



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

A Meeting of the **COUNCIL** will be held in the Council Chamber - Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham RG40 1BN on **THURSDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2021 AT 7.30 PM**

Susan Parsonage
Chief Executive
Published on 10 November 2021

Note: Although members of the public are entitled to attend the meeting in person, space is very limited due to the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic. You can however participate in this meeting virtually, in line with the Council's Constitution. If you wish to participate either in person or virtually via Microsoft Teams please contact Democratic Services. The meeting can also be watched live using the following link: <https://youtu.be/ngKsUwbDvB8>

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

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



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Our Vision

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

Enriching Lives

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

Safe, Strong, Communities

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

A Clean and Green Borough

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

Right Homes, Right Places

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

Keeping the Borough Moving

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

Changing the Way We Work for You

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

To: The Members of Wokingham Borough Council

ITEM NO.	WARD	SUBJECT	PAGE NO.
49.		APOLOGIES To receive any apologies for absence	
50.		MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING To confirm the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 23 September 2021.	17 - 52
51.		DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST To receive any declarations of interest	
52.		MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS To receive any announcements by the Mayor	
53.		PUBLIC QUESTION TIME To answer any public questions A period of 30 minutes will be allowed for members of the public to ask questions submitted under notice. The Council welcomes questions from members of the public about the work of the Council Subject to meeting certain timescales, questions can relate to general issues concerned with the work of the Council or an item which is on the Agenda for this meeting. For full details of the procedure for submitting questions please contact the Democratic Services Section on the numbers given below or go to www.wokingham.gov.uk/publicquestions	
53.1	None Specific	Nicholas Marshall has asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question: Question As a cyclist I am acutely aware of the parlous state of our roads, constantly obliged to stare at the road ahead - scanning for cracks and holes in order to avoid injury to myself and damage to my wheels. Anyone observing a garden can see the effects of excessive dry spells, leading to shrinkage of the ground, whilst periods of saturating rainfall causes swelling and warping. Applied to the highway, it's clear that the increasing intensity of climactic conditions is putting stress on the road layer. Variations in the water table cause heave and	

shrinkage. Water ingress and freezing obviously compound the problem. It's becoming increasingly clear that climate change is a factor because even recently constructed pathways and cycle tracks are degrading rapidly, which cannot be ascribed to the burden of heavy traffic.

My question is what policies has the Council formulated to relieve stress on the existing highways, to ensure new construction meets climate change proofed standards and for seeking alternatives to an over reliance on road-based distribution?

53.2 None Specific

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

Question

In December 2019, before the pandemic, 2,641 households in Wokingham Borough were in receipt of Universal Credit.

The latest provisional figures, for May 2021, show 6,547 households in receipt of Universal Credit. It should be remembered that prior to the pandemic, over 40% of households in receipt of Universal Credit contained one or more people in work.

Since May, the opening up of the economy will have reduced the number of households receiving Universal Credit. Assuming 5,000 of the Borough's least well-off households are still in receipt of Universal Credit, the recent £20 a week cut to Universal Credit will have taken £100,000 per week out of the budgets of our poorest families - at a single stroke increasing the levels of poverty experienced by thousands and thousands of families in our Borough.

What formal representations has Wokingham Borough Council made to the Borough's four Members of Parliament to stress the need to maintain or restore the £20 a week Universal Credit uplift?

54.

PETITIONS

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

55. None Specific

ADOPTION OF THE STATEMENT OF GAMBLING PRINCIPLES

To consider an updated Statement of Gambling Principles as agreed by the Licensing and Appeals Committee at its meeting held on 20 October 2021.

53 - 100

RECOMMENDATION That Council:

- 1) considers the Statement of Gambling Principles and the consultation responses received.
- 2) approves the Statement of Gambling Principles for adoption and publication by the 31st January 2022.

56.

MEMBER QUESTION TIME

To answer any member questions

A period of 30 minutes will be allowed for Members to ask questions submitted under Notice

Any questions not dealt with within the allotted time will be dealt with in a written reply

56.1

None Specific

Rachel Bishop-Firth has asked the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure the following question:

Question

I have a question about our garden waste disposal.

We have an increasing number of homes being built with small gardens but have just one standard garden bin size which is 240 litres. For those with small gardens this is difficult to store and would take a long time to fill, which is why in some other Council areas, this is the largest garden bin size available.

We also have the brown bags for garden waste, but for those with the smallest gardens these disintegrate before they are full. I have had a resident raise with me that those with arthritis find these bags very hard to use.

Other Councils have services which better suit residents with small gardens. For example, Braintree District Council issues bins in 140 litre and 180 litre sizes as well as a 240 litre garden bin for those with the largest gardens.

What steps has Wokingham Borough Council taken to look at how we can best handle garden waste disposal for residents who have smaller gardens?

56.2

None Specific

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

Question

Decentralising renewable energy generation is key to us decarbonising energy in order to reduce demand on the grid. We're pleased that this Council has agreed with the Lib Dems and enacted the requests made in the Lib Dem motion supporting the Local Electricity Bill, which is a start.

More needs to be done, and we need to help residents install solar PV on their own properties. Many households don't have large amounts of disposable income and it's quite daunting with many cowboy installers out there.

Local authorities up and down the country have been working with an organisation called Solar Together. Solar Together is a group-buying scheme for solar PV and battery storage. It helps make this technology more accessible and more affordable. Local authorities work with Solar Together to promote the scheme in the area. Homeowners register their interest; the company organises a reverse auction and installers are pre-vetted. Residents then get their personal recommendation and are asked if they wish to accept the recommendation or not.

This is a simple thing to do to enable more of our residents to generate their own renewable energy. Will this Council commit to enabling a scheme like this for our residents?

56.3 Twyford

Stephen Conway has asked the Executive Member for Finance and Housing the following question:

Question

Will the Executive Member for Finance provide the Council with details of the current shortfall in funding for Twyford's new library? At the Executive meeting on 30 September, the item relating to the lease for the new library was pulled at the last minute on the grounds that rising costs necessitated a 'pause' to review the budget. I would like to know how much the project costs are likely to exceed the already-agreed budget so I can better understand what needs to be done to address the problem.

56.4 None Specific

Andrew Mickleburgh has asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Question

I wish to acknowledge the professionalism of our Borough's Civil Parking Enforcement team. They are a key part in the strategy to help manage parking and crucially, in many locations, such as outside schools, to help make our streets safer. Some initiatives have helped to address parking related safety issues. But all around the Borough serious problems continue. Regrettably, the often-heard phrase 'an accident waiting to happen' remains all too true in many locations. Could the Executive Member for Highways please outline the Borough's strategies and tactics for tackling this issue – including timings for actions?

56.5 Shinfield North;
Shinfield South

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

Question

As Members are aware in the past few years Shinfield has been subjected to significant development on what was a semi-rural community. Some of the key routes are still on semi-rural roads and others widely recognised as needing uplift due to significant safety concerns arising from the increased traffic levels.

As one example, in 2008 it was recognised that the junction between Church Lane and Basingstoke Road required 'uplift'. This was approved some 6 years later in 2014, as part of various local area development conditions. We are still waiting, nearly 14 years. In my short time as a Councillor, residents, and Councillors have been promised at least four dates for work to commence, others tell me it is many more than this.

All have been missed, the latest being Summer 2021. We are now being led to believe early 2022 but understandably we have little trust in this. There are multiple other areas of highway safety concern, especially in the areas adjacent to our schools. Hyde End Lane being one prime example.

My question is when will this Council give priority to the safety of Shinfield school children and other Shinfield residents by actually delivering what they promise, when they promise?

56.6 Winnersh

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey has asked the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement the following question:

Question

Why were 60 houses in Woodward Close not included in the traffic modelling for the Winnersh relief road when it was done for the SEND school and the 83 homes proposed by the Council behind the school?

56.7 Sonning

Michael Firmager has asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Question

At the junction of Sonning Lane and the A4 there have recently been a couple of accidents. Thankfully there have been no fatalities. This is a particularly dangerous road.

Please can you advise the number of accidents there since the year 2000 and what safety measures can be taken?

56.8 None Specific

Sam Akhtar has asked the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and Communities the following question:

Question

Residents in my ward have complained of fireworks being let off at unsociable hours last week. Myself and a number of residents were woken up on a weekday at 3am by the loud bangs from these fireworks. What is the local authority doing to clamp down on this sort of behaviour?

57.

MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND WARD MATTERS

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

58.

STATEMENT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE CONSTITUTION REVIEW WORKING GROUP

To receive an update from the Chairman of the Constitution Review Working Group on the item considered at their recent meeting.

59.

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

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

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

60.

STATEMENT FROM COUNCIL OWNED COMPANIES

To receive any statements from Directors of Council Owned Companies.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 4.2.24 the total time allocated to this item shall not exceed 10 minutes, and no Director, except with the consent of Council, shall speak for more than 3 minutes.

61.

MOTIONS

To consider any motions

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

61.1 None Specific

Motion 467 submitted by Ian Shenton

This Council formally declares an ecological emergency and will:

1. Address ecological issues alongside climate emergency actions and ensure that opportunities to gain co-benefits from addressing both the climate and ecological emergencies are maximised.
2. Add ecological implications alongside those for climate in committee and Council reports.
3. Ensure the delivery of biodiversity and environmental enhancements through our planning policy and development control functions by providing guidance through a biodiversity supplementary planning document.
4. Strive to enable the development of a 20% mandatory biodiversity net gain policy for Wokingham through the new local plan.
5. Create a Developing Nature Toolkit and direct

developers to use the toolkit to assist them in demonstrating a net gain in biodiversity, to be used from the very outset of planning new developments, and ideally at the time of selecting sites to acquire for development.

6. Re-establish the Wokingham Biodiversity Forum to allow the Council to collaborate effectively with partners and the wider community.
7. Where possible, embed ecological initiatives within all Council work areas, including Covid-19 recovery projects and programmes.
8. Promote woodland planting and rewilding in the right places and with the right species, peatland restoration, natural flood management, wild flower meadows, and habitat creation and restoration.
9. Work with local, county, regional and national partners to increase wildlife habitats, green infrastructure and natural capital in Wokingham Borough ensuring robust connectivity between them.
10. Manage Council services, buildings and land in a biodiversity-friendly manner, including by reviewing the use of harmful chemicals, such as pesticides and taking opportunities to create new wildlife habitats and corridors.
11. Provide advice for local communities and businesses on how to incorporate biodiversity, green infrastructure and natural capital into Neighbourhood Plans and other initiatives.
12. Encourage residents to take biodiversity measures in their own homes by, for example, wildlife gardening and home composting.
13. Working collaboratively with the Berkshire Local Nature Partnership, Wokingham Biodiversity Forum, a cross party working group and other stakeholders, produce a local nature recovery strategy and associated action plan with an annual progress report to full Council.

61.2 None Specific

Motion 468 submitted by Gregor Murray

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

This will be done by:

1. Maintaining clear responsibility within the Council for the care of trees across our Borough.
2. Agreeing a policy for the care and management of our forests and trees across the Borough. This must include standards for tree care, where and when they apply and penalties for non-compliance.
3. Working with external partners to create and maintain an inventory of the local tree resource so that effective long-term planning for planting, care and removal can be established.
4. Setting aside an annual budget for the implementation of the tree management strategy and management plan.
5. Holding an annual celebration of our Borough's trees and acknowledge the residents schools, charities and Council staff that contribute to our city tree programme.
6. Creating a 'Garden Forest' program to allow residents the opportunity to plant some of our 250,000 new tree commitment in their own gardens.
7. Developing a continuous education process aimed at informing residents of the importance of trees, tree planting and tree protection and how best to care for the trees in their own gardens and communities.
8. Committing to planting a Covid-19 memorial wood within the Borough, of native trees, as a long-lasting memorial to those who have lost their lives during the 2020-21 Pandemic.

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

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

Motion 469 submitted by David Hare

White Ribbon UK is a leading charity engaging with men and boys to end violence against women and girls. Their mission is for all men to fulfil the White Ribbon Promise to never commit, excuse or remain silent about male violence against women and girls.

It is not enough for men to not be violent towards women and girls. Men need to take responsibility for helping to make change happen. All men can help prevent physical, mental or emotional violence against women and girls by speaking out whenever they encounter such behaviour. If men do not act to correct this, women and girls will continue not feeling safe to do many of the things men do without thinking, making us a morally corrupt and emotional poor society, as we trivialise the sickness that is any type of violence against women and girls.

Wokingham Borough Council resolves to:

- Seek White Ribbon Accreditation for the Organisation within the next 6 months and encourage all male councillors to take the White Ribbon pledge, never to take part in, condone or stay silent about violence against women. As part of this Wokingham Borough Council will appoint a male Councillor as an Ambassador for White Ribbon.
- Promote the Our Streets Now campaign to make street harassment of women a crime; ask the Chief Executive to write to the Home Secretary to ask them to make street harassment a specific crime; ask the Chief Executive to write to the four MPs who cover the Borough, as well as the Police and Crime Commissioner, to ask them to show their support for this campaign by signing the petition and by lobbying ministers to make street harassment a specific crime and encourage elected members and residents to sign the petition.
- Ask schools, academies and colleges in the Borough to each develop a clear policy on tackling physical, mental, emotional or spiritual harassment of female pupils or staff, separate to their bullying policy and ask them to include education to prevent public sexual harassment, as part of their PSHE education.

61.4 None Specific

Motion 470 submitted by Clive Jones

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

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

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

It's good that the Executive Member for Resident Services, Communications and Emissions has agreed with what the Liberal Democrats have been trying to do for the last year. We are pleased that at last he has written to the Borough's local MPs seeking their support and the former Minister of State responsible for the Bill.

However, there is still more to be done. This Council therefore agrees to:

- Resolve to support the Bill

- Authorise the Chief Executive to write to the new Minister of State for Energy and Climate Change, supporting the aims of the Bill and asking for these aims to be taken into account in the forthcoming Energy White Paper.

61.5 None Specific

Motion 471 submitted by Rachel Burgess

Wokingham Borough Council must continually review the support offered to families facing financial crisis to ensure a robust safety net is in place for those in need.

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic there were already too many families in Wokingham struggling to make ends meet, and now many more families have been thrown into crisis, without the ability to pay their rent, heat their homes or feed their children.

The Local Welfare Provision Scheme exists to provide immediate financial support to households facing an emergency situation. However the number of people helped by this scheme in Wokingham borough has fallen by 76% since 2016-17, with just 21 people helped in 2020-21. In 2019-20 just £3,000 was spent providing support through this scheme. Over the last three years only 23% of the allocated budget was actually spent, on average.

Now more than ever, with the Covid-19 pandemic causing an unprecedented downturn in incomes, Wokingham Borough Council must continually review the support offered to families in crisis. Wokingham Borough Council will:

- Review the effectiveness of Wokingham's Local Welfare Provision Scheme
- Consult with residents and the voluntary sector to ascertain how those who need crisis assistance can be better supported
- Ensure residents in need of support can easily access the scheme and work to remove barriers to application
- Ensure effective signposting of the scheme in conjunction with the voluntary sector
- Ensure frontline staff are trained so that they are fully aware of the scheme and are able to advise residents on how to apply
- Prioritise the delivery of cash-first support, which is more empowering and respectful to those on lower incomes
- Ensure cash can be provided within 24-48

- hours of a successful application
- Consider relaxing the qualifying criteria and disclosure requirements for the scheme, ensuring that residents' dignity is respected throughout.

CONTACT OFFICER

Anne Hunter
Tel
Email
Postal Address

Democratic and Electoral Services Lead Specialist
0118 974 6051
anne.hunter@wokingham.gov.uk
Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham, RG40 1BN