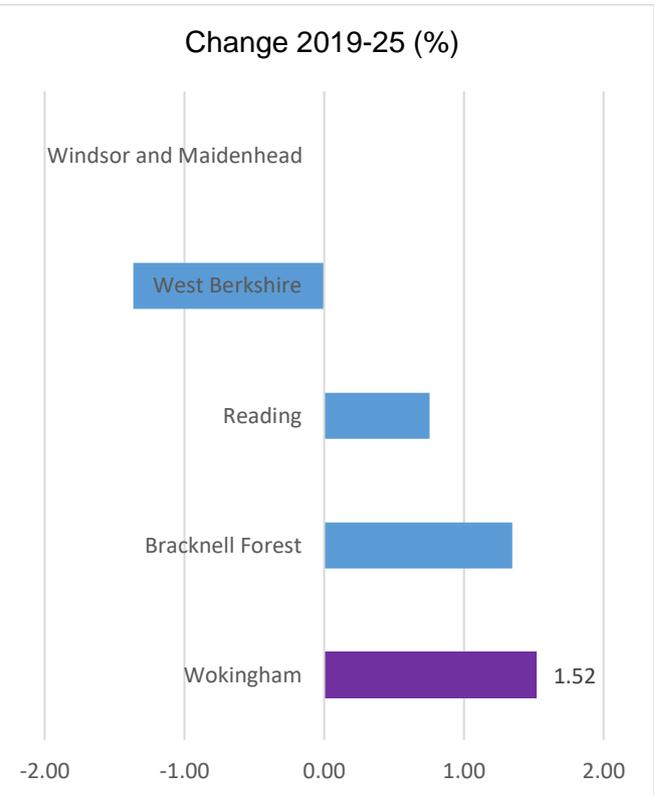
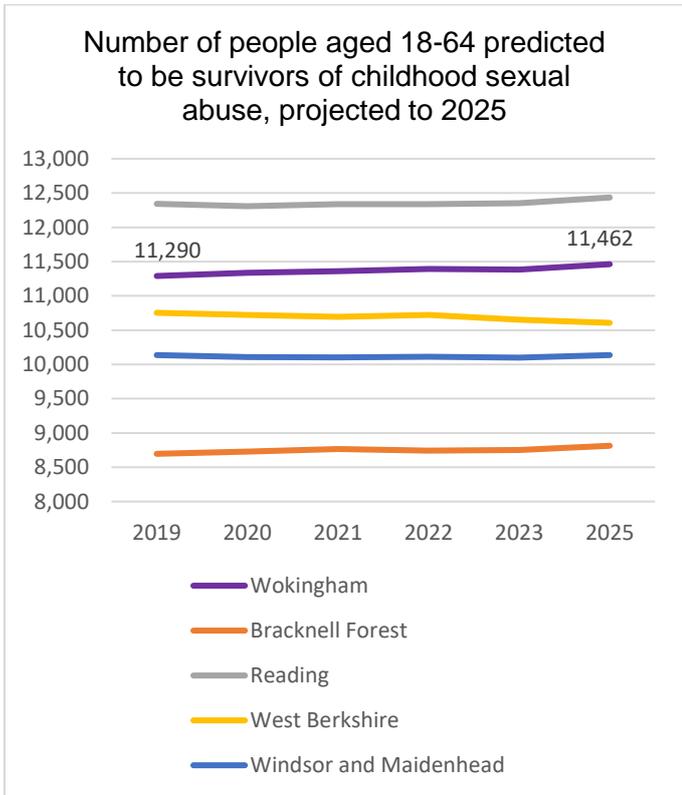


Number of people aged 18-64 predicted to be dependent on drugs projected to 2025





## 25. Sexual Abuse



## 26. Carers

In the 2011 census 14,000 people living in the borough of Wokingham identified themselves as a carer providing unpaid care to a partner, family member or friend/neighbour. This is an increase on the 2001 census figures of 8.2% and shows that unpaid care has increase at a faster pace than population growth over the last decade. This reflects the picture nationally.

- 10, 500 carers in Wokingham Borough are of working age, 8,200 are in some form of employment
- 230 are aged 16 or below, 489 are aged 16-24. These figures are recognised as being extremely conservative. This is because young carers do not provide the information themselves and are dependent on parents providing this information in the census.
- 2,300 people in Wokingham Borough provide 50 hours or more unpaid care per week
- 553 people are registered as an unpaid carer with the Council, 425 have a carers assessment.
- Month on month a significant amount of carers refuse an assessment. This ranges from a refusal rate of 19% - 21%
- 3,000 carers are over the age of 65.

The Survey of Adult Carers in England (SACE) is sent out by local authorities every other year to all adult carers of 18 years and over. In 2016-17, 57.6% of carers in Wokingham responded to this survey, 67.3% were female and 32.7% were male.

Each respondent is assigned a score based on their answers to six questions. The higher the overall score the better the average social care related Quality of Life (QoL). The maximum score is 12. The overall QoL score for Wokingham was 7.9 this is higher than the overall score for the South East (7.6) and for England (7.7). For carers who reported that they cared for someone with dementia the QoL score was 7.7, this compares favourably with the 7.5 overall score by both England and the South East Region. The highest QoL score was for those who care for someone with a learning disability (8.6) whilst those who care for someone with a long standing illness, or problems connected with ageing have the lowest score (7.0)

Please see our carer's strategy for more information about the current and future anticipated needs and demands

### Carers Consultation

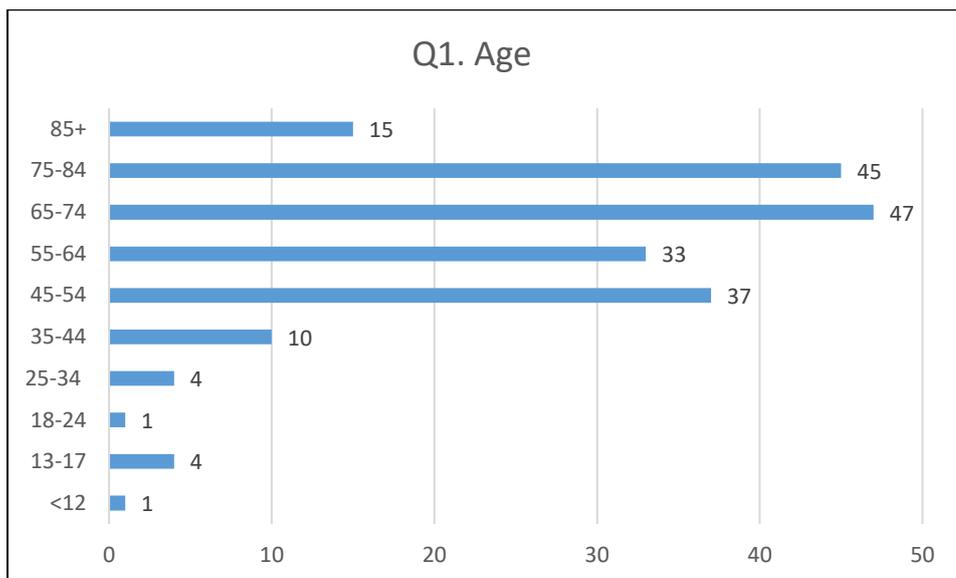
In July 2018 we sent out a survey asking carers what services that they use, what they felt were the most useful and if their needs weren't being met what services they think would meet their needs.

This survey was sent to:

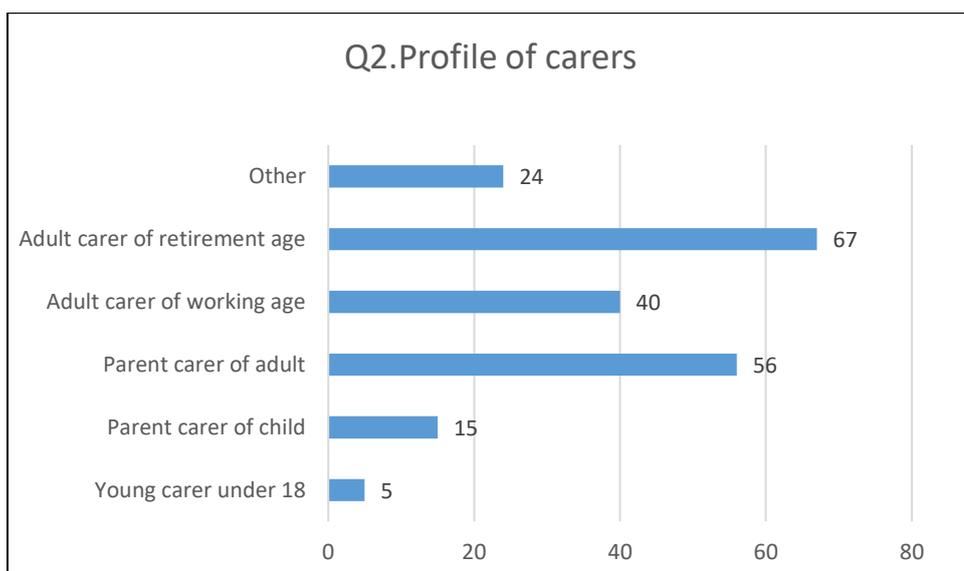
- 563 carers who were registered with the Council.
- A web link to the survey was included in Wokingham Outreach Services newsletter which is sent to 400 carers
- A number of drop in sessions were advertised through carers newsletters these took place in the Bradbury Centre at various times and days

We had a 19% response rate to the postal survey and a 66% response to the online survey. The overall response rate was 35%.

Please note not all questions were answered by all respondents.



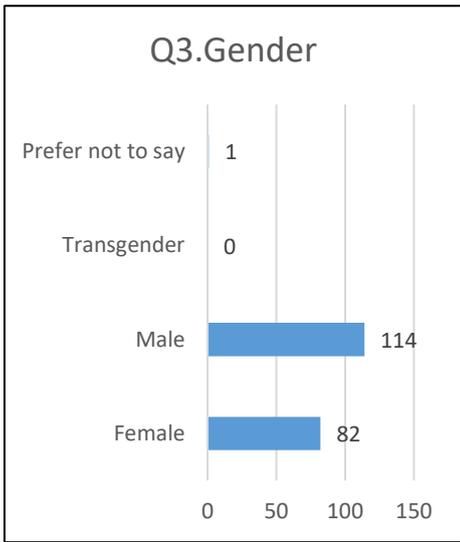
Of those who responded:  
54% were over the age of 65  
43% were below the age of 65  
2.5% were below 18



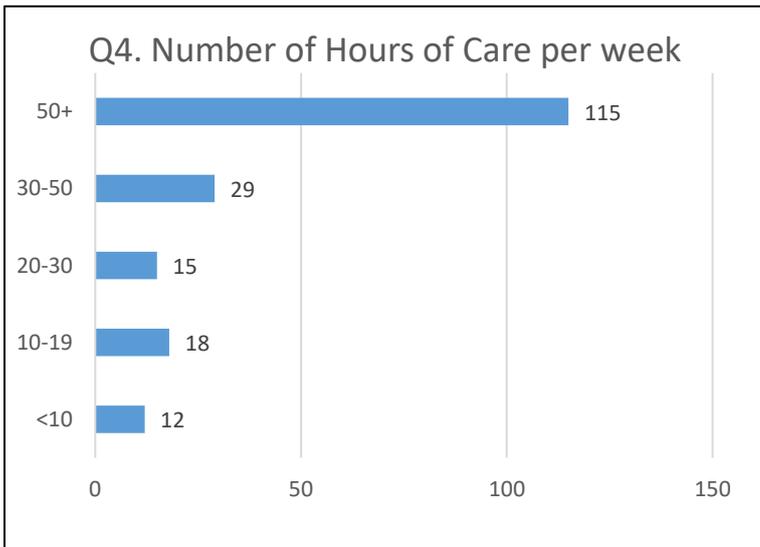
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*Of those who responded:  
67 carers identified as being of retirement age  
40 identified as being of working age  
Some carers identified as being of working age and a parent/adult carer as did some retired carers  
A small number of carers cared for more than one person e.g. an adult and a child*

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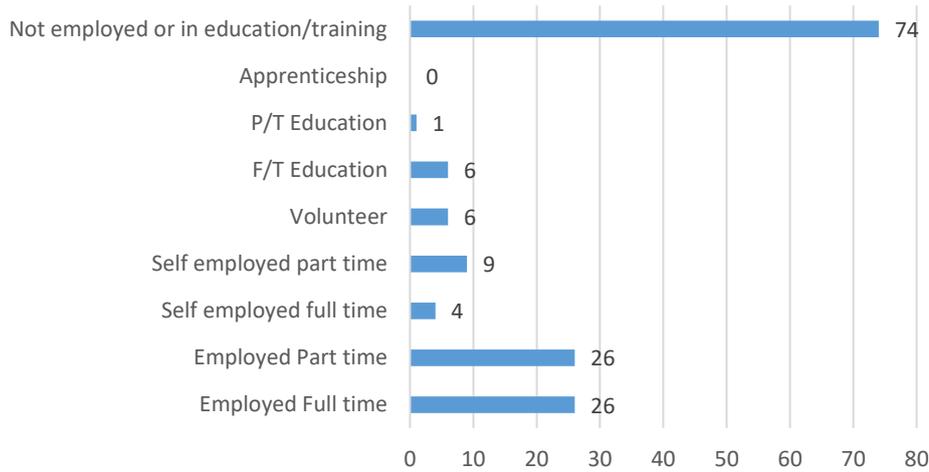


OF THOSE WHO RESPONDED THERE WERE A SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER NUMBER OF MALES THAN FEMALES. THIS DOES NOT REFLECT THE NATIONAL PICTURE



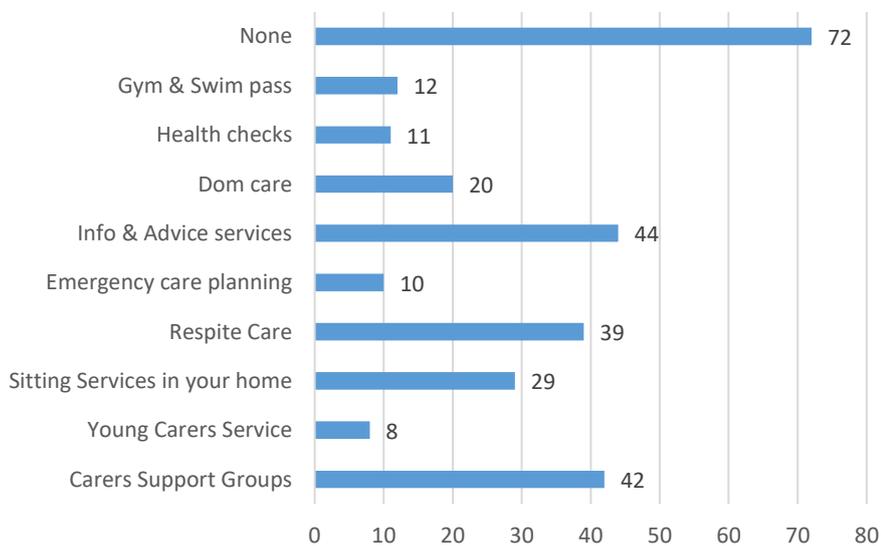
61% of carers reported providing over 50 hours of care per week  
A number of carers reported caring 24 hours per day

### Q5. Employment



**51% OF CARERS REPORTED BEING IN EMPLOYMENT OR EDUCATION**  
**WORKING CARERS WERE MORE LIKELY TO PAY FOR SERVICES**  
**49 % OF CARERS REPORTED BEING RETIRED**

### Q6. Carers Services



A significant number of carers did not use any of these services. This was predominantly because:

- They self-fund services that they need*
- They are working carers who cannot access certain services due to them taking place when they are primarily at work*
- They did not know about these services*

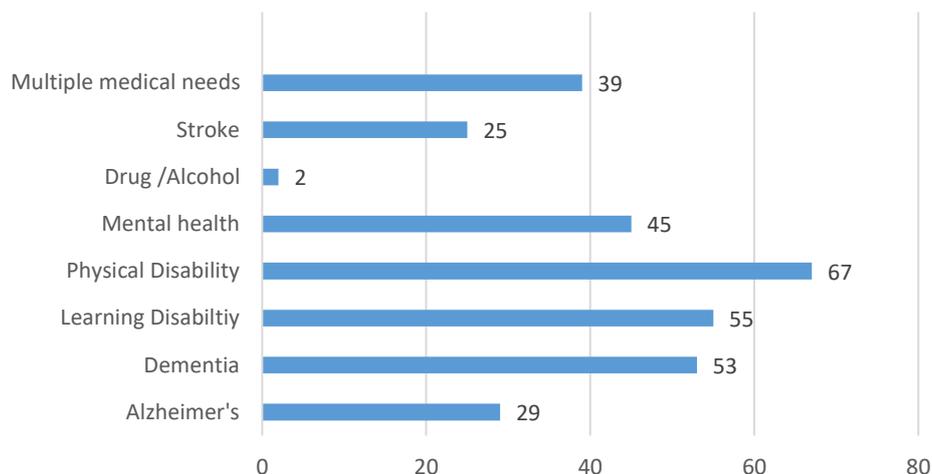
In the Survey of Adult Carers 2016 – 17, 62% of carers identified it as being easy to find information about services

Q7.Customer experience rating of services used	1 = Poor 5 = Excellent				
	1	2	3	4	5
Carers support groups	7	8	20	14	25
Young carers service	2	3	7	5	3
Sitting Services in your home	7	5	6	9	3
Respite care	8	6	7	12	3
Emergency care planning	8	3	4	4	7
Information & advice	8	10	14	20	15
Domiciliary care	8	5	5	4	2
Health checks	4	1	10	8	4
Gym & swim pass	7	0	5	7	7
	59	41	78	83	69

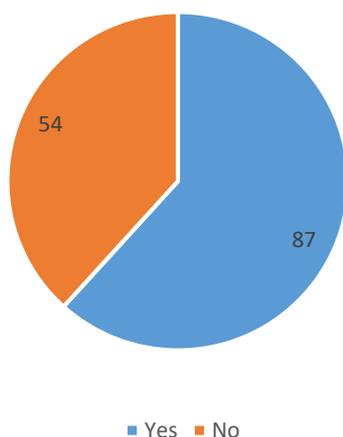


70% OF CARERS WHO RESPONDED TO THIS QUESTIONS RATED THESE SERVICES AS SATISFACTORY OR ABOVE

### Q8. Needs of the person cared for



### Q9. Are these the right type of services



Many carers look after someone who has more than one need e.g. a mental health need and a physical disability

The majority of carers felt these were the right type of services.

We asked carers if there was anything else that they felt would support them in their caring role

Young carers identified as feeling isolated and needing someone to talk to.

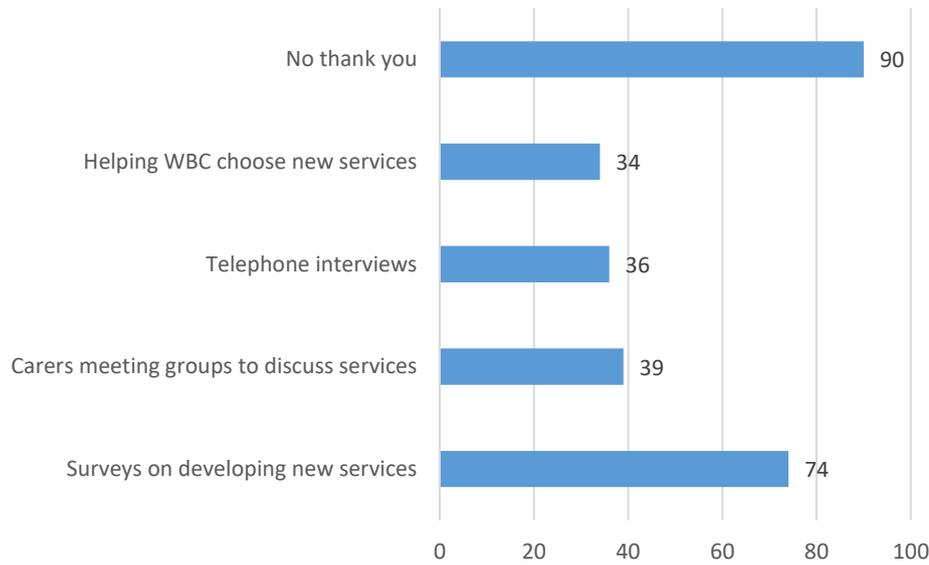
Adult carers cited visiting services and respite care as being most needed.

Working carers stated that they need respite at appropriate times e.g. when they are not working. They also suggested carers groups in the evening and on-line support.

Several carers requested training for financial planning/assessments and predicting and preventing problems.

One suggestion was made that people with Alzheimer's or dementia could have a card to show other people that they are disabled

### Q10. Involvement in developing future services



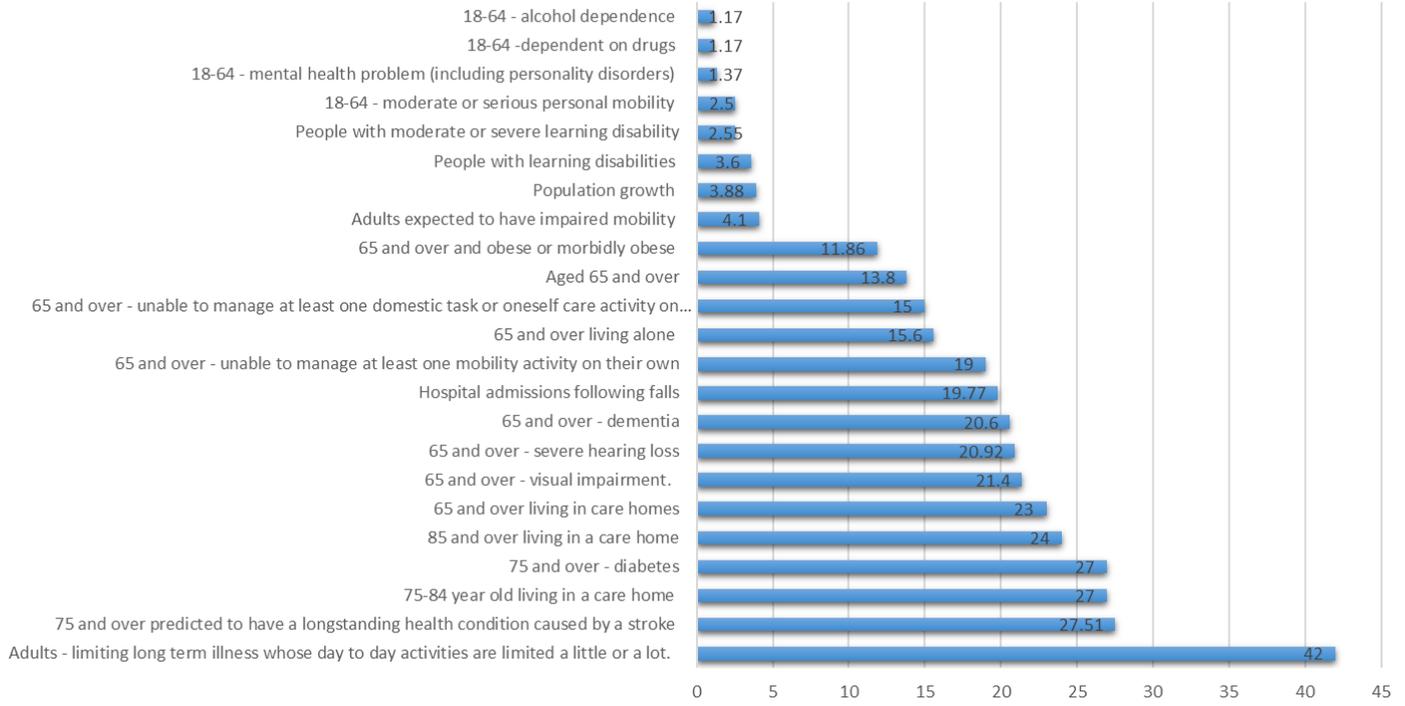
67% OF CARERS WOULD BE HAPPY TO PROVIDE FURTHER INFORMATION TO WBC ON CARERS SERVICES. 12% OF CARERS WOULD LIKE TO BE ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN HELPING WBC CHOSE CARERS SERVICES

## 27. Summary

The design of social care services in Wokingham Borough must take into account not only the growing number of residents who may need care and support but most importantly the likely needs of the population. This study has evidenced that by 2025 the main issues the Council is likely to experience are:

- A 3.88%, (6,500) population growth
- Over 20% (33,700) of the population will be aged 65 and over
- A 13% increase in (3,800) people aged 65 and over
- A 15.6% increase in (1,516) people aged 65 and over are predicted to live alone
- One in approximately three people aged 65 and over are predicted to live alone (11,221 people or 33.2% of the entire 65 and over population)
- A 23% increase in (213) people aged 65 and over living in care homes
- A 27% increase in (60) people aged 75-84 year old living in a care home
- A 24% increase in (143) people aged 85 and over living in a care home
- A 27.51 % increase in (124) people aged 75 and over predicted to have a longstanding health condition caused by a stroke
- A 11.86% increase in (929) in people aged 65 and over predicted to be obese or morbidly obese - almost 26% of the population aged over 65 will be obese or morbidly obese
- An increase of 21.4% (769) people aged 65 and over are predicted to have a visual impairment.
- A 20.92% increase in (508) people aged 65 and over predicted to have severe hearing loss
- A 8.6% increase of diabetes across the total population - those aged 75 and over likely to see an increase of 27% (462 people).
- A 4.1% increase in (234) people expected to have impaired mobility
- A 2.5% increase in (177) people aged 18-64 predicted to have a moderate or serious personal mobility
- A 42% increase in (2,245) people in adults predicted to have a limiting long term illness whose day to day activities are limited a little or a lot.
- A 15% increase in (2,663) people aged 65 and over unable to manage at least one domestic task or oneself care activity on their own
- A 19% increase in (1,288) people aged 65 and over unable to manage at least one mobility activity on their own
- A 19.77% increase in (90) hospital admissions following falls, an increase in percentage terms of
- A 3.6% increase in (109) people with learning disabilities
- A 2.55% increase in (16) people with moderate or severe learning disability
- A 1.37% increase in adults aged 18-64 with a mental health problem (including personality disorders)
- A 20.6% increase in (435) people aged 65 and over predicted to have dementia
- A 1.17% increase in (39) people aged 18-64 dependent on drugs
- A 1.17% increase in (65) people aged 18-64 with alcohol dependence

### Predicted increase 2019-2025



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