



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

A Meeting of the **COUNCIL** will be held in the Council Chamber - Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham RG40 1BN on **THURSDAY 24 MARCH 2022 AT 7.30 PM**

Susan Parsonage
Chief Executive
Published on 16 March 2022

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/ZI_dVGMg2r8

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.
97.		APOLOGIES To receive any apologies for absence	
98.		MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING To confirm the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 17 February 2022.	19 - 54
99.		DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST To receive any declarations of interest	
100.		MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS To receive any announcements by the Mayor	
101.		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	
101.1	Maiden Erlegh	Suzy Pfizer has asked the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement the following question: Question I refer you to your recent statement in which you said "Green spaces are a vital part of that because of the role they play in maintaining people's physical and emotional wellbeing. They offer valuable opportunities for exercise, socialising and spending time outside in nature, which can significantly reduce stress". The users of Laurel Park already know this, especially during Covid!! There is a children's play area in the Park; the children won't be in the open fresh air, they will instead be breathing in emissions from the increase in cars using the pitch.	

Do you stand by that statement, and will you therefore be objecting to the installation of a 3G pitch at Laurel Park a conservation area and wildlife reserve?

101.2 Maiden Erlegh

Al Neal has asked the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure the following question:

Question

Your letter to residents dated 26th February states the Executive has made no formal decision on the site of the proposed 3G pitch in the Lower Earley area.

How can this statement be reconciled with the facts that on the 24th June, the Council's Executive approved expenditure of £300k on this project; and that on page 103 of the Medium Term Financial Plan presented to Council on the 9th February this figure appears to have doubled to £600,000 with "3G Pitch at Laurel Park" explicitly recorded?

101.3 Maiden Erlegh

Mike Smith has asked the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure the following question:

Question

In the Berks and Bucks Football Foundation web based report, entitled - Local Football Facility Plan - Wokingham (but not dated), it has, as a 5th of 20 priorities, a recommendation for a 3G pitch in the Earley area with the statement that "A preferred site is to be confirmed, multiple potential options exist such as Laurel Park and Chalfont Park."

In the Minutes of the Executive Meeting of the 25th June 2021, under Agenda item 9 - Implementing the Leisure Strategy – sub-item 3, it was explicitly Resolved to allocate £300,000 funding for a 3G pitch at Laurel Park (page 19 in Minutes). And the Medium Range Financial Forecast approved at the last Council meeting allocates £600,000 of capital to Laurel Park 3G Pitch on page 103.

How did WBC's Leisure Services get from a simple suggestion as one of multiple options with no needs analysis, residential consultation, value for money assessment or other justification in a third-party report to the explicit designation of £600,000 for a new 3G pitch at Laurel Park in budget allocations?

101.4 Norreys

Daniel Hinton has asked the Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Services the following question:

Question

Since the GP at Burma Hills has retired and local residents are being redirected to the Wokingham Medical Centre, I understand there is talk and promises but at the moment no firm plans to restore GP services at this practice. I am very concerned about this and have a petition to draw attention to this which has picked up support. I noted the update from the CCG but the date has passed with no GP still in Burma Hills.

Certain Councillors have commented on Facebook that this and the petition was scaremongering and not correct. What is the truth in regards to Burma Hills and is there any update?

101.5 Maiden Erlegh

Judith Clark has asked the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure the following question:

Question

Please could the Council tell us whether the 3G “upgrade” contemplated for the Maiden Erlegh School pitch means transforming some of the existing playing field into a new 3G football pitch(es), with floodlights, 7 days a week and evening use up to 10:00pm and providing relevant extra parking, as was the case for Laurel Park?

101.6 Maiden Erlegh

Anna Morris has asked the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure the following question:

Question

I live in Avalon Road, about five minutes on foot from Maiden Erlegh School. I am concerned over the proposed upgrade to Maiden Erlegh School pitches to include a 3G pitch. This would have serious implications for residents of my area with regard to noise, traffic congestion, parking, light pollution from the floodlights and so a heavy impact on the environment.

101.7 None Specific

Beth Rowland has asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Question

The consultation on the Woodley to Reading Cycleway has caused the Council to have to go back to the drawing board. What lessons has the Council learnt about managing change from this exercise and what will it do differently to carry residents with it on its plan to get more people walking and cycling?

102.		<p>PETITIONS To receive any petitions which Members or members of the public wish to present.</p>	
103.	None Specific	<p>UKRAINE To consider a report that sets out the Council’s response to the Ukraine crisis.</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION that Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) condemn the violations of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine; 2) pledge its support of, and solidarity with, the people of Ukraine and will welcome those seeking sanctuary here; 3) note the immediate response of the Council and the longer term actions planned. 	55 - 58
104.	None Specific	<p>COUNCIL PLAN REFRESH 2022/23 To consider recommendations from the Executive relating to refresh of the Council Plan.</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION that Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) note the slight change in articulation of the strategic priorities as proposed; 2) agree the proposed changes to the Council Plan and updates to strategic themes as summarised within this report and set out in Appendix 1; 3) adopt the Annual Review for 2020/21 as contained in Appendix 2 and highlights for 2021/22 as contained in Appendix 3. 	59 - 98
105.	Finchampstead South	<p>GORSE RIDE REGENERATION PROJECT CHANGES TO DELIVERY MODEL To consider recommendations from the Executive relating to the financing of the regeneration of social housing at Gorse Ride, to provide more affordable homes and support a strong community.</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION that Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) approve that the development of homes within the Gorse Ride regeneration will be transferred to the Housing Revenue Account. 	99 - 106

(With market sale element in the general fund)

- 2) approve the expenditure budget up to the total cost of the scheme of £105,601,534 funded through a combination of HRA borrowing, capital receipts, developer contributions and right to buy receipts. (Further information provided in the report);
- 3) give delegated authority to the Director of Resources and Assets, in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing and Finance, to approve the use of additional Affordable Housing s106 commuted sums as a contingency against cost and funding variations such as any future design changes and/or fluctuations in costs and values of up to 15% of the cost of the scheme in the event of any other financial impacts;
- 4) agree that any appropriation of land between the HRA and general fund required to deliver the scheme will be delegated to the Director of Resources and Assets, in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing and Finance.

106. Finchampstead
South

DELIVERING THE GORSE RIDE REGENERATION PROJECT - PROCUREMENT OF CONSTRUCTION WORKS AND SERVICES

107 - 126

To consider recommendations from the Executive in relation to the procurement of construction works and services for the regeneration of social housing at Gorse Ride Regeneration Project.

RECOMMENDATION That Council be recommended to:

- 1) approve the procurement business case of the construction works and services as relevant to Gorse Ride Regeneration project;
- 2) give delegated authority to the Director of Resources and Assets and Director of Place and Growth to approve the awarding and execution of the construction works and services as relevant to Gorse Ride Regeneration within the funding envelope and the over-arching business case as presented to the Executive on 17th February 2022.

107.	None Specific	<p>ELECTORAL REVIEW - PHASE 1 SUBMISSION</p> <p>To consider a recommendation from the Electoral Review Working Group regarding the proposed Phase 1 submission to the Local Government Boundary commission for England on the Council's preferred number of Councillors from May 2024 onwards.</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION: That Council agrees the phase 1 submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (as set out in Appendix A to the report) on the preferred number of Councillors of 54, as recommended by the Electoral Review Working Group at its meeting of 8 March 2022.</p>	127 - 152
108.	None Specific	<p>RECRUITMENT AND APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTORS AND ASSISTANT DIRECTORS (PERMANENT AND INTERIM)</p> <p>To consider recommendations from Personnel Board regarding the recruitment and appointment of Directors and Assistant Directors (permanent and interim).</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION That Council agree:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) to the changes to the appointment processes for Directors and Assistant Directors, as set out in the report; 2) that changes to the appointment processes for Directors and Assistant Directors will not apply to any recruitment process that has already started. 	153 - 158
109.	None Specific	<p>INDEPENDENT MEMBER OF AUDIT COMMITTEE</p> <p>To consider recommendations from the Audit Committee relating to the appointment of an Independent member to the Audit Committee as per the CIPFA Best practice guidance.</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION that Council agree that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) an Independent member is co-opted on to the Audit Committee on a non-voting basis and the Constitution is updated accordingly to reflect this; 2) the independent member role profile, as set out in the report, is approved; 3) the appointment of the independent member is 	159 - 168

delegated to the Audit Committee;

- 4) the process for selecting and recommending an appropriate candidate is delegated to the Assistant Director Governance in consultation with the Chair of the Audit Committee.

110.	None Specific	<p>ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AND THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES 2021/22</p> <p>To receive a report from the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on the work undertaken by the Management Committee and the associated Overview and Scrutiny Committees over the past year.</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION: That the report from the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee be noted.</p>	169 - 188
111.	None Specific	<p>REPORTS FROM MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES</p> <p>To note those reports from Members on Outside Bodies as circulated in the agenda.</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION: That the reports from Members appointed to Outside Bodies be noted.</p>	189 - 228
112.		<p>MEMBER QUESTION TIME</p> <p>To answer any member questions</p> <p>A period of 30 minutes will be allowed for Members to ask questions submitted under Notice</p> <p>Any questions not dealt with within the allotted time will be dealt with in a written reply.</p>	
112.1	Charvil	<p>Sam Akhtar has asked the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement the following question:</p> <p>Question</p> <p>Over thirty trees have been felled on Council owned land in Charvil by a resident towards the end of last year. The resident in question is claiming they had permission from the Council to fell these trees, however they do not have any proof of the permission granted. In light of the climate crisis and recent tree planting initiatives, can the Council advise what they are doing to rectify the situation and prevent other residents from believing that it is acceptable to do the same?</p>	

- 112.2 Maiden Erlegh Andrew Mickleburgh has asked the Leader of the Council the following question:
- Question**
Would you consider it good practice for all Borough Councillors representing the affected wards to be copied into 'mass circulation' letters or emails sent under Wokingham Borough Council letterhead, such as the letter from you regarding the 3G pitch proposals at Laurel Park, dated the 26th February?
- 112.3 Maiden Erlegh David Hare has asked the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure the following question:
- Question**
How involved in the decision recently made to discount Laurel Park from consideration for a 3G pitch were you? You were very strong on the apparent fact that this was an F.A. choice but were overridden as John Halsall and Pauline Jorgensen reacted to an overwhelming wave of local resistance, the FA seeming to have no consideration in this.
- 112.4 None Specific Stephen Conway has asked the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement the following question:
- Question**
I think we can agree that significant parts of the Borough are at risk of flooding.
- Can you assure me that the Council's draft Local Plan includes robust measures to project as accurately as possible future flood risk and is not over-reliant on Environment Agency mapping of existing and historic flood zones?
- I ask because both run-off from current development and the increased incidence of heavy rainfall events associated with climate change suggest that there will be a significant expansion of the areas at risk of flooding over the local plan period.
- 112.5 None Specific Sarah Kerr has asked the Executive Member for Resident Services, Communications and Emissions the following question:
- Question**
We are all aware of the sharp increase in energy bills that are having a huge detrimental effect on our communities. The debate we're seeing played out in the media focuses on the sourcing of our energy, but

very little is being said about reducing the demand for energy in the first place.

People are requiring more gas and electricity to heat and power their homes, at a greater cost to them, than they would have needed if the national green homes grant scheme hadn't been a failure and if this government hadn't scrapped the zero carbon homes policy in 2016.

I do appreciate that this Council is helping to deliver the green home local authority delivery scheme and the ECO scheme which helps households to insulate better. These schemes are focused on low income and vulnerable households, with the vast majority of households not qualifying. This energy crisis is really going to bite for a lot of people who do not qualify for these schemes, and people are going to be looking for support and guidance at this challenging time. What is this Council going to do to facilitate this?

112.6 Bulmershe and Whitegates; Coronation; Loddon; South Lake

Paul Fishwick has asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Question

The Woodley to Reading cycle route was awarded funding from the DfT under the Active Travel 2 tranche. As this scheme has been delayed beyond the original deadline date, will the Executive Member guarantee that the DfT funding will not be lost?

112.7 Maiden Erlegh

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

Question

Please could clarify which of these statements is correct:

In the Executive Meeting of the 24th of June, you are minuted as being... 'pleased to see the proposal for a 3G pitch at Laurel Park'

A letter from Wokingham Borough Council to a small number of residents talking of '... looking into the feasibility of installing a flood-lit, all-weather pitch towards the end of 2022'

A Facebook post-dated 5th February in which you wrote... 'the proposal is in a very early conceptual stage'.

112.8 None Specific

Peter Dennis has asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Question

In August 2020 the Borough Council submitted a bid for Active Travel Phase 2 funding, claiming to have undertaken “a robust scheme prioritisation process” leading to 2 alternative options. £576,650 was granted in November 2020 but the Council decided to spend this on an entirely new scheme in Woodley. Inevitably, this took longer than originally envisages and after a rushed consultation process, the scheme and the associated funding are on hold indefinitely.

The wider network plan for walking and cycling – the LCWIP – was to be developed for public consultation starting in June 2021. It is now March 2022 and there is no forecast for when this consultation will start. The first part of this – an LCWIP for Wokingham Town – was completed and presented to the Executive Member for Highways and Transport in 2020, but never published.

The Low Carbon Transport Plan which was commissioned by the Council in 2019 has yet to be seen. And projects such as the A327 cycleway and replacement rail crossings to make walking and cycling easier have all slipped. Does the Council acknowledge the urgency of these issues, and can they commit, tonight or in a written response, to a schedule for when each of these issues will be resolved?

112.9 None Specific

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

Question

The letter from the Leader of the Council to residents dated 26th February states: “A review of a pitch at Laurel Park indicates that this site is not suitable and will not therefore be progressed by this administration.” Can a copy of this review please be made public to include clear details of the process by which it was conducted, factors considered and when this review started and ended?

113.

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

114.

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

115.

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.

116.

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

116.1 None Specific

Motion 474 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
- Consider prioritising the delivery of cash-first support, which is more empowering and respectful to those on lower incomes
- Aim to provide support 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.

116.2 None Specific

Motion 475 submitted by Clive Jones

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

Community schemes encourage local generation and storage to match local demand thus relieving pressure on the grid. Local schemes would be given new impetus and be able to contribute more

renewable energy if local people could buy their electricity directly from local suppliers. But the disproportionate cost of meeting regulatory approvals makes it impossible to be a local energy supplier at a local scale and so, under the current system, this local energy gets sold back to the central grid.

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

Council Agrees to:

- Resolve to support the Bill.
- Authorise the Leader to contact our MPs to discuss their support for the Bill and how they can enable its passage into law.
- Authorise the Chief Executive to write to the Minister of State for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy, supporting the aims of the Bill and asking for these aims to be taken into account in the forthcoming Energy White Paper.

116.3 None Specific

Motion 476 submitted by Gregor Murray

In 2019, Wokingham Borough Council was one of the first local authorities in the country to declare a Climate Emergency. WBC has since produced a comprehensive Climate Emergency Action Plan designed to take practical steps to allow the Borough to reduce its carbon output. This Council supports the actions taken so far by officers and Executive Members to tackle the Climate Emergency.

This Council believes that there are benefits to be seized in addressing the Climate Emergency arising from Brexit. This includes removing VAT from green products to reduce the costs for residents, businesses, charities and public sector organisations.

This Council therefore requests that the Leader of the

Council write to the Borough's four Members of Parliament urging them to make the case to the Chancellor of the Exchequer for removing VAT from green products.

116.4 None Specific

Motion 477 submitted by Guy Grandison

This Council welcomes the pause and review of the draft Planning Bill by the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. This Council strongly believes in the principle of local decision-making in planning, and urges the Secretary of State to place this at the heart of reforms to the planning system.

Further, this Council recognises that the Leader of the Council has written to the Secretary of State, asking him to consider the following:

1. A revision of the Housing Need formula to ensure that it does not penalise areas like Wokingham Borough for being prosperous places to live;
2. Enhanced local community decision-making on development, including the potential for individual streets or villages to vote on whether to accept more housing; and
3. Greater powers for local planning authorities to get developers building applications they have already been granted and the end the practice of 'land-banking'.

This Council welcomes the speedy and positive response from the Secretary of State. This Council urges the Leader to continue a dialogue with Mr Gove to ensure that reforms to the planning system deliver the right outcomes for the residents of Wokingham Borough.

116.5 None Specific

Motion 478 submitted by Paul Fishwick

(Please note that in accordance with Rule 4.2.13.13 as this motion involves expenditure of over £1,000 once the motion has been proposed and seconded it will stand adjourned without discussion to the next meeting of the Executive, with a report back to the next ordinary Council meeting.)

More people cycling more often, especially for short journeys, rather than driving has many benefits including reducing our CO₂ outputs, improving the air that we breathe, assisting with mental and physical health and it creates space on the road for those who

have no alternative but to drive.

As this authority starts to build a network of quality cycleways, they need to be available and safe all year round including the winter months when ice and snow can make them dangerous to use.

This Motion calls on the Council to include in the next Winter Maintenance Plan update (October 2022) a policy to treat the primary cycle network as well as other selected designated routes.

These improvements to our active travel network are essential to our future.

Council may exclude the press and public in order to discuss the Part 2 sheets of Agenda Item 106 above and to do so it must pass a resolution in the following terms:

That under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended) as appropriate.

CONTACT OFFICER

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

HELD ON 17 FEBRUARY 2022 FROM 7.00 PM TO 10.45 PM

Members Present

Councillors: Keith Baker (Mayor), Abdul Loyes (Deputy Mayor), Sam Akhtar, Parry Bath, Rachel Bishop-Firth, Laura Blumenthal, Chris Bowring, Shirley Boyt, Prue Bray, Jenny Cheng, Rachel Burgess, Anne Chadwick, Stephen Conway, Phil Cunnington, Peter Dennis, Lindsay Ferris, Michael Firmager, Paul Fishwick, John Halsall, Jim Frewin, Maria Gee, Guy Grandison, David Hare, Pauline Helliard-Symons, Clive Jones, Norman Jorgensen, Pauline Jorgensen, John Kaiser, Sarah Kerr, Tahir Maher, Morag Malvern, Charles Margetts, Rebecca Margetts, Adrian Mather, Andrew Mickleburgh, Stuart Munro, Gregor Murray, Jackie Rance, Angus Ross, Daniel Sargeant, Ian Shenton, Imogen Shepherd-DuBey, Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey, Caroline Smith, Wayne Smith, Bill Soane, Alison Swaddle and Shahid Younis

95. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted from Barrie Patman.

96. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor subject to the following amendment: 'Rachel Bishop Firth indicated that the speech attributed to Maria Gee under the Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2022/23 item, had been given by herself.'

97. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Charles Margetts declared a Personal and Prejudicial Interest in Item 95 Optalis Contract Renewal 2022, on the grounds that he was a Non-Executive Director of Optalis Ltd. He left the meeting during the discussion of this item.

Councillor John Halsall declared a Personal Interest in Item 95 Optalis Contract Renewal 2022, on the grounds that he was a Non-Executive Director of Optalis Holdings Ltd.

Councillor John Kaiser declared a Personal Interest in Item 95 Optalis Contract Renewal 2022, on the grounds that he was a Non-Executive Director of Optalis Holdings Ltd.

98. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor thanked all those that had donated to or bought tickets for the forthcoming Mayor's event. He was pleased to announce that the event was sold out and encouraged the donation of further auction prizes.

The Mayor went on to congratulate Her Majesty The Queen who on the 6th February became the first British Monarch to celebrate a Platinum Jubilee after 70 years of service.

99. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

99.1 Adrian Betteridge asked the Executive Member for Resident Services, Communications and Emissions the following question:

Question

The sum of the commitments to reduce CO2 in the Transport Section of the Council's

Climate Emergency Action Plan is that, by 2030, vehicle traffic will be reduced by 40%, and levels of walking and cycling will be 250% and 450% respectively of their current levels.

How confident is the Council in achieving this target based on the current actions and investment and what further actions does it intend to take to improve this confidence?

Answer

Thank you for your question.

Wokingham Borough Council has made a commitment to play as full a role as possible – leading by example as well as by exhortation – in achieving a carbon-neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030. The Council has demonstrated this commitment by developing a clear and ambitious climate emergency action plan. The plan was prepared as a predictive tool that provides a clear picture on the scale of the challenge and the approach needed to reduce our carbon emissions.

The Council's powers to reduce carbon emissions are, though, limited and we need to look at the wider picture where our role as a community leader and influencer will be equally, if not more, critical. More than half of the emissions cuts needed will rely on people and businesses taking up low-carbon solutions - decisions that are made at a local and individual level. Many of these decisions can be positively influenced by having supporting infrastructure and systems in place.

Reducing carbon emissions from transport is one of the biggest challenges in the Borough. The Council is taking a holistic approach that will support our residents with both infrastructure and education and awareness programmes. The Council strives to engage and involve the community through events and educational activities such as cycle training, air quality monitoring, anti-idling campaigns and through supporting our schools.

We want our residents to adopt more active and sustainable ways of travel, and for this the Council is increasing and improving the infrastructure through the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, the Greenways and other initiatives, and working closely with public transport providers.

The Council recognises that our current efforts alone are not sufficient to achieve these ambitious targets. The targets in the Climate Emergency Action Plan are attributed to projects though we acknowledge that we will need to refine these targets as they progress and seek alternative and additional policies and projects over the coming years to meet the same level of CO₂e reduction. To assist with this, a Low Emissions Transport Strategy has been in development which informs our targets in the Climate Emergency Action Plan.

The Council has set very ambitious targets for its climate emergency agenda, and we continue to innovate and seek new opportunities to deliver our goals.

Supplementary Question:

I am concerned that outside of what it says in the Climate Emergency Plan, the Council's wider commitment to improving active travel rates is not entirely clear or quantified, in contrast to the commitment to making driving easier, which is well funded and regularly publicised by Executive Members. Tonight's budget falls well short of the estimates in the Climate Plan for improving active travel, and that funding actually goes down in 2024.

My supplementary question is, is the whole of the Council committed to increasing walking and cycling as stated in the Climate Emergency Plan, or some other target, and if so, when can we expect to see this quantified as an objective for the Council as a whole, and see the resources put behind it?

Supplementary Answer:

There are a couple of different answers to what you have just asked. So, the first is, is the entire Council committed? Yes, we are. To give you some numbers, the amount we have put into the investment of certain things; cycle routes £1.5million, Safe School routes £0.25million, the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan £1.2million, the A327 cycleway £0.75million, Borough Council cycling network £1.5million, and the cycleways with Scape £4.4million. So, we are investing across our community and across the different departments in our Council in order to deliver against more active transport capability,

The follow up to your question is, we need to change people's behaviours, in order to get them more active in their transport. That means providing different solutions to the journeys that they do at the moment, and that means understanding the need. It also means looking at different behaviour change programmes that we can put in place to actively encourage our residents to get moving, get travelling in a more active way. We saw with Beat the Street last year, a very popular programme, it got people out walking, schools in particular, but there are other initiatives that are coming in terms of behaviour change, that we will be working on at the moment. We will be looking forward to announcing them very shortly.

99.2 Rebecca Frazier asked the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure the following question:

Question

Can you confirm that there will be a full public consultation for the proposal for 3G pitches to be built adjacent to the Maiden Erlegh nature reserve before any planning permission is put in?

Answer

First of all, I would like to reassure you that we are still evaluating the best site option for this much needed facility in the community, following on from the initial site proposal proposed by the Berkshire and Buckinghamshire Football Association. It has also been my intention to bring back the most optimal site solution to the Executive after the full evaluation of options in the area. We are still at a very early viability stage. Once we have determined and agreed upon the most viable site for the community, at Executive, I can assure you that there will be a full public consultation on the 3G, and this will happen before any planning permission is submitted.

99.3 Julie Freak asked the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure the following question:

Question

Please could you tell us why Laurel Park is being favoured as a site for a new 3G pitch when it is quite clearly the wrong location and is facing fierce opposition from many Lower Earley residents that use the park for all manner of recreation purposes, not just football?

Answer

Laurel Park was favoured as a proposed site by the Berkshire and Buckinghamshire Football Association. It was always my intention to carry out a full evaluation of options and issues, to understand the optimal site for this important facility in the community. I have already referenced another potential option as Maiden Erlegh School. Following this full options evaluation, the preferred site will be taken to Executive for consideration so that we can begin the full consultation process.

Supplementary Question:

In the hope that it is indeed realised that Laurel Park is the wrong location, when and how will we hear that this is definitely the case, and it be confirmed that it is no longer in the running?

Supplementary Answer:

I cannot give you a precise date, but my guess is that we will complete the options assessment process by April/May and then we will bring it back to the Executive.

99.4 Hazel Bell asked the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure. Due to her inability to attend the meeting the following written answer was provided:**Question**

I am a resident who is concerned about the proposals for a 3G pitch.

What is the current stage of the 3G proposal and what alternative sites were considered and why were these rejected in favour of Laurel Park?

Answer

Thank you for your question. As stated in response to the previous question we are still in the early stages in determining the location of the 3G pitch and other potential options beyond Laurel Park, such as the Maiden Erlegh school, are being explored and evaluated. This options analysis setting out the viable options and preferred site for formal consultation, following a full evaluation, will be brought back to a future Executive for consideration and agreement.

99.5 Antony Crouch asked the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure the following question:**Question**

Re Laurel Park 3G pitch proposal, if Laurel Park is the main focus, can you please highlight why this valuable park space (currently the main green area for the majority of the development) is being favoured?

Answer

As previously stated, Laurel Park was favoured as a proposed site by the Berkshire and Buckinghamshire Football Association for the new proposed site for the 3G pitch. Following on from this a full evaluation of options in the community are being undertaken, including surveys, the outcome of this options analysis will be considered to determine the optimum site on which we will formally consult.

99.6 Debra Taylor asked the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure the following question:

Question

Re Laurel Park 3G pitch proposal, there are existing sites in the very close locality (literally within walking distance of Laurel Park - no emissions) existing hard courts and floodlights in place. One is Reading FC (based outside Wokingham Borough) with state of the art training facilities at Bearwood, (inside the Borough) 1.6 miles from Laurel Park. A condition of the planning approval for that site was that it opened for community use. Yet, in the WBC letter to residents (received by very few residents), it stated that one of the groups that will use the 3G pitch will be Reading FC.

There is a 3G 1.8 miles and another 3G 3.4 miles from Laurel Park. We are told grass pitches are running at full capacity, yet you are intent on digging up four of these grass pitches. Grassroots, will Laurel Park FC play their league games on a plastic pitch?

Answer

Teams can now only use pitches for match purposes as long as they have the FIFA 5 Star rating, of which a 3G pitch is. As such there is a high demand for 3G pitches, because teams are having to travel long distances across the Borough, and many are having to play their home games outside of the Borough. We are therefore clear that we need such a valuable facility in our community. What we are not clear on is on the optimum site for it, which is why we are undertaking a full evaluation of options as mentioned previously

Reading Football Club Community Trust, which you mentioned, is one of the main users mentioned, this is a registered charity, and is the community arm of the football club, engaging, developing, and educating young people in various community groups in various locations in the Borough. Officers have informed the planning department with regards to the question regarding the football club training facilities being used by them and will look into this further.

Supplementary Question:

Laurel Park FC have to travel just a 5 minutes' walk to Maiden Erlegh for their winter training, so that is not outside the Borough. The Football Foundation have a Grass Pitch Improvement Strategy. They state that the majority of football is still played on grass pitches. They also state that improving these pitches are a priority, and to ensure that affiliated football fixtures are played on a quality football pitch, and keep grass roots football where it should be played, guess where, there is a clue there. Yes, it is on grass and not plastic.

The Football Foundation Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund provides grants also to enhance or sustain these pitches. This one could be used to improve those grass pitches at Laurel Park, and where grass roots football has been played for many, many, many years. I read that 3G pitches have a 10-year life cycle.

Laurel Park sits in what, when it was built, was the biggest housing estate in Europe, surrounded by housing, so why can't and don't you enhance what is already there for the football community and let the wider community still enjoy what is at the heart of that community, and for generations to come? This is what residents need and want. A 3G pitch at Laurel Park would not benefit residents.

Supplementary Answer:

I can assure you that we have, wherever we have tried to build 3G pitches, we have also improved the grass pitches as well, but there is a hell of a lot of demand for the 3G pitches because of the quality that these 3G pitches offer. We are trying to meet that demand within the Borough. We are trying to stop the teams going away from the Borough, to play their home games away from the Borough, and therefore we are trying to reduce our carbon footprint by building these facilities.

99.7 Chris Elliott asked the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure the following question:

Question

Re Laurel Park 3G pitch proposal, has the usage profile been assessed - what that means is how is the facility used now, by whom and how often and what is the assessed profile going to change to afterwards?

Answer

The current usage was a key consideration in the Berkshire and Buckinghamshire Football Association initially proposing this site. The future of the 3G pitch wherever it will be located, will need to be formulated as part of the Football Development Plan, which will be submitted to and agreed by the Football Foundation.

As stated previously, following this initial proposal we are undertaking an options analysis to arrive at the optimum site for the location, which is yet to be determined.

Supplementary Question:

I just want clarification – so you have not done a current usage profile on the existing facility as it is today?

Supplementary Answer:

It will be done.

99.8 Louise Timlin asked the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and Communities the following question:

Question

At the WBC meeting on 20 January 2022, in response to a supplementary question from Councillor Kerr, Councillor Soane remarked that although the contract to provide support for domestic abuse victims was awarded to Cranstoun in July 2021, we need to “appreciate” that time would be needed to find an appropriate property for a refuge. I therefore conclude that WBC were aware it would take some time for Cranstoun to provide a refuge in Wokingham and ask why, in that case, was provision not made to continue to provide funds to Berkshire Women’s Aid in the interim period until Cranstoun have a refuge up and running?

Answer

The Wokingham Domestic Abuse Partnership Board and Network Group are proud to be working in close collaboration with over 40 voluntary, charity and statutory organisations. This includes making grant funding available to these organisations to help deliver local services and provision to enhance safe accommodation locally.

As part of this work, the Council recognises that Berkshire Women’s Aid is a key stakeholder and valued partner. We, therefore, continue to work in partnership with

Berkshire Women's Aid to support them as a provider of safe accommodation in the Borough.

To add to existing safe accommodation provision, the commissioned provider Cranstoun and the Council continue to work together to address the challenge of finding an appropriate property.

Supplementary Question:

I have been in communication with Berkshire Women's Aid, and I understand that they have had to reach out to the Council to ask to have funds to continue to provide the refuge in Wokingham, and they were told that they needed to acquire an emergency grant which is being provided from November last year to March this year. Does that mean that it is expected that Cranstoun will have a refuge up and running by March, and if not, will funding continue to be provided to Berkshire Women's Aid to run the refuge in Wokingham for victims of domestic abuse?

Supplementary Answer:

I cannot answer whether Cranstoun will have a refuge up and running by March. I would think not at this stage to be honest, but the funding that we offered to the voluntary organisations, as far as I understand, will continue.

99.9 Laura Taylor asked the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure the following question:

Question

There are two 3G pitches, one 1.8 miles from Laurel Park and one 3.4 miles from Laurel Park, plus facilities with outdoor floodlit facilities in place at:

- London Valley Leisure Centre 0.8 miles from Laurel Park
- Maiden Erlegh School 0.9 miles from Laurel Park (where Laurel Park Winter train)
- Sol Jol Park 0.8 miles from Laurel Park
- Chalfont Park 1.4 miles from Laurel Park
- Reading FC training ground 1.6 miles from Laurel Park
- Reading University 1.6 miles from Laurel Park

Local players and members therefore do not have too far to travel for training (most of the above facilities are in fact within walking distance of Laurel Park or no more than a 5 minute drive.

My question is therefore why are WBC intent on digging up the only green space at Laurel Park, installing a 3G pitch which will increase congestion and emissions and when the majority of residents don't want nor need it?

Answer

The pitches mentioned above are all sand dressed or tarmac, and apart from one site they are mainly not suitable for football training or matches. There is therefore an identified need for a 3G pitch in the community, as teams, at present, are having to travel across the Borough, and even out of the Borough to play. Providing a local facility will therefore reduce emissions and congestion.

I can assure you that the specific site options analysis I have previously referenced, will include a consideration of the impact on congestion and emissions.

100. PETITIONS

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

The Mayor's decision as to the action to be taken is set out against each petition.

Danny Errewalla	Danny Errewalla presented a petition of over 1500 signatures against the proposed one-way system on Woodlands Avenue in Woodley. <i>To be forwarded to the Executive Member for Highways and Transport</i>
Shahid Younis	Shahid Younis presented a petition relating to the designation of Kennetmouth as protected Local Green Space. He also presented comments submitted in support asking that the Thameside flyover (East Reading MRT) be rejected and to save green space. <i>To be forwarded to the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement</i>

101. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN AND ASSOCIATED REPORTS

The Council considered four reports which together comprised a single Agenda item:

- The Housing Revenue Account Budget 2022/23 as set out on Agenda pages 49 to 53;
- The Capital Programme and Strategy 2022/25 as set out on Agenda pages 55 to 91;
- The Treasury Management Strategy 2022/25 as set out on Agenda pages 93 to 137;
- The Medium-Term Financial Plan 2022/25 – Revenue Budget Submission 2022/23 as set out on Agenda pages 139 to 141.

The Mayor reminded Members that a total of 90 minutes would be set aside for the debate.

The Mayor also reminded Members that Appendix A to the Medium-Term Financial Plan (the Statutory Resolution) and the Council Tax by Band and Parish, had been circulated.

101.1 John Halsall, Leader of the Council - Statement on the Budget:

It is three years since you elected me as your Leader. It has been humbling to have had the active and wholehearted support of a professional, dedicated, and hardworking team of Members and Officers. I thank you all; it has truly been the honour of my life.

It has been a very busy three years; it has been pretty much full-on 24/7 during which making a positive impact on our community has always been in the forefront of my mind. It has been a pleasure to serve. We are a great local authority. We aspire to be the best.

We have achieved huge accolades. We are one of the most prosperous, least deprived, healthiest and one of the most desirable places to live. Our climate emergency action plan has been ranked 8th in the whole of the country. UNICEF has chosen us in a bid to be recognised as a UNICEF UK Child Friendly Community – we are only one of a handful in the country.

In the last three years, we have brought forward an unprecedented number of policies and strategies. We have reviewed and renewed almost every aspect of the Council and renewed its relationship with partners across sectors and central Government. We have continued to deliver substantial cost savings and service improvements. This has been despite Covid 19, which has dominated thoughts for the last two years.

I have tried to lead from the front. I have encouraged can-do innovation, conscious that initiatives may not work but believe they are always a source of feedback and learning. Our staff feel valued and supported to come up with new ideas and approaches; they understand the high level of aspiration and expectation. There has been a strong focus on promoting staff wellbeing led by senior officers.

The only reason that we are here is to serve the residents, for whom our mission is to make them happier, healthier, and more prosperous. The tragedy of life is often not in our failure, but rather in our complacency; not in our doing too much, but rather in our doing too little; not in our living above our ability, but rather in our living below our capacities.

I have sought to reinvigorate everything we do, and we have. The recent Peer Review team in their feedback to us found we delivered valued, well performing services that provide a high quality of life for residents. We achieve good outcomes for our residents, despite receiving no central government grant funding. Notwithstanding the recent pressures of Covid, we are financially stable.

This did not happen by accident but by the achievement of Officers and Members throughout the 20 years of Conservative administration. We have demonstrable resilience and financial probity.

Over the last three years despite Covid, we have made great strides in all key areas, for example:

- Clear vision for the Borough and recognised Corporate Plan that is delivering the key priorities.
- Meaningful partnership relationships, including Health, and the Voluntary Sector.
- Focus on data and insight to improve decision making.
- Commitment to enhance and improve the customer experience.
- Significant and genuinely marvellous improvement within the Adults and Children's Services which are reflected in recent inspection visits results visits.

However, I am not complacent. We are the golden thread which runs through our community. We will continue to develop, deliver, and shape the future aspirations for the Borough. The scale of challenge has increased. I am confident that I can lead the way to overcome whatever is thrown our way without reducing our services and without reducing momentum on reform where needed. We recognise this as a journey of continuous improvement.

We are proud of our achievements throughout the Covid pandemic. We displayed organisational strength, resilience, and played a pivotal role in ensuring that the local community had the support it needed throughout. Working in partnership with the brilliant voluntary and community groups.

There has been a focus on deepening collective leadership between the Executive and Corporate Leadership Team; this provides a strong foundation to build on. Officers and Members have worked together to enhance our strategic capacity.

We now need to continue to deliver great outcomes for all our residents in a way that promotes fairness, equality, and diversity. We will

- Restate a clear narrative about our ambitions for our residents and the future vision for Wokingham.
- Recognise the role we play in community and place leadership, and sometimes that means taking tough decisions.
- Continue to embed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion for Members and Officers, and through the delivery of services.
- Ensure there is a commitment to a long-term vision for the Borough co-designed with partners.

As you know, we have worked over many years to attain the highest standards of financial management, including a strong track record of delivery of significant savings. The financial future looks both extremely challenging and uncertain. The degree of uncertainty is at a level seldom, if ever, previously experienced.

The financial impact of the Adult Social Care and NHS reform is potentially the greatest concern given its magnitude. Additional expenditure of between £20million to £30million are anticipated when the impact of the reform is fully felt. Whilst the ongoing grant funding of this is unclear, the current levels of financial support suggested will fall well short of that needed by Wokingham and other authorities with a high proportion of self-funders.

A three-year funding settlement was expected for the financial year 2022/23 and beyond, but unfortunately only a one-year settlement was announced. This leaves considerable uncertainty over our funding after 2022/23. A major review of local government funding in the context of a 'levelling up' agenda is expected to be announced for 2023/24.

Wokingham will need to continue to make its case for a fair deal for its residents in the formulation of a new national funding system; currently we receive the lowest level of support per head of population in the country. The New Homes Bonus is substantial reflecting the scale of development in the Borough. We are concerned that it may disappear.

Inflationary pressures on both Revenue and Capital expenditure have become both severe and unpredictable. Inflation in this budget has been carefully considered but we live in extraordinary times, and it may be understated. The government is consulting on changes to what local authorities must charge their general fund for capital borrowings. Wokingham has embarked on a responsible but ambitious Capital Programme over its recent past to enable the strategic delivery of housing, the regeneration of Wokingham Town and the development of much needed affordable housing. There is a risk of adverse consequences, and we will have to review our approach to Housing Delivery,

Regeneration, the provision of affordable housing and holding assets for the purpose of income generation.

The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) budget area is highly regulated which means the opportunity to address the growing demand led statutory pressures relating to SEND is limited. The deficit on DSG is likely to increase significantly in future years and is estimated to be in the region of £13m by 31st March 2023. Options to mitigate the deficit are currently being developed and some may require additional capital investment to deliver them.

The budget proposals put forward for 2022-25 are responsible and affordable, leaving a safe level of General Fund Balances. However, this MTFP is being put forward in an unprecedented landscape of uncertainty and risk. Our financial position will require continual review and there may be a need to undertake some form of mid-year budget review.

This administration has demonstrated its capacity to navigate through the extraordinarily difficult waters of the pandemic and still come in at budgeted levels for 2021/2022. It is vital to do the basics right to provide the capacity and financial flexibility to continue to invest in our community and to build social homes in response to the increase in homelessness. We must be strong and financially resilient, providing high levels of services for resident. In these perilous waters we must always maintain robust control over our finances, and prudently forecast given the uncertainty over future government funding.

We are not in crisis unlike many. The CIPFA Financial Resilience Indicator showed Wokingham to be amongst the top 20 out of 300 councils in the country. We went into this pandemic with excellent cash reserves due to years of excellent Conservative cash management. We will reluctantly have to reduce these reserves, but they will still be maintained at a sustainable level.

Reserves are to support the residents in time of need and hardship. If any Member feels this this is not one of those times, I suggest you look at the havoc wreaked by this pandemic not just in Wokingham or even the UK but worldwide and the personal misery. Think about those who have died before their time and the families facing uncertain times. So yes, we have spent money to ease the suffering and uncertainty of our residents delivering the services they rely on. Would I do the same again? Yes, 100% yes!

Wokingham Borough is a great place to live. More and more people want to live in the Borough. I regret the loss of every field, tree, and hedgerow. While landowners promote their land and developers know they can sell every house they build, it makes it difficult for us to balance the need for new homes with the needs of existing residents. I have managed to materially reduce the number of homes, but I still believe the quantity is still too high. Nevertheless, having a plan is the best of the choices available to us, creates upfront funding of SDLS for high quality infrastructure and has enabled us to oppose speculative development.

Rising prices and rents makes it increasingly difficult for those on low incomes and next generation to acquire or rent homes in the borough. We have a responsibility to help residents. More social homes are required.

We have started the medium-term financial plan on a firm footing and the budget is sound,

but we must recognise the unfavourable winds around us. Mr Mayor, I am recommending this budget to the Council. A budget that contains substantial investment in vital services for the community and contains no cuts. It is safe and prudent and will ensure we continue to deliver the high quality services the residents have come to expect and rely on. As my friend and colleague, the Executive Member for Finance and Housing has said on many occasions “a council which is broke is no good to anyone.”

101.2 Clive Jones, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group - Statement on the Budget

The last two years have been difficult for our residents struggling to cope with the effects of the Covid pandemic. I want to thank all of the staff at Wokingham Borough Council who have during this time worked diligently to continue to provide the Council’s services, that many in our community rely on. Many others in our communities have also worked extremely hard to help their employers keep their businesses afloat, often adapting to new ways of working, such as working from home, with many having to balance this with home schooling. Thanks also to everyone who has helped our NHS and care homes to continue to provide high standards of care. Many have battled through quite horrendous times in the last two years. Life as an NHS professional was very different back in February 2020 to what it is now, while Adult Social Care employees have throughout continued the vital work of looking after some of the most vulnerable in our society. Wokingham Citizens Advice, our Food Banks, and many other charities, have also worked tirelessly to support our residents. We all hope that in the coming months we will be able to see a return to some form of normality, in whatever form that manifests itself. However, we know that many in our communities will continue to face significant challenges.

The Liberal Democrats are firm supporters of social housing. With the looming cost of living crisis, the need for affordable, decent, quality homes is more acute than ever in the Borough. We welcome the fact that the Council works in partnership with our council tenants to deliver our housing service, and that they have been consulted on the Housing Revenue Account budget. We are also pleased to see that the Council has started to look at adapting its housing stock as part of work on the climate emergency. However, we are surprised that the report says absolutely nothing about the major decision which went to the Executive tonight, to bring the Gorse Ride regeneration project back into the Housing Revenue Account. According to the Executive agenda, the budget for this is over £105million. There is an expectation that funding it will involve additional Housing Revenue Account borrowing of £37.5million. Not only is this not in the HRA report, but it is also not in the Treasury Management Strategy, which on page 111 of the agenda, and again on page 125, gives the HRA figures for the next 3 years without any mention of the possibility of more borrowing for Gorse Ride. Failing to include significant borrowing does rather make a mockery of the papers in front of us tonight. Essentially you are asking us to approve a 3-year Treasury Management Strategy, which you know contains incomplete information.

We are all facing a cost of living crisis; increases in energy costs are hitting our residents hard, with many having to suffer an increase of over £700 per year. High energy costs, high increases in inflation, increased taxes on businesses and employees will all take their toll, hitting our most vulnerable residents the hardest. The Government’s proposal to reduce council tax for Bands A to D will help some residents in a small way, but it is nowhere near enough. Pensioners have had their state increases limited to 3.1% now that the Conservatives have scrapped the pensions triple lock introduced by the Liberal Democrats. Inflation is however, now over 5%, so they are losing income. Interest rates have just had their first consecutive rises since 2004. Commentators say that there is

much more to come. The next 18 months could be very difficult for home owners with mortgages. The Bank of England predict that inflation will reach 7.5% in April. All these cost increases will hit our residents. They will also hit the Council. We are already seeing the effects of increases in inflation on Wokingham Borough Council. We share the concerns of the Chief Financial Officer that we are in unprecedented times of uncertainty. We must therefore keep inflation budgets under constant review.

Increases in energy costs have hit budgets and cost increases in raw materials in the building industry have resulted in cuts to the Council's Capital Programme. I am thinking of the Twyford Library, that appears to be on hold following a 20 year plus campaign by local Liberal Democrats to get a new library. It is on hold it appears because of a relatively small amount of money. The crematorium project has been scrapped. Increases in building costs mean it is no longer viable, but has the original need for a crematorium in Wokingham gone away? I think it probably has not.

So, are the Conservatives fit to be in charge of our Borough finances? Conservatives are driven by dogma. A few years ago, their ideology said that outsourcing of services was the key to solving all of our ills. They set up Optalis and outsourced PPP. Neither worked well and we have had to radically change them. Luckily, we now have an excellent management at Optalis which is putting it back on track again. The Council is bringing PPP back in house, but there is a substantial one off cost of £300,000 in 2022/23. Substantial additional revenue costs in the next 3 years are being provided for organisational transformation, or change, including £3.4million in Adult Social Care and £3.7million in Children's Services. These and other costs are predicated substantially or wholly on savings in future years. We welcome additional spend to save and to deliver improved services, but we ask how long have issues that require change existed, and how long have overspends been going on for? How much of the spend is due to the unravelling of the 21st century Council process, so soon after it was implemented? How will hard pressed staff cope with yet more changes? All these scenarios put pressure on the personal finances of our residents, especially the lower paid and the vulnerable. It is therefore incumbent on us as councillors to minimise the Council's council tax increases. Our difficulty is that we have less Government funding for the next financial year. In fact, there has and will be a massive decrease in funding relative to costs that the Council is expected to cover. The new Homes Bonus is a grant from Government to encourage house building. Despite plans to meet increased building targets the new Homes Grant from the Government has decreased from £7.5million in 2021 to £4.8million in 2022/23. Coming down the road is the galloping elephant of the Social Care Reforms that have the potential to bankrupt the Council and other councils unless they are fully funded by the Government.

If we are running the Council, we would broadly abide by this budget envelope, but within that envelope we would have different priorities to the Conservatives. We would look at ways of helping local businesses to recover from Covid. Mental health and wellbeing will be a priority for all ages, especially children's mental health. We would commit the Council to seek White Ribbon accreditation. We will push for affordable, safe travel options. We will review the system of discretionary payments for residents in crisis. We will ensure effective out of hours support for residents in crisis, that ensures that no resident is forced to sleep rough. We will invest in implementing the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, and ensure that public money spent on climate emergency projects have fully costed business cases. We will push ahead with our idea of a Covid memorial wood, as a place where residents can remember their friends and family members who have been lost to Covid. Mr Mayor, this evening Liberal Democrat Shadow Executive

Members will give some details on what we might do differently to the Conservatives if we were running the Council.

101.3 Housing Revenue Account Budget 2022/23

It was proposed by John Halsall and seconded by John Kaiser that the Housing Revenue Account Budget 2022/23 as set out in Agenda pages 45 to 54, be approved.

Voting on the item was as follows:

For	Against	Abstain
Sam Akhtar	Jim Frewin	Keith Baker
Parry Batth		
Rachel Bishop-Firth		
Laura Blumenthal		
Chris Bowring		
Shirley Boyt		
Prue Bray		
Rachel Burgess		
Jenny Cheng		
Stephen Conway		
Phil Cunnington		
Peter Dennis		
Lindsay Ferris		
Michael Firmager		
Paul Fishwick		
Maria Gee		
Guy Grandison		
John Halsall		
David Hare		
Pauline Helliari-Symons		
Clive Jones		
Norman Jorgensen		
Pauline Jorgensen		
John Kaiser		
Sarah Kerr		
Abdul Loyes		
Tahir Maher		
Morag Malvern		
Charles Margetts		
Rebecca Margetts		
Adrian Mather		
Andrew Mickleburgh		
Stuart Munro		
Gregor Murray		
Jackie Rance		
Angus Ross		
Daniel Sargeant		
Ian Shenton		
Imogen Shepherd-Dubey		
Rachelle Shepherd-Dubey		

Caroline Smith		
Wayne Smith		
Bill Soane		
Alison Swaddle		
Shahid Younis		

RESOLVED: That Council approve the following-

- 1) The Housing Revenue Account budget for 2022/23 (Appendix A);
- 2) that Council house dwelling rents be increased by up to 4.10% effective from 4 April 2022 in line with the council's Rent Setting Policy that was approved by Executive on 25 November 2021;
- 3) that garage rents to be increased by 3.80% effective from April 2022 in line with Council's general fees and charges;
- 4) that Shared Equity Rents to be increased by 4.86% based on September RPI, effective from April 2022;
- 5) that the Tenant Service Charges be set based on cost recovery;
- 6) the Housing Major Repairs (capital) programme for 2022/23 as set out in Appendix B;
- 7) that sheltered room guest charges for 2022/23 remain unchanged at £9.50 per night per room.

101.4 Capital Programme and Strategy 2022-2025

It was proposed by John Halsall and seconded by John Kaiser that the Capital Programme and Strategy 2022/25, as set out at Agenda pages 55 to 92, be approved.

For	Against	Abstain
Sam Akhtar	Shirley Boyt	Keith Baker
Parry Batth	Rachel Burgess	Rachel Bishop-Firth
Laura Blumenthal		Prue Bray
Chris Bowring		Stephen Conway
Jenny Cheng		Peter Dennis
Phil Cunningham		Lindsay Ferris
Michael Firmager		Paul Fishwick
Jim Frewin		Maria Gee
Guy Grandison		Clive Jones
John Halsall		Sarah Kerr
David Hare		Tahir Maher
Pauline Helliari-Symons		Morag Malvern
Norman Jorgensen		Adrian Mather
Pauline Jorgensen		Andrew Mickleburgh
John Kaiser		Ian Shenton
Abdul Loyes		Imogen Shepherd-Dubey
Charles Margetts		Rachelle Shepherd-Dubey
Rebecca Margetts		Caroline Smith

Stuart Munro		
Gregor Murray		
Jackie Rance		
Angus Ross		
Daniel Sargeant		
Wayne Smith		
Bill Soane		
Alison Swaddle		
Shahid Younis		

RESOLVED: that Council approve the following:

- 1) the Capital Strategy for 2022 - 2025 - Appendix A;
- 2) the three-year capital programme for 2022 - 2025 –Appendix B;
- 3) the draft vision for capital investment over the next five years - Appendix C;
- 4) the use of developer contribution funding (s106 and CIL) for capital projects as set out in Appendix D. Approval is sought up to the project budget.

101.5 Treasury Management Strategy 2022-2025

It was proposed by John Halsall and seconded by John Kaiser that the Treasury Management Strategy 2022/25, as set out at Agenda pages 93 to 138, be approved.

Voting was as detailed below:

For	Against	Abstain
Sam Akhtar	Rachel Bishop-Firth	Keith Baker
Parry Bath	Prue Bray	Shirley Boyt
Laura Blumenthal	Stephen Conway	Rachel Burgess
Chris Bowring	Peter Dennis	
Jenny Cheng	Lindsay Ferris	
Phil Cunningham	Paul Fishwick	
Michael Firmager	Jim Frewin	
Guy Grandison	Maria Gee	
John Halsall	David Hare	
Pauline Helliard-Symons	Clive Jones	
Norman Jorgensen	Sarah Kerr	
Pauline Jorgensen	Tahir Maher	
John Kaiser	Morag Malvern	
Abdul Loyes	Adrian Mather	
Charles Margetts	Andrew Mickleburgh	
Rebecca Margetts	Ian Shenton	
Stuart Munro	Imogen Shepherd-DuBey	
Gregor Murray	Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey	
Jackie Rance	Caroline Smith	

Angus Ross		
Daniel Sargeant		
Wayne Smith		
Bill Soane		
Alison Swaddle		
Shahid Younis		

RESOLVED that Council:

- 1) notes the Treasury Management Strategy as set out in Appendix A including the following additional appendices;
 - Prudential Indicators (Appendix B)
 - Annual Investment Strategy 2022/23 (Appendix C)
 - Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy (Appendix D)
- 2) notes that the Audit Committee agreed the Treasury Management Strategy on 2 February 2022 and have recommended the report to Council for approval;
- 3) notes the cumulative financial impact on the Council of its borrowing activities equates to a net credit to the general fund for the taxpayer of £42.70 per band D equivalent at end of 2022/23 and noting this credit increases to £62.47 at the end of 2024/25.

101.6 Medium Term Financial Plan 2022-2025 Including Revenue Budget Submission 2022/23

It was proposed by John Halsall and seconded by John Kaiser that the Medium Term Financial Plan 2022/25 Revenue Budget Submission 2022/23 be approved subject to the tabled sheets.

In line with the requirements of the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, a recorded vote was taken.

For	Against	Abstain
Sam Akhtar	Shirley Boyt	Keith Baker
Parry Batth	Rachel Burgess	Rachel Bishop-Firth
Laura Blumenthal	Jim Frewin	Prue Bray
Chris Bowring		Stephen Conway
Jenny Cheng		Peter Dennis
Phil Cunnington		Lindsay Ferris
Michael Firmager		Paul Fishwick
Guy Grandison		Maria Gee
John Halsall		Clive Jones
David Hare		Sarah Kerr
Pauline Helliard-Symons		Tahir Maher
Norman Jorgensen		Morag Malvern
Pauline Jorgensen		Adrian Mather
John Kaiser		Andrew Mickleburgh
Abdul Loyes		Ian Shenton
Charles Margetts		Imogen Shepherd-Dubey
Rebecca Margetts		Rachelle Shepherd-Dubey

Stuart Munro		Caroline Smith
Gregor Murray		
Jackie Rance		
Angus Ross		
Daniel Sargeant		
Wayne Smith		
Bill Soane		
Alison Swaddle		
Shahid Younis		

RESOLVED: that Council approve the following:

- 1) the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2022/25, including the budget submission for 2022/23 and the Summary of Budget Movements (SOBM);
- 2) the statutory resolution that sets out the 2022/23 council tax levels (as set out in Appendix A to the report);
- 3) that in the event that there are any changes to the provisional precept of the Fire Authority or parishes, arising from their precept setting meetings being held before the end of February, the Deputy Chief Executive (S151 Officer) is delegated authority to enact all relevant changes to the MTFP, Statutory Resolution and council tax levels.

Note: The Statutory Resolution is attached as an appendix to the Council Minutes.

Statutory Resolution

102. INTERIM POLLING PLACE REVIEW

The Council considered a report regarding an Interim Polling Place Review.

It was proposed by Pauline Jorgensen and seconded by Clive Jones Jorgensen that the recommendations set out within the report be agreed.

Pauline Jorgensen commented that polling stations had successfully been placed at Lower Earley library and Earley St Peter's Church Hall previously.

RESOLVED: That the following permanent re-designations be agreed:

- 1) Hillside Ward: Lower Earley Library to be designated as the polling place for all elections for polling district EDW.
- 2) Maiden Erlegh Ward: Earley St Peters Church Hall to be designated as the polling place for all elections for polling districts EFW & EGW.

103. RE-DESIGNATION OF POLLING PLACES

The Council considered a report regarding the Redesignation of Polling Places.

It was proposed by Alison Swaddle and seconded by Clive Jones that the recommendations set out within the report be agreed, subject to the following alteration:

RECOMMENDATION: *That Council agree for any elections held in 2022 that:*

1) *St John's Church Centre, Woodley be designated as the polling place for polling district KCM in Coronation Ward instead of St John's Ambulance, HQ, Woodley;*

This alteration was agreed.

Clive Jones commented that he hoped that in future an alternative polling station to Oaklands Junior School could be found in Wokingham Without ward.

RESOLVED: That for any elections held in 2022 that:

- 1) St John's Church Centre, Woodley be designated as the polling place for polling district KCM in Coronation Ward instead of St John's Ambulance, HQ, Woodley;
- 2) The Assistant Director Governance be delegated authority, in consultation with the relevant Ward Member(s), to re-designate any polling place in the Borough which becomes unavailable.

104. ELECTORAL REVIEW ARRANGEMENTS

The Council considered a report regarding Electoral Review Arrangements

It was proposed by John Halsall and seconded by John Kaiser that the recommendations set out within the report be agreed.

John Halsall commented that he had hoped to be able to put this item forward with cross party support, however, the Leader of the Opposition had declined this. He believed that if consensus was reached within the Council, it would carry a lot of weight with the Boundary Commission. John Halsall went on to add that the recommendation related to the establishment of a cross party Working Group. To ensure all the groups were represented, a Working Group of 18 would have been required which was impractical. He had therefore asked the Independent and Labour Group to share a vote to enable a Working Group of 9 and political balance was preserved. The current undertaking was to consider the shape of the Borough in 2028, which was an officer exercise based on currently anticipated development, and also to determine the number of Councillors that the Council believed should be elected.

Rachel Burgess was of the view that a Working Group would not be impartial because the ruling group would always take forward their view, due to the number of votes they have on the Working Group. She emphasised that the Boundary Commission did not place weight on what the Council agreed, but on the quality of evidence provided. Rachel Burgess stated that the review had been known about for some time, but it felt as if they were being rushed into the Working Group with little time to consider the information.

Clive Jones indicated that the Liberal Democrats supported the establishment of a cross party Working Group to compile a submission to the Boundary Commission. There was a need for wards to have roughly equal numbers of electors and the new wards to reflect local communities. He emphasised that consultation of residents must be balanced. Clive Jones stated that he felt the Working Group process to be rushed and that the Working Group should be made up of Members with equal votes. He questioned the quorum being five Members, which gave the potential opportunity for no Opposition involvement. Clive Jones emphasised that should consensus not be reached a minority report would be submitted.

Voting was as detailed below:

For	Against	Abstain
Sam Akhtar	Shirley Boyt	Keith Baker
Parry Batth	Rachel Burgess	
Rachel Bishop-Firth		
Laura Blumenthal		
Chris Bowring		
Prue Bray		
Jenny Cheng		
Stephen Conway		
Phil Cunnington		
Peter Dennis		
Lindsay Ferris		
Michael Firmager		
Paul Fishwick		
Jim Frewin		
Maria Gee		
Guy Grandison		
John Halsall		
David Hare		
Pauline Helliar-Symons		
Clive Jones		
Norman Jorgensen		
Pauline Jorgensen		
John Kaiser		
Sarah Kerr		
Abdul Loyes		
Tahir Maher		
Morag Malvern		
Charles Margetts		
Rebecca Margetts		
Adrian Mather		
Andrew Mickleburgh		
Stuart Munro		
Gregor Murray		
Jackie Rance		
Angus Ross		
Daniel Sargeant		
Ian Shenton		
Imogen Shepherd-Dubey		
Rachelle Shepherd-Dubey		
Caroline Smith		
Wayne Smith		
Bill Soane		
Alison Swaddle		
Shahid Younis		

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the arrangements for a review of electoral arrangements by the Local Government Boundary Review for England be noted;
- 2) the setting up a cross-party, Member level Working Group on the basis set out in paragraphs 4.3-4.5 of the report be agreed to;
- 3) the Terms of Reference of the Electoral Review Working Group as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be agreed.

105. WHOLE COUNCIL ELECTIONS

The Council considered a report regarding Whole Council Elections.

It was proposed by John Halsall and seconded by John Kaiser that the recommendation set out within the report be agreed.

John Halsall emphasised the importance of representing the views of local communities. He commented that elections by thirds came with a cost and disrupted Council business for some time because of Purdah.

John Kaiser emphasised that the money spent on elections by thirds could be spent elsewhere on other services.

The following amendment was proposed by Stephen Conway and seconded by Rachel Burgess. Changes are shown in bold italics.

RECOMMENDATION *That Council be recommended to:*

- 1) *Launch a consultation with stakeholders on moving to a whole council (all-out) electoral cycle **or maintaining the existing electoral cycle;***
- 2) *The consultation document (Appendix C) be changed by deleting the wording in sections “Benefits of all-out elections” and Benefits of Elections by Thirds” to be replaced by the following:
“The Benefits of all-out four-yearly elections*

Holding elections once every four years for all councillors is easier for the electorate to understand. All out elections would make a financial saving, in that there would be one election rather than three (but the one election would be all-out and therefore more costly than in any year of elections by thirds). A four-yearly cycle would reduce the distraction of elections three years out of four, enabling officer time to be devoted to other duties and councillors to take a longer-term perspective.

The Benefits of elections by thirds

Electing by thirds is the current electoral system of the council. A major benefit of this system is that it provides greater accountability than four-yearly all-out elections. Electing by thirds gives the electorate a greater opportunity than all-out elections every four years to be involved in decision-making at the council and so furthers local democracy. It also means that there is greater stability for the Council in terms of its membership. Electing by thirds reduces the risk of wholesale change within the Council and allows for succession

planning because there is always a mixture of new and experienced councillors on the Council.”

3) Agree that the consultation should be for a minimum of six weeks.

Stephen Conway commented that he would prefer a balanced picture. He felt that the amendment offered a balanced assessment of both options and removed a reference to greater fairness in the all out option, which he felt was incorrect. He emphasised that he was not pre-judging the outcome of the consultation.

Rachel Burgess explained that there was no scenario where there would be an inequality in the chances to vote. She was of the view that the amendment presented a more balanced view of both options.

The amendment was not accepted by John Halsall the proposer of the report.

Pray Bray stated that consultation should be carried out fairly to ensure that results were valid. She felt that the Administration had already made up their minds as to which option they would like implemented.

Jim Frewin emphasised that residents should be provided with all the options to make an informed choice.

John Halsall indicated that the wording of the consultation had been drafted by the Monitoring Officer and that he had had no input. He was of the opinion that the amendment was inaccurate.

Stephen Conway requested a point of personal explanation under Section 4.2.13.14 of the Constitution, relating to John Halsall's suggestion that the reference to the greater stability of the Council in terms of its membership, should be removed. He indicated that these were the words of the Monitoring Officer.

Voting on the amendment was as set out below.

For	Against	Abstain
Rachel Bishop-Firth	Sam Akhtar	Keith Baker
Shirley Boyt	Parry Batth	
Prue Bray	Laura Blumenthal	
Rachel Burgess	Chris Bowring	
Stephen Conway	Jenny Cheng	
Peter Dennis	Phil Cunnington	
Lindsay Ferris	Michael Firmager	
Paul Fishwick	Guy Grandison	
Jim Frewin	John Halsall	
Maria Gee	Pauline Helliard Symons	
David Hare	Norman Jorgensen	
Clive Jones	Pauline Jorgensen	
Sarah Kerr	John Kaiser	
Tahir Maher	Abdul Loyes	
Morag Malvern	Charles Margetts	
Adrian Mather	Rebecca Margetts	
Andrew Mickleburgh	Stuart Munro	

Ian Shenton	Gregor Murray	
Imogen Shepherd-DuBey	Jackie Rance	
Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey	Angus Ross	
Caroline Smith	Daniel Sargeant	
	Wayne Smith	
	Bill Soane	
	Alison Swaddle	
	Shahid Younis	

The amendment was declared to be lost.

Stephen Conway felt that the Liberal Democrats could not support a proposal which contained a material inaccuracy regarding one of the options. They supported the idea of a consultation.

John Halsall responded that the consultation had been drafted by Officers which were independent.

Voting on the original recommendations was as follows:

For	Against	Abstain
Sam Akhtar	Rachel Bishop Firth	Keith Baker
Parry Bath	Prue Bray	
Laura Blumenthal	Stephen Conway	
Chris Bowring	Peter Dennis	
Shirley Boyt	Lindsay Ferris	
Rachel Burgess	Paul Fishwick	
Jenny Cheng	Maria Gee	
Phil Cunnington	David Hare	
Michael Firmager	Clive Jones	
Jim Frewin	Sarah Kerr	
Guy Grandison	Tahir Maher	
John Halsall	Morag Malvern	
Pauline Helliard Symons	Adrian Mather	
Norman Jorgensen	Andrew Mickleburgh	
Pauline Jorgensen	Ian Shenton	
John Kaiser	Imogen Shepherd-DuBey	
Abdul Loyes	Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey	
Charles Margetts	Caroline Smith	
Rebecca Margetts		
Stuart Munro		
Gregor Murray		
Jackie Rance		
Angus Ross		
Daniel Sargeant		
Wayne Smith		
Bill Soane		

Alison Swaddle		
Shahid Younis		

RESOLVED: That a consultation with stakeholders on moving to a whole council (all-out) electoral cycle, be launched.

106. CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION

The Council considered a report regarding Changes to the Constitution.

It was proposed by Stuart Munro and seconded by John Kaiser that the recommendations set out within the report be agreed.

Stuart Munro took Council through the proposed changes to the Constitution.

Sarah Kerr expressed concern around recommendation 6. She understood the need to have transparency over the cost implications of decisions made but queried the definition of a 'significant sum of money.' She asked the Council to consider the negative consequences of the proposed amendment and indicated that a Climate Emergency would not have been declared had the amendment been in place at the time. The full cost implications of this declaration were still unknown some time later. Sarah Kerr asked that the Chairman of the Constitution Review Working Group remove recommendation 6 from the report and take it back to the Constitution Review Working Group for further consideration. She emphasised that some Councillors who wished to raise issues of concern to residents may not always have full access to cost implications. Sarah Kerr questioned the rationale of sending the Motion to the Executive.

Sarah Kerr proposed that should recommendation 6 be removed, that recommendation 1, 2 and 3 be voted on separately, and that recommendations 4, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10 be voted on separately and that should recommendation 6 not be removed from the report, that it be voted on with recommendations 1, 2 and 3. This was seconded by Imogen Shepherd-DuBey.

Imogen Shepherd-DuBey felt that the current threshold proposed around recommendation 6 was not high enough and that not all matters could be fully costed in advance.

Stuart Munro did not accept the removal of recommendation 6. He commented that the threshold had been proposed by the Head of Legal, and felt that should the amendment prove problematic, it could be reviewed again.

Rachel Burgess was of the view that recommendation 6 around the costing of Motions was undemocratic.

Voting on the proposal to remove recommendation 6 and to request that it be reconsidered by the Constitution Review Working Group was as follows.

For	Against	Abstain
Rachel Bishop-Firth	Sam Akhtar	Keith Baker
Shirley Boyt	Parry Batth	
Prue Bray	Laura Blumenthal	
Rachel Burgess	Chris Bowring	
Stephen Conway	Jenny Cheng	
Peter Dennis	Phil Cunnington	

Lindsay Ferris	Michael Firmager	
Paul Fishwick	Guy Grandison	
Jim Frewin	John Halsall	
Maria Gee	Pauline Helliard Symons	
David Hare	Norman Jorgensen	
Clive Jones	Pauline Jorgensen	
Sarah Kerr	John Kaiser	
Tahir Maher	Abdul Loyes	
Morag Malvern	Charles Margetts	
Adrian Mather	Rebecca Margetts	
Andrew Mickleburgh	Stuart Munro	
Ian Shenton	Gregor Murray	
Imogen Shepherd-DuBey	Jackie Rance	
Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey	Angus Ross	
Caroline Smith	Daniel Sargeant	
	Wayne Smith	
	Bill Soane	
	Alison Swaddle	
	Shahid Younis	

The amendment was declared by the Mayor to be lost.

Imogen Shepherd-DuBey spoke to the original proposal as not amended. She commented that there were many proposals that the Liberal Democrats could support, but some such as extending the deadline for submitting questions, that they could not. She welcomed the amendments to the Standards Committee terms of reference.

107. CONTINUATION OF THE MEETING

At this point in the meeting, 10.14pm, in accordance with Procedure Rule 4.2.12 (m), the Council considered a Motion to continue the meeting beyond 10.30pm for a maximum of 30 minutes to enable further business on the Agenda to be transacted. The Motion was proposed by Prue Bray and seconded by Stephen Conway.

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

108. CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION CONTINUED

Recommendations 1,2,3 and 6 were voted on together.

The results of the voting are detailed below.

For	Against	Abstain
Sam Akhtar	Rachel Bishop-Firth	Keith Baker
Parry Batth	Shirley Boyt	
Laura Blumenthal	Prue Bray	
Chris Bowring	Rachel Burgess	
Jenny Cheng	Stephen Conway	
Phil Cunnington	Peter Dennis	
Michael Firmager	Lindsay Ferris	

Jim Frewin	Paul Fishwick	
Guy Grandison	Maria Gee	
John Halsall	David Hare	
Pauline Helliard-Symons	Clive Jones	
Norman Jorgensen	Sarah Kerr	
Pauline Jorgensen	Tahir Maher	
John Kaiser	Morag Malvern	
Abdul Loyes	Adrian Mather	
Charles Margetts	Andrew Mickleburgh	
Rebecca Margetts	Ian Shenton	
Stuart Munro	Imogen Shepherd-DuBey	
Gregor Murray	Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey	
Jackie Rance	Caroline Smith	
Angus Ross		
Daniel Sargeant		
Wayne Smith		
Bill Soane		
Alison Swaddle		
Shahid Younis		

Recommendations 4, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10 were voted on together.

The results of the voting are detailed below.

For	Against	Abstain
Sam Akhtar		Keith Baker
Parry Batth		
Rachel Bishop-Firth		
Laura Blumenthal		
Chris Bowring		
Shirley Boyt		
Prue Bray		
Rachel Burgess		
Jenny Cheng		
Stephen Conway		
Phil Cunnington		
Peter Dennis		
Lindsay Ferris		
Michael Firmager		
Paul Fishwick		
Jim Frewin		
Maria Gee		
Guy Grandison		
John Halsall		
David Hare		
Pauline Helliard-Symons		
Clive Jones		
Norman Jorgensen		

Pauline Jorgensen		
John Kaiser		
Sarah Kerr		
Abdul Loyes		
Tahir Maher		
Morag Malvern		
Charles Margetts		
Rebecca Margetts		
Adrian Mather		
Andrew Mickleburgh		
Stuart Munro		
Gregor Murray		
Jackie Rance		
Angus Ross		
Daniel Sargeant		
Ian Shenton		
Imogen Shepherd-Dubey		
Rachelle Shepherd-Dubey		
Caroline Smith		
Wayne Smith		
Bill Soane		
Alison Swaddle		
Shahid Younis		

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

- 1) the deadline for public and Member questions, that relate to items on the agenda or urgent matters, be amended, as set out in Paragraph 1 of the report;
- 2) Section Rule 4.2.9.9 Written Answers, be amended as set out in Paragraph 2 of the report;
- 3) Section 4.2.8.1 Consideration of motions and Section 4.2.11.3 Motion set out in Agenda be amended as set out in Paragraph 3 of the report;
- 4) Section 4.2.11.3 Motion set out in Agenda, be amended as set out in Paragraph 4 of the report;
- 5) Section 4.2.13.1 No Speeches Until Motion Seconded, be amended as set out in Paragraph 5 of the report;
- 6) Section 4.2.13.13 Motions on Expenditure or Revenue, as set out in Paragraph 6 of the report, be added to the Constitution;
- 7) Section 8.1 Planning Committee Terms of Reference be amended as set out in Paragraph 7 of the report;

- 8) Sections 8.7.1 Function and Composition of School Transport Appeals Panel and 8.7.2 Meetings of the School Transport Appeals Panel, be amended as set out in Paragraph 8 of the report;
- 9) Section 9.1.12 Process for Dealing with Misconduct Complaints be amended as set out in Appendix 1 to the report;
- 10) amendments to various sections of the Constitution, put forward by the Head of Legal Services, and as set out in Paragraph 10 of the report be agreed.

109. OPTALIS CONTRACT RENEWAL 2022

Charles Margetts left the meeting during the discussion of this item and did not participate in discussions or the vote.

The Council considered a report regarding the Optalis Contract Renewal.

It was proposed by Phil Cunnington and seconded by David Hare that the recommendations set out within the report be agreed.

Phil Cunnington commented that Optalis had evolved into a joint organisation in conjunction with the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead to provide adult care services across the two areas and to provide as many of the corporate and operational costs as possible so as to provide value for money. Whilst the objectives of the authorities remained the same, the construct of Optalis was unfavourable to the Council. It was necessary to reset the strategic focus of Optalis to ensure quality of services provided to Wokingham residents as opposed to growth. The Board structure had been slimmed down to allow quicker decision making. The Lead Members for Adult Services and the Directors of Adult Services from the two authorities would be Board members, allowing direct operational control and the setting of objectives to suit shareholders and residents. Services in Wokingham would be run independently from RBWM, giving more flexibility and independence for the Council.

David Hare praised the work of Optalis, and in particular, David Birch, Chief Executive of Optalis, and Matt Pope, Director Adult Services. He referred to some of the improvements being made and highlighted the benefits of the peripatetic team.

Shirley Boyt referred to the care staff who were ‘at the sharp end’ caring for the elderly and disabled. Many of these were some of the lowest paid workers in the Borough. Shirley Boyt commented that whilst it was likely that Optalis was paying the national living wage of £9.50 to those employees who were over 23, she asked whether consideration could be given to paying the real living wage, which was 40p an hour more, and which could make a real difference to people. She questioned whether this could form part of the Council’s Anti-Poverty Strategy.

Phil Cunnington responded that the Council wanted to make sure that services was run as efficiently as possible so as to make the best offers to keep and reward staff, in a very competitive market.

Voting was as follows:

For	Against	Abstain
Sam Akhtar	Adrian Mather	Keith Baker

Parry Bath		
Rachel Bishop-Firth		
Laura Blumenthal		
Chris Bowring		
Shirley Boyt		
Prue Bray		
Rachel Burgess		
Anne Chadwick		
Jenny Cheng		
Stephen Conway		
Phil Cunnington		
Peter Dennis		
Lindsay Ferris		
Michael Firmager		
Paul Fishwick		
Jim Frewin		
Maria Gee		
Guy Grandison		
John Halsall		
David Hare		
Pauline Helliard-Symons		
Clive Jones		
Norman Jorgensen		
Pauline Jorgensen		
John Kaiser		
Sarah Kerr		
Abdul Loyes		
Tahir Maher		
Rebecca Margetts		
Andrew Mickleburgh		
Stuart Munro		
Gregor Murray		
Jackie Rance		
Angus Ross		
Daniel Sargeant		
Ian Shenton		
Imogen Shepherd-Dubey		
Rachelle Shepherd-Dubey		
Caroline Smith		
Wayne Smith		
Bill Soane		
Alison Swaddle		
Shahid Younis		

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the attached procurement business case to renew the contract to Optalis be approved;

- 2) authority be delegated to the Director of Adult Services, in consultation with the Lead Member for Adult Services to:
 - a) approve and complete the contract with Optalis for £7.3mil – 2022-23; and
 - b) undertake all activities required to complete the joint ownership arrangements between RBWM and the Council as set out under the heading 'Future Arrangements' below.

- 3) authority be delegated to the Director of Adult Services and the Director of Resources and Assets, to add to and remove services within Optalis during the term of the contract provided that in each case, up to the total value of £500k:
 - a) the budget for the costs of the services has already been approved as part of the agreed Council Budget;
 - b) the business case has been approved by both Directors;
 - c) the Executive Member with responsibility for Adult Services and the Executive Member with responsibility for Finance have been consulted.

- 4) the shareholders agreement be noted.

110. CENTRAL AND EASTERN BERKSHIRE JOINT MINERALS AND WASTE PLAN: MAIN MODIFICATIONS CONSULTATION

The Council considered a report regarding the Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Plan: Main Modification Consultation.

It was proposed by Wayne Smith and seconded by Clive Jones that the recommendations set out within the report be agreed.

Wayne Smith indicated that following the latest modelling data, Brookside in Swallowfield was no longer being considered as a waste site due to the increased flood risk. Clarity had been provided around Star Works and Knowl Hill. In addition, Policy DM15 the operator past performance, had been renamed site history.

The voting was as follows:

For	Against	Abstain
Sam Akhtar		Keith Baker
Parry Batth		
Rachel Bishop-Firth		
Laura Blumenthal		
Chris Bowring		
Shirley Boyt		
Prue Bray		
Rachel Burgess		
Jenny Cheng		
Stephen Conway		
Phil Cunnington		
Peter Dennis		
Lindsay Ferris		
Michael Firmager		
Paul Fishwick		
Jim Frewin		

Maria Gee		
Guy Grandison		
John Halsall		
David Hare		
Pauline Helliar-Symons		
Clive Jones		
Norman Jorgensen		
Pauline Jorgensen		
John Kaiser		
Sarah Kerr		
Abdul Loyes		
Tahir Maher		
Morag Malvern		
Charles Margetts		
Rebecca Margetts		
Adrian Mather		
Andrew Mickleburgh		
Stuart Munro		
Gregor Murray		
Jackie Rance		
Angus Ross		
Daniel Sargeant		
Ian Shenton		
Imogen Shepherd-Dubey		
Rachelle Shepherd-Dubey		
Caroline Smith		
Wayne Smith		
Bill Soane		
Alison Swaddle		
Shahid Younis		

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Plan: Main Modifications and supporting documentation for publication and public consultation, be agreed;
- 2) community engagement on the Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Plan: Main Modifications and associated supporting documents be authorised to take place for at least 6 weeks from February 2022 onwards;
- 3) the Director of Place and Growth, in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement, be authorised to agree minor amendments necessary to the Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Plan: Main Modifications and other supporting documents prior to consultation.

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REVENUE BUDGET & STATUTORY RESOLUTION 2022/23

The Leader of the Council proposes the budget submission contained in the Medium Term Financial Plan and moves the following statutory resolution required to fix the Council Tax for each Band in each part of the Council's area in accordance with the decision on the level of Council Tax. The Localism Act 2011 has made significant changes to the Local Government Finance Act 1992, and now requires the billing authority to calculate a Council Tax requirement for the year, not its budget requirement as previously.

The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group will make his budget speech and propose any amendments that he wishes to the budget proposals put forward by the Leader of the Council.

1. That it be noted that at its meeting on 20th January 2022 Council calculated the following amounts for the year 2022/23 in accordance with regulations made under Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended by the Localism Act 2011 and the Local Government Finance Act 2012:-

(a) 74,946.30 being the amount calculated by the Council, (Item T) in accordance with regulation 31B of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011 and the Local Government Finance Act 2012), as its council tax base for the year

(b) Part of the Council's area.

Arborfield and Newland	1,298.9
Barkham	2,158.9
Charvil	1,464.9
Earley	11,974.9
Finchampstead	6,295.6
Remenham	327.3
Ruscombe	545.7
St. Nicholas Hurst	1,104.0
Shinfield	7,356.1
Sonning	829.5
Swallowfield	1,077.8
Twyford	3,026.4
Wargrave	2,150.9
Winnersh	4,465.3
Wokingham	16,712.9
Wokingham Without	3,299.4
Woodley	10,857.8
	<u>74,946.3</u>

being the amounts calculated by the Council, in accordance with regulation 6 of the Regulations, as the amounts of its council tax base for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a parish precept relates.

2. Calculate that the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2022/23 (excluding Parish precepts) is £125,054,267. This includes £14,771,916 in respect of the Adult Social Care precept; this is based on a 1.0% increase on the 2021/22 council tax and annual increases from 2015/2016.

3. That the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2022/23 in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, amended by the Localism Act 2011. The precept shown below for Thames Valley Police was approved on 28th January 2022 and the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority was approved on 15th February 2022:-

- (a) £332,596,223 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2)(a) to (f) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by parish councils
- (b) (£202,386,629) being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3)(a) to (d) of the Act
- (c) £130,209,594 being the amount by which the aggregate at 3(a) above, exceeds the aggregate at 3(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its council tax requirement for the year (Item R)
- (d) £1,737.37 being the amount at 3(c) above (Item R), all divided by 1(a) above (Item T), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the 'basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts).

(e) £5,155,327 being the aggregate amount of all special items (parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (as per the table below).

	2022/23			2021/22			Council Tax	
	TAX BASE	PARISH PRECEPT £	PARISH BAND D £	TAX BASE	PARISH PRECEPT £	PARISH BAND D £	Increase	%
Arborfield and Newland	1,298.9	106,955	82.34	1,324.2	103,578	78.22	5.27	
Barkham	2,158.9	73,787	34.18	2,012.9	65,555	32.57	4.94	
Charvil	1,464.9	87,059	59.43	1,437.2	69,118	48.09	23.58	
Earley	11,974.9	988,054	82.51	11,961.2	988,054	82.60	(0.11)	
Finchampstead	6,295.6	184,615	29.32	6,032.0	168,500	27.93	4.98	
Remenham	327.3	27,751	84.79	329.0	27,209	82.70	2.53	
Ruscombe	545.7	29,300	53.69	533.0	29,600	55.53	(3.31)	
St. Nicholas Hurst	1,104.0	48,400	43.84	1,086.3	44,700	41.15	6.54	
Shinfield	7,356.1	552,370	75.09	6,703.2	488,797	72.92	2.98	
Sonning	829.5	39,002	47.02	835.7	38,046	45.53	3.27	
Swallowfield	1,077.8	32,237	29.91	1,075.1	25,813	24.01	24.57	
Twyford	3,026.4	127,238	42.04	3,037.2	116,140	38.24	9.94	
Wargrave	2,150.9	204,404	95.03	2,128.1	194,673	91.48	3.88	
Winnersh	4,465.3	186,917	41.86	4,298.5	174,675	40.64	3.00	
Wokingham	16,712.9	1,014,210	60.68	16,396.3	970,732	59.20	2.50	
Wokingham Without	3,299.4	227,400	68.92	3,300.4	218,709	66.27	4.00	
Woodley	10,857.8	1,225,628	112.88	10,806.8	1,293,034	119.65	(5.66)	
Total / Average	74,946.3	5,155,327	68.79	73,297.1	5,016,933	68.45	0.50	

(f) £1,668.58 being the amount at 3(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 3(e) above by the amount at 1(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special items relates.

- That it be noted that for the year 2022/23 the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for the Thames Valley has issued a precept to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each category of dwellings in the Council's area as indicated in the table below.
- That the Council in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the aggregate amounts shown in the tables below as the amounts of Council Tax for 2022/23 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings.

SUMMARY OF COUNCIL TAX 2022/2023**Valuation Bands**

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Wokingham Borough Council	1,112.39	1,297.78	1,483.18	1,668.58	2,039.38	2,410.17	2,780.97	3,337.16
Thames Valley Police Authority	160.85	187.66	214.47	241.28	294.90	348.52	402.13	482.56
Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	49.30	57.52	65.73	73.95	90.38	106.82	123.25	147.90

Aggregate of Council Tax Requirement for each parish and the borough for each part of the Council's area:-

Arborfield and Newland	1,167.28	1,361.82	1,556.37	1,750.92	2,140.02	2,529.11	2,918.20	3,501.84
Barkham	1,135.18	1,324.36	1,513.56	1,702.76	2,081.16	2,459.54	2,837.94	3,405.52
Charvil	1,152.01	1,344.00	1,536.01	1,728.01	2,112.02	2,496.01	2,880.02	3,456.02
Earley	1,167.40	1,361.95	1,556.52	1,751.09	2,140.23	2,529.35	2,918.49	3,502.18
Finchampstead	1,131.94	1,320.58	1,509.24	1,697.90	2,075.22	2,452.52	2,829.84	3,395.80
Remenham	1,168.92	1,363.73	1,558.55	1,753.37	2,143.01	2,532.64	2,922.29	3,506.74
Ruscombe	1,148.18	1,339.54	1,530.90	1,722.27	2,105.00	2,487.72	2,870.45	3,444.54
St. Nicholas Hurst	1,141.62	1,331.88	1,522.15	1,712.42	2,092.96	2,473.49	2,854.04	3,424.84
Shinfield	1,162.45	1,356.18	1,549.93	1,743.67	2,131.16	2,518.63	2,906.12	3,487.34
Sonning	1,143.74	1,334.35	1,524.98	1,715.60	2,096.85	2,478.09	2,859.34	3,431.20
Swallowfield	1,132.33	1,321.04	1,509.77	1,698.49	2,075.94	2,453.37	2,830.82	3,396.98
Twyford	1,140.42	1,330.48	1,520.55	1,710.62	2,090.76	2,470.89	2,851.04	3,421.24
Wargrave	1,175.74	1,371.69	1,567.65	1,763.61	2,155.53	2,547.44	2,939.35	3,527.22
Winnersh	1,140.30	1,330.34	1,520.39	1,710.44	2,090.54	2,470.63	2,850.74	3,420.88
Wokingham	1,152.84	1,344.98	1,537.12	1,729.26	2,113.54	2,497.82	2,882.10	3,458.52
Wokingham Without	1,158.34	1,351.38	1,544.44	1,737.50	2,123.62	2,509.72	2,895.84	3,475.00
Woodley	1,187.64	1,385.58	1,583.52	1,781.46	2,177.34	2,573.22	2,969.10	3,562.92

Aggregate of Council Tax Requirements for each part of the Council's area:-

Arborfield and Newland	1,377.43	1,607.00	1,836.57	2,066.15	2,525.30	2,984.45	3,443.58	4,132.30
Barkham	1,345.33	1,569.54	1,793.76	2,017.99	2,466.44	2,914.88	3,363.32	4,035.98
Charvil	1,362.16	1,589.18	1,816.21	2,043.24	2,497.30	2,951.35	3,405.40	4,086.48
Earley	1,377.55	1,607.13	1,836.72	2,066.32	2,525.51	2,984.69	3,443.87	4,132.64
Finchampstead	1,342.09	1,565.76	1,789.44	2,013.13	2,460.50	2,907.86	3,355.22	4,026.26
Remenham	1,379.07	1,608.91	1,838.75	2,068.60	2,528.29	2,987.98	3,447.67	4,137.20
Ruscombe	1,358.33	1,584.72	1,811.10	2,037.50	2,490.28	2,943.06	3,395.83	4,075.00
St. Nicholas Hurst	1,351.77	1,577.06	1,802.35	2,027.65	2,478.24	2,928.83	3,379.42	4,055.30
Shinfield	1,372.60	1,601.36	1,830.13	2,058.90	2,516.44	2,973.97	3,431.50	4,117.80
Sonning	1,353.89	1,579.53	1,805.18	2,030.83	2,482.13	2,933.43	3,384.72	4,061.66
Swallowfield	1,342.48	1,566.22	1,789.97	2,013.72	2,461.22	2,908.71	3,356.20	4,027.44
Twyford	1,350.57	1,575.66	1,800.75	2,025.85	2,476.04	2,926.23	3,376.42	4,051.70
Wargrave	1,385.89	1,616.87	1,847.85	2,078.84	2,540.81	3,002.78	3,464.73	4,157.68
Winnersh	1,350.45	1,575.52	1,800.59	2,025.67	2,475.82	2,925.97	3,376.12	4,051.34
Wokingham	1,362.99	1,590.16	1,817.32	2,044.49	2,498.82	2,953.16	3,407.48	4,088.98
Wokingham Without	1,368.49	1,596.56	1,824.64	2,052.73	2,508.90	2,965.06	3,421.22	4,105.46
Woodley	1,397.79	1,630.76	1,863.72	2,096.69	2,562.62	3,028.56	3,494.48	4,193.38

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TITLE	Ukraine
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Council on 24 March 2022
WARD	None Specific
LEAD OFFICER	Susan Parsonage, Chief Executive

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

To inform residents of the Council's response to the Ukraine crisis.

RECOMMENDATION

Council is recommended to:

- 1) condemn the violations of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine;
- 2) pledge its support of, and solidarity with, the people of Ukraine and will welcome those seeking sanctuary here;
- 3) note the immediate response of the Council and the longer term actions planned.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

This report sets out Wokingham Borough Council's condemnation of the multiple attacks and violations of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine. The Council expresses its full support and solidarity to the Ukrainian people.

It is recognised that all formal groups on the council have very grave concerns about the situation in Ukraine.

Councils have a proud history of welcoming new arrivals, stepping forward to offer support so families and individuals can build new lives in the UK. As well as playing a unique role in welcoming new arrivals, councils have a huge range of expertise that could inform development and delivery of support for new arrivals from Ukraine across all routes to the UK.

The Local Government Association (of which Wokingham Borough Council is a member) wrote to Government on 9 March 2022 setting out the role of local government in supporting arrivals from Ukraine.

In the immediate short term, the Council has responded by:

- Stepping up its emergency planning response.
- Set up dedicated area of our website to signpost residents who would like to donate to the Ukrainian response.
- Reviewing contracts and investments including around energy supply and pension funds with Russian firms and individuals.
- Reviewing cyber security arrangements.

Mechanisms have been put in place to establish a medium-term response.

Analysis of Issues

Local Response

At the Executive on 7th March, the leader of Wokingham Council announced the Borough's commitment to welcome and support the victims of the war and ensure that arrangements are in place in Wokingham borough when arrivals do take place.

Wokingham currently has a Ukrainian population of 120, based on the 2021 Census, and as a Borough we must ensure that we are doing all that we can for this existing community. We also have a Russian community within the Borough with a population of 230, and a very small Belorussian community, who should not be penalised for the actions of Vladimir Putin. This is not an argument with the Russian people but with the Russian Government.

The immediate response by the Council was:

- Stepping up its emergency planning response;
- Setting up a dedicated area of our website to signpost residents who would like to donate to the Ukrainian response;
- Reviewing contracts and investments including around energy supply and pension funds with Russian firms and individuals to ensure no prohibited investments or contracts;
- Requesting that the pension scheme seeks to divest from Russian owned or controlled investments, whether direct or indirect as far as is practically possible; and
- Reviewing cyber security arrangements.

The next stage of preparation work is well underway and includes a Gold, Silver and Bronze emergency planning structure in place which is being supported by a corporate project management group together with Leader's briefings with other group leaders as appropriate. The preparation work, which is subject to change once formal Central Government guidance is issued, includes the following areas to date:

- Mobilising resources within the Council and working in partnership with the local voluntary and community sector. Working in a joined-up and aligned way as per the Council's approach during the pandemic. (For example, we have already made contact with the Ukrainian Community Centre in Reading and provided practical support by offering storage space for donations received from local communities. We will continue to engage with the Centre to ensure we can support their work as well as retain access to translation and interpretation facilities which will be critical as we move forward.)
- Preparing an effective communications strategy which will ensure that we send a consistent message to all stakeholders in the borough.
- Working on a range of practical challenges which include:
 - Integrating new arrivals into the local community.
 - Working with schools on school places and educational needs.
 - Ensuring accommodation needs are met.

- Addressing any safeguarding matters that may arise.
 - Working in partnership to ensure health needs are met.
 - Enabling employment and skills training pathways into employment.
 - Facilitating a compensation package (subject to Government guidance).
 - Developing a deeper understanding of current population from Ukraine, Belarus and Russia and their needs to ensure they are not adversely affected.
- Ensuring that we embrace the cultural diversity of any new arrivals. Working with local faith and community groups to welcome potential arrivals into the borough and make their stay as smooth as possible.
 - Working in partnership with neighbouring local authorities and the sub regional partnership to ensure that we maximise all opportunities to support any arrivals into the Borough.

This list is not exhaustive and the Council will do all that it can to address the many varied and complex issues that will arise as we move forward. All aspects of the response will change and be refined as we move forward and learn more.

Next Steps

The Next Steps include:

- Refining and developing the Council’s approach as new guidance is issued from central government.
- Ensuring the Council’s corporate governance is enabling an agile response.
- Maintaining regular contact and liaison with Home Office and SE partnership.
- Regular reporting and updates to CLT and group leaders.
- Continuing with and building further partnership opportunities with the voluntary and community sectors.
- Continuing engagement with health partners – refining the approach as we move forward.

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)	see Other Financial Implications		
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	As above		
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	As above		

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

A £10.5k support package has been made available, but we don't yet know the full extent of the funding available. Any request for significant funding will go to The Executive, or urgent matters between meetings to Executive members, for consideration and would need full costings developed.

Cross-Council Implications

The implications for other council services will be better understood once the numbers of people likely to come to the borough are better known: this could have an impact on schools and adult social care as women and children and older people are more likely to be accommodated. This supports the council's strategic priorities of being a safe and strong borough and enriching lives, in particular.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Any response to the Ukraine conflict will be in line with obligations through the Public Sector Equality Duty and an equalities assessment will be completed for any aspects of the approach where it is helpful.

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*

There is no direct relationship between the Ukraine response and climate emergency objectives.

List of Background Papers

N/A

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Service Chief Executive's Office

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TITLE	Council Plan Refresh 2022/23
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Council on Thursday 24 March 2022
WARD	None Specific;
LEAD OFFICER	Chief Executive - Susan Parsonage
LEAD MEMBER	Leader of the Council - John Halsall

PURPOSE OF REPORT (INC STRATEGIC OUTCOMES)

There is a need to refresh the Council Plan to pick up on emerging priorities since it was developed and to ensure better clarity and communication around the strategic priorities. The Annual Review is an important opportunity to look back at what has been achieved over the past year and use this to support further service delivery, improvement activity and changes in focus to the Council Plan for coming years.

RECOMMENDATION

The Executive recommend Council to:

- 1) note the slight change in articulation of the strategic priorities as proposed;
- 2) agree the proposed changes to the Council Plan and updates to strategic themes as summarised within this report and set out in Appendix 1;
- 3) adopt the Annual Review for 2020/21 as contained in Appendix 2 and highlights for 2021/22 as contained in Appendix 3.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council Plan covers the period 2020-24 but since its development there have been many changes with Covid-19, Brexit and rising food prices impacting on people's lives and living standards. It is therefore important to refresh the Council Plan.

The changes proposed are set out within the report, which are designed to provide a more coherent set of strategic priorities; embed inclusivity throughout the plan; and incorporate emerging priorities, address feedback from the Local Government Association (LGA) peer review and include statutory services.

The report also presents the Annual Review, which provides context to the changes proposed to the Council Plan, by looking back at the achievements throughout 2020/21 and to date for 2021/22.

This report and appendices were considered by the Executive at their meeting on 7 March 2022

BACKGROUND

The Council Plan 2020-24 was approved by the Council just ahead of the Covid-19 pandemic starting and therefore it is now important that the impacts of this are considered as part of a refresh and then more detailed review of the Council Plan.

Having considered the Council Plan in its current state, some key areas for refreshing were identified:

- Changes to the key strategic themes
- Responding to the LGA Peer Review
- Increasing focus on emerging opportunities and shorter term priorities
- Incorporating statutory obligations

It is also recognised that with the current financial uncertainty it is appropriate to have a more comprehensive review of the Plan later in the year, alongside development of the Medium Term Financial Plan.

Key Strategic Themes

It is proposed to update the key strategic themes within the Community Vision and the Council Plan to make these sit together in a more cohesive manner with similar style for each. This also allows greater focus and clearer communication around five outward focused themes supported by two organisational themes as below.

Current Strategic themes

- Safe, Strong Communities
- Enriching Lives
- A Clean and Green Borough
- Right Homes, Right Places
- Keeping the Borough Moving
- Changing the Way We Work For You

Proposed revised strategic themes

- Providing Safe, Strong Communities
- Enriching Lives
- Enjoying a Clean and Green Borough
- Delivering the Right Homes, in the Right Places
- Keeping the Borough Moving

Supported by two organisational themes or enablers

- Being the Best we can be
- Changing the Way we Work for You

Emerging Priorities

Since the Plan was originally written there are several emerging priorities which are being built in through this refresh. The detail of these is contained in the Council Plan (see Appendix 1) but they are highlighted below:

- Equality – including working towards “Achieving” in the LGA Equality Framework
- Tackling poverty – being picked up through development of a partnership Anti-Poverty Strategy and supporting 4 year programme
- Customer excellence – ensuring that residents are put at the heart of everything we do and delivering a programme to support this
- Data and insight – driving better use of data at all levels of the council to provide intelligence and support evidence based decision making

- Health and wellbeing – supporting delivery of the new strategy and leading an early intervention approach
- UNICEF Child Friendly Area Programme – maximising on the opportunities of being one of the few councils accepted onto the programme embedding children’s rights within systems and services
- Social care reform – preparing for the changes to charging and responding to the increasing demand for care

As well as the priorities set out above which have been incorporated, it is clear that there is not much reference to the statutory, day-to-day services for which the council is responsible within the Plan. These have therefore been threaded throughout the refreshed Council Plan enabling staff to see how they are contributing to and involved in the Council’s success.

LGA Peer Review Feedback

Whilst there were no surprises to the feedback received from the LGA peer review held in November, there are three aspects which we identified for increased priority and prominence in addressing:

- Restate and bring to life a narrative about the Council's ambitions for its residents to deliver the future vision for Wokingham - the place, the people, and the opportunities
- Ensure there is a commitment to a long-term vision for the Borough co-designed and co-delivered with partners to become the focus for the entire community
- Further embedding of the Council vision ensuring a golden thread throughout all the strategies, identifying the impact that the adopted strategies have on the council’s priorities and delivery plans, and what a priority and non-priority means

These have all been incorporated within the refreshed Council Plan and work programmes are being developed to bring about the changes or focus required.

Annual Review

The annual review, included as Appendices 2 and 3, sets out some key achievements for the Council during 2020/21 and 2021/22: providing an opportunity to better promote the work and achievements of the Council.

BUSINESS CASE

It is important that the changes proposed and highlighted above are included at this point in time to demonstrate the priority given to these areas of work. It is expected that these changes will be delivered over a number of years, but it is not appropriate to wait longer before the full review of the Council Plan is concluded.

By acting now on these priority areas of work, the Council is best able to respond to the increased challenges that many people are facing; can be seen to be tackling inequality and poverty and embedding inclusivity as a key thread throughout our work.

Work to address the LGA peer review feedback will lead to short term improvements including:

- A clear communications and marketing strategy will be established with a supporting campaign to sell the council and the Borough
- Working with key partners across the public, voluntary and community sectors in the borough to establish a vision for Wokingham Borough, as a place, with clear aspirations

- Influencing alignment of shared priorities and objectives across our partners to maximise benefits for residents and focus Council strategies, policies and delivery plans
- Mapping strategies to establish a clear hierarchy and cascade from the Community Vision and Council Plan through other strategies, rationalising what is a strategy and ensuring that these are focussed on the agreed priorities.

All these initiatives help to better communicate what the council is about, what it is seeking to achieve and how it is working with partners to achieve this: increasing focus on priorities and improving outcomes for residents.

Whilst the LGA peer review programme is voluntary, it is important to address the feedback received in a timely manner. Failing to do so would impact the council's reputation with the LGA and amongst peers.

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	Yes	
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£0	Yes	
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£0	Yes	

Other Financial Information

The Council Plan will be delivered within existing resources, if any additional funding is required a further report would be brought to the Executive.

Stakeholder Considerations and Consultation

There is no consultation being carried out as part of this refresh: the more detailed review of the plan later in the year will include a more comprehensive consultation process, engaging with stakeholders in identification of changes.

Public Sector Equality Duty

The initial Council Plan was supported by an EqIA and the review to be undertaken later in the year will also take the same approach. The refresh is only making small changes that help to increase the focus on equalities, inequality and disadvantage across the Borough.

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

There are no changes proposed within this refresh that would impact negatively on carbon neutrality aspirations.

List of Background Papers
Council Plan 2020-24
Annual Review 2020/21
Annual Review 2021/22

Contact Mark Gwynne	Service Insight, Strategy & Inclusion
Telephone 07710 465612	Email mark.gwynne@wokingham.gov.uk

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Wokingham Borough Council Plan 2020 - 2024

Supporting our Community Vision for Wokingham Borough to be:

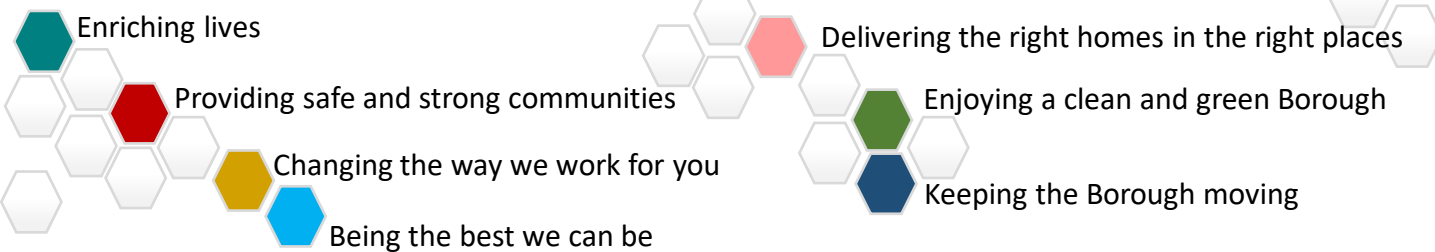
**A great place to live, learn, work and grow
and a great place to do business.**



Refreshed February 2022

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Our Community Vision for Wokingham Borough



Our Community Vision is for Wokingham Borough to be a great place to live, learn work and grow and a great place to do business. This Council Plan is a tool for our organisation, supporting our vision, to identify how we will deliver on these commitments to our community.

Introduction from the Chief Executive, Susan Parsonage and Leader, John Halsall

Through consultation, our residents and partners told us that they were most concerned about the impact of development upon communities and that some people face challenges with finding an affordable home. People also told us of their frustrations with traffic delays and disruptions around the Borough. Hence within this plan we have identified what we can do to ensure we are **Delivering the Right Homes in the Right Places** and that we are **Keeping the Borough Moving**.

Residents also agreed with the importance of protecting our vulnerable people to ensure we are **Providing Safe and Strong Communities** and for Wokingham Borough to offer good leisure opportunities for children and adults, as well as excellent education so that we support our residents to lead happy, healthy **Enriching Lives**. To reflect this, we are increasing our focus on equality and tackling poverty with the Borough.

The impact of climate change is a pressing concern both globally and locally and we are committed to playing as full a role as possible to achieve a carbon neutral Borough so that we can live: **Enjoying a Clean and Green Borough** now and for future generations to come. To achieve these ambitions, we will continue to improve, **Changing the way we work for you** putting our residents and businesses at the heart of what we do, delivering a high standard of customer service whilst building resilience in our organisation and in our communities.

The Council Plan identifies our ambitions focused on **Being the Best we can be** and the steps we will take to nurture and develop colleagues across our organisation to realise these ambitions within the budget available.

We want to improve outcomes for our residents by delivering these strategic priorities together with staff and our partners. Despite the challenges we face, we are ambitious, committed to and passionate about, delivering improvements; striving for excellent and efficient services.

The Council Plan sets out what we want to achieve for each strategic priority, what we will do to get there and what success will look like. The Plan will be monitored and corporate performance measures have been developed to track our progress in delivering these strategic objectives.



Our Values

Our values help shape and guide our behaviour. By demonstrating these values, it will help us move forwards together to achieve our future ambitions for Wokingham Borough. Our values are:

Customer Focussed

Put ourselves in our customers shoes and listen, to deliver services we would like to receive.

Taking ownership

Taking responsibility for issues and address them with actions we see through to resolution. Be accountable for our service delivery in the context of our community wellbeing and Council objectives.

One team

Work jointly with our residents, colleagues, councillors and partners, across any boundaries, to ensure efficient, effective delivery on behalf of our communities.

Being ambitious

Aiming for excellence in the outcomes we pursue and the way we do things. Being forward-thinking, innovative, entrepreneurial and accepting risks where possible to do so.

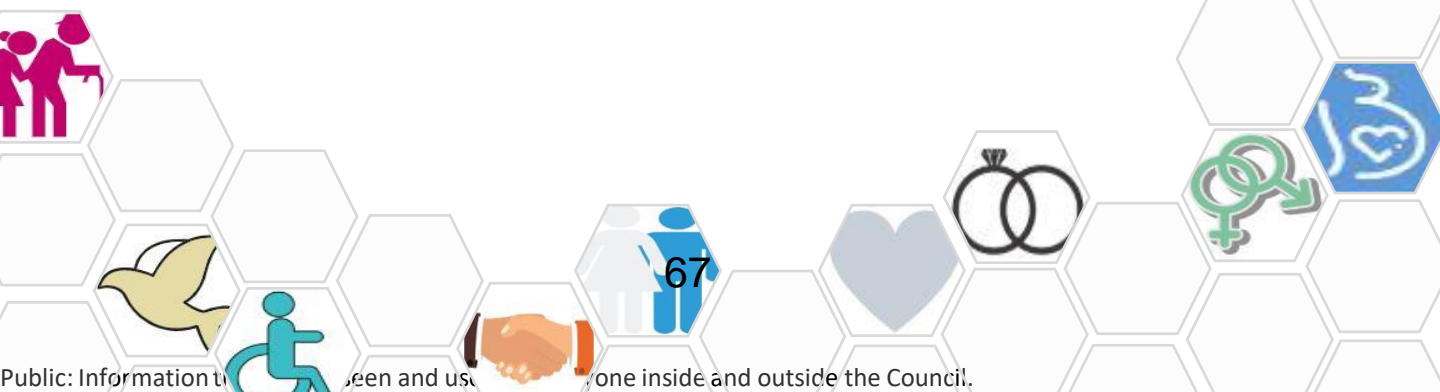
Our Commitment to Equality

Each Borough is unique in its diversity, challenges and opportunities and Wokingham is no exception.

Whilst being an affluent area with great opportunities and low levels of deprivation, there are challenges to ensure these benefits can be accessed and shared by all. Through this plan we want to achieve a more equal Borough, where everyone is respected and has access to the opportunities that the Borough has to offer. As such, we are building inclusivity as a theme to run through the Council Plan and the Council's supporting strategies.

To do this we commit to the following in all of our work and service provision:

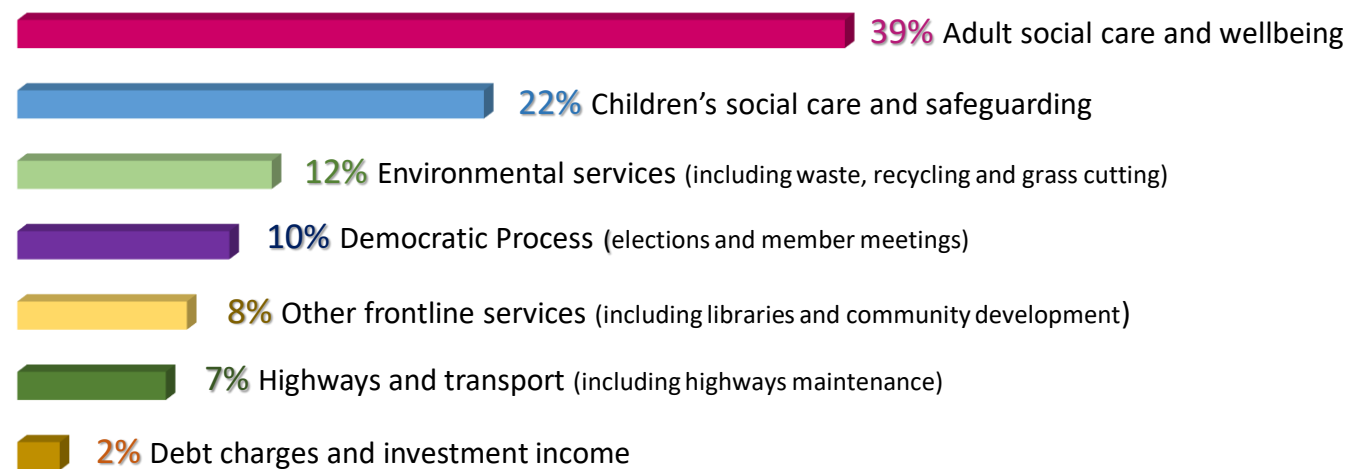
- Work with our partners to promote equality and good relations between communities and diverse groups
- Consistently strive to eliminate discrimination for reasons of a person's age, gender identity, ethnicity, sexual orientation, sex, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, religion or belief, or socio-economic circumstances within our communities and within our workplace.
- Ensure new projects, policies, strategies, service changes and communication take account of all the needs of our users.
- Increase our understanding of the communities we serve to inform the decisions we make.
- Continue to monitor the impact of our employment policies and practices.



Our Budget

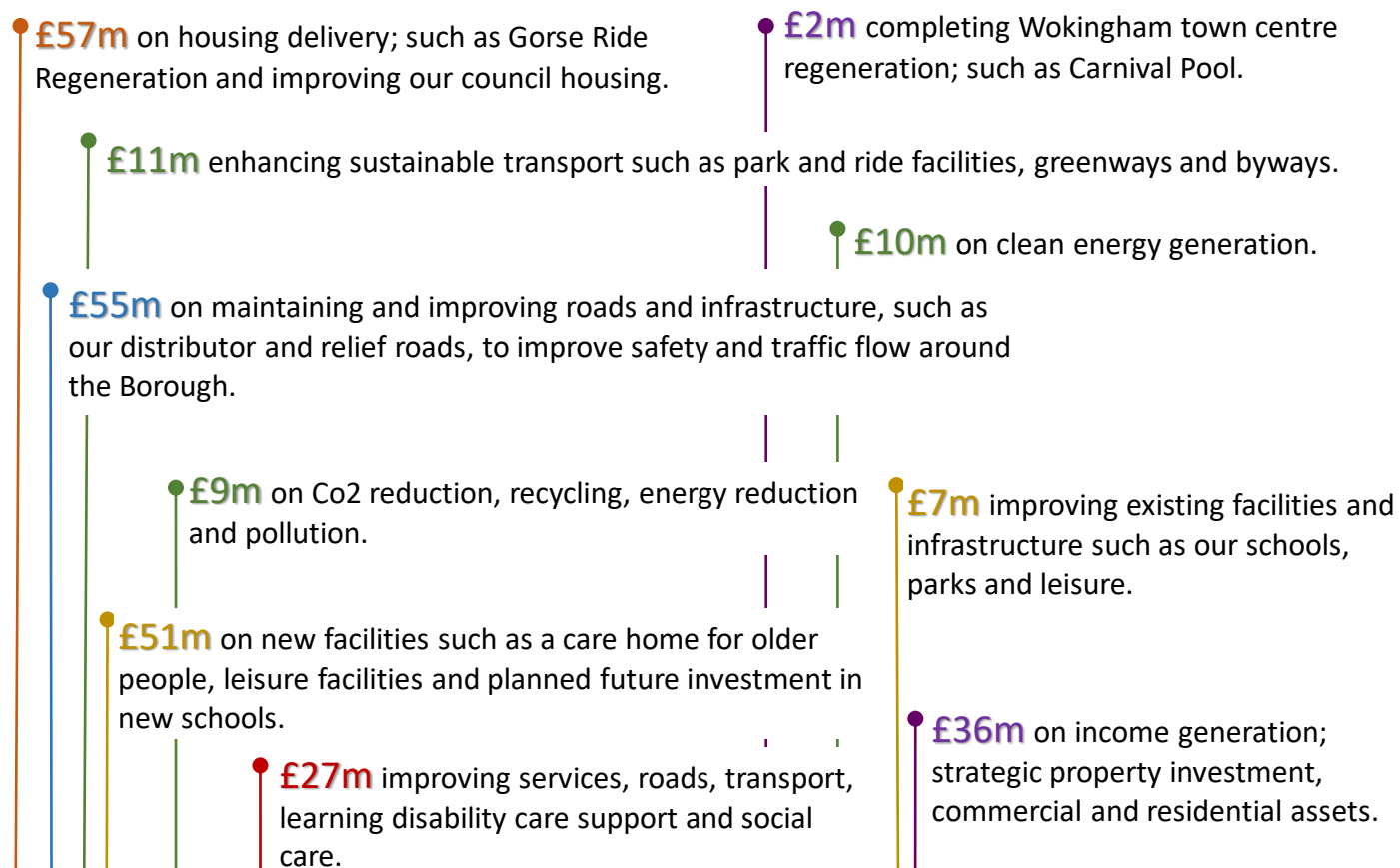
The budget represents the Council's strategies and priorities from a financial perspective. We have a duty to fulfil statutory services, such as adult social care, children's services and waste. The majority of our income is used for these statutory services and with increased demand, we continue to be innovative and diligent to safeguard those services you value the most and consider new ways of generating further income to invest back into our community.

Our £144.7m budget for the first year, 2022/23, of our Council Plan will be allocated as follows:



Our capital programme 2022-25

Some of the ways we are utilising our capital programme 2022-25 over the next three years are highlighted below. Further information about our budget for 2022/23 and future year estimates are detailed in our Medium Term Financial Plan and Capital Strategy.



Our challenges

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 to address and manage demand for long term care and maintain high quality services.

We will work with our partners to

- Protect and safeguard our children, young and vulnerable people.
- Offer quality care and support, at the right time, to reduce the need for long term care.
- Nurture our communities: enabling them to thrive and families to flourish.
- Ensure our Borough and communities remain safe for all.

What we will do

- Maintain a relentless focus on safeguarding.
- Work together to shape services around the needs of the individual and deliver them in a way that empowers residents to live independent and healthy lives.
- Plan, commission and monitor high quality services that deliver value for money.
- Work with residents and providers in an inclusive manner to ensure sustainable local provision of care services and a thriving voluntary sector.
- Work with families and young people to ensure planned transitions from children to adult services.
- Work with our health partners to improve access to primary healthcare and better integrate local health and social care services.
- Work with partners to tackle anti-social behaviour and increase the resilience of local communities.

What success will look like

- Residents feel safe and secure in their neighbourhoods and in the services they receive.
- Improvements in health, wellbeing and independence in the community.
- Greater access to opportunities through the voluntary sector: increasing inclusivity; reducing social isolation and preventing loneliness.
- Increased opportunities for self-support, reducing the demand for ongoing care and support.
- Wokingham Borough is the very best place for people with a learning disability to live, learn, work and feel supported.

Enriching lives

Our challenges

We are tackling health and well-being in Wokingham Borough, with a particular focus on emotional health and well-being, early intervention and prevention. Broad measures of well-being mask pockets of deprivation, health and economic need and those living in poverty. Over the last couple of years there has been an increase in the number of children, young people and adults seeking support for mental and emotional well-being support.

We will work with our partners to

- Champion excellent 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 enable healthy choices for everyone.
- Engage and empower our communities through arts and culture and create a sense of identity for the Borough which people feel part of.
- Support growth in our local economy and help to build business.

What we will do

- Work with our partners to make the Borough a place where businesses want to invest and are supported to stay and grow: providing opportunities for our residents.
- Support and challenge all schools to provide the right environment for effective learning and good emotional well-being for pupils.
- Work with our partners to provide excellent adult education and training opportunities that meets the skills needs of our employers.
- Work across the organisation with all partners to deliver our health and well-being strategy to support residents to lead happy, healthy lives.
- Maximise opportunities for physical and social activities and make sure everyone is able to participate if they want to.
- Increase the opportunity for creativity to flourish through a vibrant arts and culture offering which is accessible to everyone.

What success will look like

- A strong local economy with continued inward investment into the Borough.
- Thriving villages and town centres offering residents and visitors a range of retail and leisure options.
- Increased educational attainment overall and a narrowing of the gap between disadvantaged children, those with protected characteristics and their peers.
- Enhanced working across all partners to reduce health inequality.
- An increase in all residents engaging in active, healthy, cultural and social opportunities.
- More local people involved in volunteering and community activities, taking pride in their neighbourhood and, where possible, looking after their own wellbeing and that of their families and neighbours.

Our challenges

We have a challenge within Wokingham Borough to manage and balance need with requirements for new housing, whilst protecting the quality of our environment and the sustainability of our existing communities. Creating places 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 at risk of homelessness.

We will work with our partners to

- Offer quality, affordable, sustainable homes fit for the future.
- Ensure the right infrastructure is in place, early, 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, where it is needed most, to live independently in their own homes.

What we will do

- Ensure a planned approach to house building and place shaping through master-planning and community involvement.
- Develop policies to make sure development is vibrant with the right mix of housing, employment, leisure, community uses and green infrastructure that is well connected and meets community needs.
- Ensure our existing built environment and valued green spaces are protected.
- Maximise the delivery of affordable housing through developers, social landlords and our own housing companies.
- Work closely with our partners and the voluntary sector to deliver a variety of housing options that meet the needs of vulnerable and disabled residents.
- Work with all landlords and home owners to improve the quality, efficiency and sustainability of the Borough's existing housing stock.

What success will look like

- Where possible, all new development is delivered through a planned approach minimising the impact on existing communities and protecting our valued green space.
- Local residents are supported and protected during any new development in their neighbourhood and that any essential infrastructure is delivered up front.
- New developments have their own sense of place that adds to the quality of life and sense of community for those residents living there.
- Sufficient affordable, specialist housing to meet the requirements of all those residents in priority need.

Our challenges

We have a challenge to effectively manage high volumes of traffic travelling through the Borough, to reduce congestion, deal with road works and address strategic connections. We must also balance this with supporting and enabling behaviour change in residents' travel choices and maximising the use of digital connectivity and smart city technology.

We will work with our partners to

- Maintain and improve our roads, footpaths and cycleways.
- Tackle traffic congestion and 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 in offering affordable, accessible public transport with good transport links.

What we will do

- Ensure a strategic approach to highway investment and maintenance.
- Increase opportunities across the Borough to access public transport and use electric vehicles.
- Continue to promote and develop the MyJourney programme as a tool to help residents and visitors make sustainable transport choices.
- Work with our partners and the community to review and implement the Local Transport Plan and the walking and cycling strategy.
- Work in partnership to explore new technologies that contribute to an intelligent transport system that makes the best use of the existing road network.

What success will look like

- Less congestion on our roads and more efficient journey times across the Borough.
- Increased use of public transport, walking and cycling initiatives.
- Increased number of electric vehicle charging points.
- A well maintained road network and improved safety for all road users.
- Improved air quality.

Our challenges

To tackle climate change, achieve carbon neutrality while adapting for a growing population and seeking out value for money. There is a challenge in encouraging behaviour change around waste, recycling and transport around the Borough whilst addressing air quality and respiratory health and protecting valued spaces.

We will work with our partners to

- Play as full a role as possible to achieve a carbon neutral Borough, sustainable for the future.
- Protect our Borough, keep it clean and enhance our green areas for people to enjoy.
- Reduce our waste, promote re-use, increase recycling and improve biodiversity.
- Connect our parks and open spaces with green cycleways.

What we will do

- Deliver against our Climate Emergency Action Plan and ensure becoming carbon neutral is given due weight through all our strategies and decision making.
- Ensure 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.

What success will look like

- Residents and businesses change their behaviours to do more to tackle climate change and the Council is seen as setting a positive example.
- The Borough is recognised as a flagship authority in addressing the causes and impacts of climate change.
- A greener Borough, with more trees and a richer biodiversity with improved and more accessible, open spaces.
- Increased recycling and a reduction in general waste produced by each household.
- A more joined up walking and cycling network with more people choosing to walk, cycle or use public transport.

Our challenges

Be a smarter and more efficient organisation, developing effective and accessible digital solutions: making it easier for our customers, residents and businesses to work and communicate with us. Develop a better understanding of our communities needs and demands and build capacity for innovation across our organisation. Ensure we continually improve the delivery our statutory obligations placing our residents at the heart of everything we do.

We will work with our partners to

- Be relentlessly customer focussed.
- Work with our partners to provide efficient, effective, joined up services which are focussed around our customers.
- Communicate better with customers, 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.

What we will do

- Strengthen our understanding of current and future needs and demand so that we can plan, design and deliver the best outcomes for all our residents.
- Listen to what our communities are telling us and use this feedback to shape service delivery, challenge how we do business and manage expectations in an open and honest way.
- Develop an inclusive service delivery approach, in a way that promotes the independence of residents, and harnesses the digital opportunities available.
- Work in partnership to deliver community led solutions that address the issues that matter most to our residents.
- Develop a proactive approach with our partners in communicating, celebrating our shared success and promoting how the community can get involved.
- Be ambitious in all that we do, ensuring we have the right resource and governance to allow us to deliver at pace and manage demand.

What success will look like

- A customer-centred way of working that is responsive to the needs of our communities, is built on a foundation of customer engagement and results in improved satisfaction levels.
- A community led approach to meeting the needs of our residents, that is focused on the right outcome, delivered in the right way at the right time.
- Communication and feedback that encourages engagement with residents, businesses and partners in an inclusive and informative way.
- Thinking differently about how to manage the needs of our community, using a demand management approach to service delivery, with high ambition and desire to continuously improve all that we do.
- Effective use of digital technology, underpinning the very core of our organisation, that drives innovative new ways of working, helps to understand how things will change in the future and inform decision making.

Be the best we can be

Our challenges

Strive to be the best we can be as service provider, an enabler, a partner, an employer and as colleagues. Be innovative and ambitious, harnessing the skills and enthusiasm of all our colleagues, in an inclusive manner, be recognised nationally and locally as an excellent organisation and a great place to work. Be clear with our residents of our ambition and vision for the Borough and its place in the wider Berkshire community.

We will work with our partners to

- Be an organisation that values and invests in all our colleagues and is seen as an employer of choice.
- Embed a culture that supports ambition, promotes empowerment and develops new ways of working.
- Use our governance and scrutiny structures to support a learning and continuous improvement approach to the way we do business.
- Be a commercial council that is innovative, whilst being inclusive, in its approach with a clear focus on being financially resilient.
- Maximise opportunities to secure funding and investment for the Borough.
- Establish a renewed vision for the Borough with clear aspirations.

What we will do

- Place our shared vision for the Borough at the centre of the Council's plans and underpinning strategies.
- Develop a People Strategy that is centred around recognition and development of all colleagues across the Council.
- Nurture our colleagues and encourage them to be the best they can be, through opportunities to learn and develop.
- Strengthen our scrutiny approach to ensure we learn from our experiences, consider risks and make improvements.
- Create a commercial mind-set in the council, that promotes the ability to deliver services differently, demands innovation and ensures we are able to maximise our assets for the benefit of our communities and to deliver financial sustainability.
- Be assertive and robust in our approach to the financial challenges, by developing our investment strategy, enhancing commissioning and contract management, seeking additional investment and grant funding to realise our ambitions.
- Develop a communication, engagement and marketing strategy that will promote the Borough and communicate the work of the council to residents and beyond.
- Develop a corporate strategy function that enables a golden thread to run down from our shared vision, ensuring our strategies, policies and plans are focused to deliver what matters most to our residents and the Borough.

What success will look like

- Colleagues are passionate about what they do and proud to work at our organisation, they understand our goals and their role in helping us to achieve them.
- All colleagues are given the support and opportunities to develop and grow and, where possible, are able to follow a career path that supports their passion and ambition.
- We will have a proportionate approach to risk that encourages innovation whilst ensuring successful delivery.
- A forward thinking, innovative approach to organisational planning and delivery, with a strong commercial approach to everything that we do.
- A council wide approach to the financial challenges and solutions, increased grant contribution to support service delivery, and shared expertise in contract management across the organisation.

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WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

**CORPORATE PLAN:
ANNUAL REVIEW
2020/2021**

**ACHIEVEMENT IN THE
FACE OF ADVERSITY**





SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION:

In February 2020, we set out our vision of Wokingham Borough as "A great place to live, learn, work and grow and a great place to do business". Later that same month, the first case of Covid-19 was reported in the borough signalling the start of the most challenging 12 months we have faced as a local authority.

Our vision is underpinned by our strategic priorities.

There are five outward focused priorities:

- Safe, Strong Communities
- Enriching Lives
- Right Homes, Right Place
- Keeping the Borough Moving
- A Clean Green Borough

Additionally, there are two inward focused enablers:

- Being the best we can be
- Changing the way we work for you

These set our ambition to continuously improve, whilst effectively and proactively meeting the needs of our communities.

This Annual Review sets out how we have risen to the challenge of Covid-19 and how we have made progress towards these priorities during 2020/21. It documents our achievement in the face of adversity.

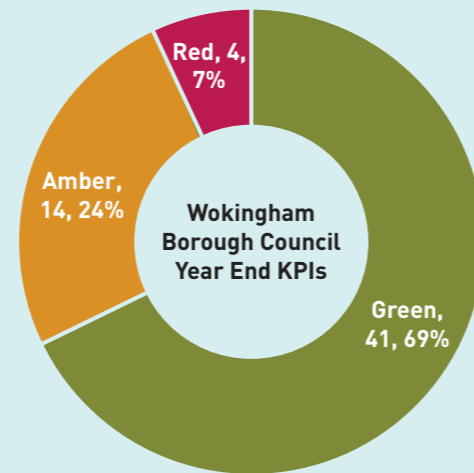
Summary of Operational Performance Indicators

Our key performance indicators (KPIs) show how we are performing against our priorities and statutory obligations. We have 59 KPIs, of which 55 were above or near target for the year 2020/21 despite the impact of Covid-19.

The 4 red results all had significant impact from Covid-19:

- Leisure Centre visitor numbers
- Leisure Centre participation
- Library visits
- People with long term care receiving a review

The first three of these were impacted through closure of the services.



SECTION 2: COVID-19 RESPONSE:

Through the spring and early summer of 2020, the need to respond to Covid-19 was almost all-encompassing for us and it continued to be a key area of focus throughout 2020/21, in particular in Adult Social Care.

- Adults Social Care along with 153 redeployed staff carried out 20,000 welfare checks to the vulnerable. Additionally, made 2,400 calls to adults known to social care were made and 500 calls to carers
- More 400,000 pieces of PPE distributed to frontline carers
- Care Home Taskforce created to rapidly put in place a cohesive protocol that could be immediately implemented to ensure providers were effectively supported to mitigate the risks of COVID. This ensured providers were well supported and enabled enduring relationships and partnerships to develop. This also enabled statutory oversight into care settings to be maintained

- The Public Health Team provide consistent Public Health and Health Protection data and advice to elected members, corporate leadership and the COVID Taskforce to ensure agile responses across the pandemic underpinned by evidence, national guidance and based on Public Health expertise
- Provided leadership in the management of outbreaks in high-risk settings across communities within the Borough
- Supported local children with free school meal provision during lockdown and over the school holiday periods
- 400 more people than the previous year were discharged from hospital back into the borough
- Voluntary and Community Sector action group was created to support the COVID response, in particular the development of the One Front Door initiative, access to prescriptions, social isolation and creation of the Food Hub - 5,000 food deliveries to 1,500 residents and more than 900 prescriptions delivered during the first lockdown





SECTION 3: SOUND FINANCES TO UNDERPIN ALL COUNCIL ACTIVITY:

- £53 million in support to local business through 1,147 separate grants worth £33 million and reliefs and discounts of £20 million
- 4,800 engagements with businesses through the Public Protection Partnership and COVID Marshall to businesses across the borough
- Provided accurate and timely information to residents with health advice, Government guidance and regulations, sign-posting to support and service update via Covid-19 e-newsletters with more than 40,000 subscriptions
- More than 500 volunteers worked at our vaccination clinics and 200 signed up to help at our rapid testing centres
- Public Health Co-leadership in the set up and running of the COVID data cell to ensure a data driven response considering the data and evidence to keep all communities within the Borough safe
- Test and trace - 1,292 calls made to residents who were self-isolating. 220 of these have been referred to One Front Door for additional support
- More than £360,000 paid out in the Covid Winter Grant Scheme
- Worked continuously with partners in the set up and ongoing planning and implementation of the COVID vaccination delivery programme for the protection of the health of our residents.
- Sourced emergency accommodation for care workers coming into the Borough to assist in our care homes
- Seamless move to almost all colleague working from home allowed for almost all services to continue uninterrupted
- Looked ahead by building a robust Recovery Strategy that will allow the community and local businesses to thrive.
- Retained face-to-face visits to the most vulnerable children and families, keeping them safe in unprecedented circumstances. This dual task was addressed through swift assessment and prioritisation of children and young people for retention of face-to-face visits, use of strict PPE and safety protocols, and introducing virtual visiting across the broad range of support activity. In 20/21 over 95% of visits to children subject to Child Protection Plans were conducted face-to-face, amounting to over 4000 visits.
- Enhanced support to schools to promote safe and effective learning. The Council provided a daily email update to all headteachers informing them of Department of Education guidance and legislative changes that affect schools in relation to COVID, weekly virtual drop in's for senior school leaders that have been well attended; weekly thematic sessions for teaching staff to support COVID related responses in schools; guidance in relation to accessing technology for pupils to support their remote learning, through periods of lockdown or bubble closure; support for Lateral Flow Testing arrangements and contact tracing (including outbreak management support); and celebrating the achievements of pupils, students and teachers who have worked tirelessly throughout these challenging times.
- During the early phase of Lockdown, our GP and Voluntary Sector Partners noted that people in the Borough were finding managing their mental health challenging. In response, a health and social care system wide Mental Health Training session was implemented
- Produced a library of free online workout videos for residents to help people stay healthy in lockdown

Following the start of the COVID pandemic, we took immediate action to set up robust, enhanced financial monitoring and reporting. Financial trackers were introduced across all Directorates with a Council wide tracker developed at both a summary level and a detail level. The finance team prioritised the monitoring of the financial impact, working closely with all services to understand the implications. This was a complex task.

Where known, implications were considered as part of budget setting for the 21/22 financial year and will also be considered in future budget setting rounds.

Despite the impact of COVID the Council was able to deliver on its savings targets. A revenue budget of £143.5m (£129.7m expenditure plus £13.8m depreciation) was approved at its meeting on 20 February 2020. The actual spend for 2020/21 was £0.8m favourable variance to budget.

The Council continues to invest in its asset base in order to improve services to residents and to support the financial sustainability of the organisation. Capital expenditure in the year totalled £123.5m (2019/20 £171.3m) as set out in report to the Council's Executive on 24 June 2021. Occupation levels in the Wokingham Town Centre Redevelopment site has remained on target with no losses of tenancy.

We adopted a sympathetic approach to the collection of both Council Tax and Business Rates through the pandemic that balanced the need to protect income streams against the pressures felt by residents and businesses. Collection of both of taxes has remained high, at similar levels to the year before, at a 99% collection rate with support mechanisms in place to implement government schemes for those in hardship.

For full details of the Council's financial performance please see the End of Year Statement of Accounts.





SECTION 4: DELIVERING ON OUR PRIORITIES



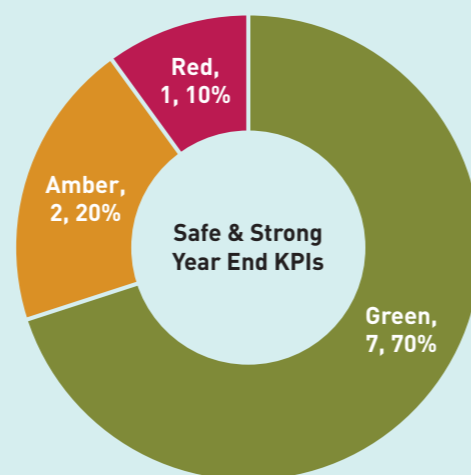
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SAFE, STRONG COMMUNITIES

Strong performance is shown in the KPIs set against this focus area, with nine out of ten KPIs on or near target. The single red KPI is as "Proportion of people receiving long term care who were subject to a review in the last 12 months" and this was due to a change of focus during COVID which has had an impact in the last quarter of the municipal year.



08

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

Launched 'Kooth' to provide online mental health support for young people:

Kooth provides young people a safe and secure means of accessing support from a professional team of qualified counsellors, therapists and support workers. In the first nine months, the 1,295 young people in the region registered for Kooth logging in approximately 10,000 times. 97.8% of children and young people would recommend Kooth to a friend. 92% found it what they were looking for.

Increased spending to domestic abuse support:

Awarded the £1.5million contract to provide domestic abuse to Cranstoun. Additional funding was included to manage the increased demand for services.

Mental health support:

Launched 18-month pilot service with Berkshire Community Foundation and Oxfordshire MIND to help people suffering problems such as anxiety, isolation and stress.

Formed the Adult Safeguarding Hub to improve the safety of vulnerable adults:

Adults Social Care maintained an average of 87% of safe guarding concerns raised having decisions assigned in 48hrs despite the number of safe guarding concerns increasing by 37.5% compared to the previous year.

Delivered core Adult Social Care responsibilities:

Adult Social Care managed 25% more demand, an increase of 1,193 contacts, whilst improving performance. Implemented a new way of working called the Strengths Based Approach. All staff have received training in an approach which enables them to spend more time with our customers to identify what is important to the person, to build on their own strengths and support networks, and to utilise the wealth of voluntary services available in the community. The emphasis of this approach is about positive outcomes for our residents.

Local Action Groups:

The Public Health team has facilitated the setting up and ongoing co-chairing of these groups to engage key partners and bring them together to deliver against health and wellbeing priorities.

Substance misuse provision:

Recommissioned a specialist substance misuse provision for local residents, including securing additional funding through successful bids.

Adult Healthy Weight Management programme and Active Movement Programme:

These two programmes have been recommissioned for schools, with national funding secured for additional local provision.

High Quality Care:

The borough has 52 care homes and 44 registered home care providers. These providers deliver a high level of quality and 100% of our nursing home providers were rated as either good or outstanding in their most recent Care Quality Commission inspections. 95% of residential care and 85% of home care providers are rated as either good or outstanding.

Adopted an Adult Social Care Strategy:

The strategy has four priorities

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

Adopted our Learning Disability Strategy:

This aims to:

- Provide more social activities and social interactions for learning disability clients
- Improve housing for learning disability clients to maximise their independence
- Create a dedicated learning disability team within the Adults Social Care structure
- Create a transitions service that can help learning disability clients transition into adulthood safely.
- Improve partnerships with Health to ensure better health outcome for learning disability clients
- Support carers who care for learning disability clients





SECTION 4: DELIVERING ON OUR PRIORITIES



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SAFE, STRONG COMMUNITIES

Adopted our Voluntary Sector Strategy:

This aims to prevent, reduce and delay the need for formal care and support by providing information, advice and the right support at the right time so people can remain independent for longer. In the last municipal year it has:

- Created a VCS action group & Wokingham Borough Community Response. Delivering welfare checks in partnership with the Link Visiting Scheme
- Established the VCS Partnership Board
- Delivered improvements through the MIND mental health service
- Retendered VCS including a service gap analysis to ensure the services the Council commissions meets the needs of residents.

Provided more specialist accommodation:

A programme launched to source specialist accommodation for people with Learning and/or Physical Disabilities or Mental Health needs. Working with Place Commissioning, Housing Services and providers to match people with suitable properties to meet their needs. This has delivered:

- A Specialist bungalow built and now occupied
- Identified 10 schemes that will provide specialist accommodation for 45 people with complex needs over the next 2 years

Home for Hospital:

Worked with health and other key partners to ensure that residents can be discharged from hospital into the right setting as quickly and safely as possible. This approach resulted in 400 more people discharged back into the borough compared to the previous year. The Council now has:

- Robust system wide governance and performance monitoring in place
- Implementation of the Rapid Community Discharge Team
- Launched an additional service run by AGE UK, a voluntary sector partner, on behalf of the Wokingham Integrated Partnership. As Winter Pressure on the Hospital increased, alongside the pressures of COVID, the partnership sought support to safely discharge people without a care need into their homes. AGE UK supported with ensuring the person returned home safely, had the heating on, had shopping in the cupboards and medication all ready. They also then contacted the person for several weeks after the discharge. Over 150 people have been supported since April, with 464 referrals to 35 organisation made.

Optalis – Council owned company providing direct care:

Optalis has continued to provide high levels of good quality support. This is supported by effective quality assurance and governance systems, resulting in 'GOOD' Care Quality Commission ratings. Supported employment service has remained no.1 in the South East for two years running and no.3 in the UK for Learning Disabilities employment outcomes

Mental Health Support Teams in schools:

As part of the National Pilot, the programme has supported 205 children across 12 schools in providing immediate mental health and emotional wellbeing support. It is anticipated that following the National Pilot, MHST's will be rolled out to all schools.

Domestic Abuse:

Domestic abuse is a high priority for the Council as we recognise the significant impact living with domestic abuse has on individuals, families and the whole community.

A report commissioned on our response led to the appointment of a Domestic Abuse coordinator in November 2020 and the decision to substantially increase our investment in the commissioning of specialist support services.

A review of the training offer on domestic abuse was undertaken with refreshed e-learning packages and virtual training sessions delivered to increase understanding of the unique ways in which domestic abuse affects individuals and their children.

A new Partnership Board was formed to deliver expected new statutory duties linked to the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and prepare for in depth analysis of how domestic abuse is affecting residents across Wokingham borough. To support our wider response, we also created a new Networking Group to bring together the over 40 agencies working in Wokingham borough who can make a real difference to the lives of the over 2000 residents who reported domestic abuse in this year.

Public Protection Partnership:

In March 2021, the council took the decision to withdraw from the Public Protection Partnership so it can better focus on the real issues affecting residents' quality of life.

Dealing with many environmental health issues such as low-level nuisances and anti-social behaviour including noise and illegal bonfires had been the responsibility of the Public Protection Partnership (PPP) with West Berkshire and Bracknell Forest councils.

But from April 2022, most services previously provided by the PPP will be provided by a new Wokingham Borough Council team that will focus on residents' priorities and improve responsiveness to address local issues. The new enforcement and safety service will include anti-social behaviour, animal wardens, health and safety, food hygiene, and licensing and will be designed to respond swiftly to concerns whenever and wherever they occur.





SECTION 4: DELIVERING ON OUR PRIORITIES



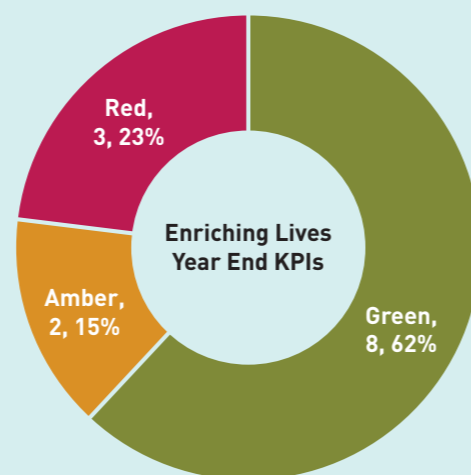
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ENRICHING LIVES

Ten of the 13 KPIs in this area are on or near target. The three that are not are a direct result of national restrictions caused by lockdown: usage of leisure centres, participation in leisure centre activities and number of visits to libraries.



Award for Addington expansion project:

The £4.4million expansion and new sixth form, which is allowing 50 more students with SEND to attend the school, won an Education Business Award in November 2020.

Alder Grove Church of England Primary School in Shinfield West:

The state-of-the-art school was built as part of the Shinfield West development and will grow to become a 420-place free school for pupils aged 4 to 11, with a 26 place nursery class. It opened in September 2020

California Country Park destination play area:

Work started in October 2020 on the new play area that includes new equipment, an inclusive sensory and water play area, a new woodland adventure trail and tree houses.

Dinton Activity Centre:

Work got underway in October 2020 on the £2.4million new centre that is the borough's first net zero carbon building project.

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KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

Rebuilt Bulmershe Leisure Centre:

Opened ahead of schedule in April 2020, the £14.5million centre includes a six-lane 25-metre swimming pool, a teaching pool with movable floor, a bigger gym plus a 'live well' (long-term condition) gym, a four-court sports hall, and an additional studio and café.

Carnival Hub:

Work started on the multi-million pound Carnival Hub, the last phase of our Wokingham town centre regeneration, this new centre will become the local destination for culture, sport and leisure and will feature two swimming pools (a six-lane 25m pool and teaching pool with moveable depth floor and splash pad); a larger fitness suite and specialist group cycling studio; two large studios; a four-court sports hall; a health and wellbeing centre; larger café; and space for children's parties. There will also be a large library including space for events and activities, a lending library, fun children's zone and space for exhibitions.





SECTION 4: DELIVERING ON OUR PRIORITIES



ENRICHING LIVES

Improvements to Foundry College:

More space was created at the school in Budes Gardens thanks to the £1.7million project, with work completed to modify buildings, relocate the temporary classrooms and landscape around the school site. Foundry College was created in September 2011, and it provides education and support to pupils who have been permanently excluded or are at risk of permanent exclusion, as well as those with medical needs who cannot attend school regularly. It has 47 students who are educated there full time.

Kickstart scheme launched:

The scheme provides job opportunities for young people who are currently on Universal Credit and are at risk of long-term unemployment. Each job placement is completely new, lasting for six months and helping young people to build their confidence and experience in the workplace; all while earning a regular wage for up to 25 hours per week.

Stabilised the children's social work workforce:

with recruitment of more permanent staff and a significantly reduced reliance on interim workers. Despite a national shortage of social workers, the proportion of interim social workers reduced this year from 37% to 30% and is projected to be 23% by September 2021

Deployed a new Compass Team which is achieving positive outcomes:

Since inception the compass team has successfully worked with 21 young people to reduce their risk of coming into care or placement breakdown. The team continues to work intensively with many more young people to address often complex issues.

Improved services for children and young people with SEND:

An Ofsted and Care Quality Commission revisit in early 2021 found that the Council have made sufficient progress in 5 of 6 areas, with a short Accelerated Progress Plan in place for the final area. The timeliness and quality of Education, Health and Care Plans has improved. It is now one of the strongest performing in the South East and higher than national average performance (86% EHCP's completed within 20 weeks of referral as at Q1 2021/22). The Council has commenced a new SEND Innovation and Improvement Programme that will take on the lead from the SEND Improvement Board.

Expanded Virtual School supporting Children in Care to include children aged 0-25:

The Council now support looked after children as they start school and continue to provide support for learners beyond their formal post 16 further education and into higher education. In addition, a new Assistant Head of the Virtual School has been appointed to support the response to the newly expanded duties to champion the educational outcomes of all children and young people who have, or have had, a social worker. It is anticipated that this will close the gap on outcomes between children with a social worker and their peers.

Local Action Groups:

The Public Health team has facilitated the setting up and ongoing co-chairing of these groups to engage key partners and bring them together to deliver against health and wellbeing priorities

Substance misuse provision:

Recommissioned a specialist substance misuse provision for local residents, including securing additional funding through successful bids

Adult Healthy Weight Management programme and Active Movement Programme:

These two programmes have been recommissioned for schools, with national funding secured for additional local provision

Promoting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion:

We've adopted a four year plan to take forward the wider equality agenda and tackle inequality in the borough this is aligned to the equality framework for local government, supporting progress towards the "achieving" level. The delivery of the action plan will allow the Council to:

- Listen to and learn from our communities and use this to deliver services that work well for everyone
- Act on our commitments to equality, diversity and inclusion in the way we plan, deliver and shape our services
- Build a diverse and engaged workforce, where everyone is respected

Tackling social isolation through technology:

The Project 'Joy' app helps tackle social isolation by enabling individuals to access activities and it also enables referrals from a range of voluntary sector partners and adult social care.

Art and culture:

A new ten year strategy was approved in March with the focus of developing the quality and appeal of the cultural 'offer' across the borough. Launched the Wocca app to provide a one-stop real time guide to cultural events happening across the borough with a steady increase in take-up.





SECTION 4: DELIVERING ON OUR PRIORITIES



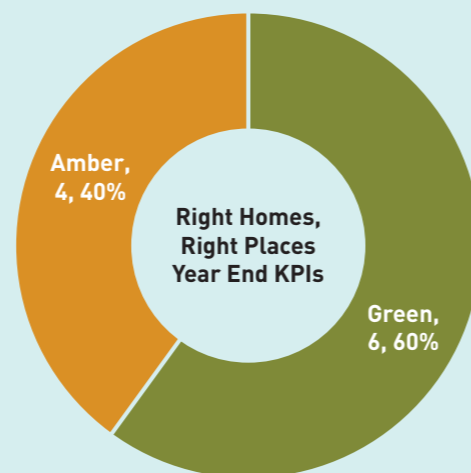
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RIGHT HOMES, RIGHT PLACES

All KPIs in this area were on or close to target. The amber KPIs are associated with the longer term planning: "New Home Survey", "Local Plan Update", "5 Year Housing Supply" and "Housing 1-4-5 Challenge". Even with these 4 amber KPIs the performance has been strong in this area.



The Central and East Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Local Plan:

The plan has been progressed with the publication consultation undertaken and subsequent submission of the plan to government for examination

South Wokingham major development:

Planning consent for 1,850 homes and accompanying facilities and infrastructure

Primary school building in Arborfield Green:

Progress on the new Farley Hill Primary. Hundreds of young people will be able to make the most of the new facilities, with space to expand for more than 600 pupils as and when it is needed.

Matthews Green Primary School:

construction progressing be ready for a potential opening in September 2022.

Work started on new community centre for Shinfield:

The community centre (a joint project with the parish council) is part of the Shinfield Parish major development which includes new homes and a district centre in Shinfield Village with a supermarket and other shops, as well as a neighbourhood centre in Spencers Wood. There are also two new primary schools, new playing fields and open spaces.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

Progress on the Local Plan Update:

Preparing a new Local Plan for the borough, including a revised strategy for consultation in autumn 2021, following the deliverability issues with the Grazeley garden town proposal which was a central plank of the Draft Local Plan consulted on in 2020:

- High level summary of responses to Draft Local Plan (2020) consultation published.
- Master planning work commissioned following cross party agreement.
- Technical evidence commissioned.
- New Local Development Scheme adopted in July 2021 outlining the revised programme, with commitment regarding the Local Plan Update to undertake a public consultation on a revised strategy in autumn 2021 and publication consultation of the full plan in summer 2022, with examination and adoption by the end of 2023.





SECTION 4: DELIVERING ON OUR PRIORITIES



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RIGHT HOMES, RIGHT PLACES

Wokingham Town Centre Regeneration:

The town centre regeneration continued to buck the national trend by attracting new businesses. 90% of council-owned regeneration units were occupied at the end of 2020/21, equating to approximately £2 million of committed income from Peach Place and Elms Field.

Homes and SEND school planned for Winnersh Farm:

Public engagement began on proposals to build a new SEND school alongside housing at Winnersh Farm

Housing Strategy 2020-24:

The strategy has an emphasis on COVID recovery, and assessing and addressing impacts. So far it has delivered:

- 187 affordable homes in 2020/21
- 61 houses in the 2nd year of the 1-4-5 programme with a further 139 units currently on site and an additional 890 units being progressed
- Completion of Gorrick Square scheme for learning disabled clients, with further specialist schemes currently being developed
- Over £1m funding secured to develop offer for rough sleepers
- Delivered an 18 unit key worker housing scheme in Wokingham

Gorse Ride redevelopment:

The regeneration is taking place in phases, progress in 2020/21:

- Phase One completion of the 10 houses for social rent and sale. These have been key for the relocation of residents living in following phases of the regeneration of the entire site
- Phase Two in preparation for future work, the Council relocated 11 Council tenants during the year and purchased two additional privately owned properties. Leaving 18 left to purchase across the site.

The Courts, Winnersh:

Demolished 75 garages in the Courts area of Winnersh and provided much needed car parking for the area.

Housing compliance:

Initiated after the social housing white paper was published, this project aims to monitor and ensure compliance within the council's housing service. As a result:

- Gas safety is at 100% compliance
- Reports were created highlighting impacts of the Social Housing White Paper. These were presented to the Tenant and Landlord Improvement Panel

Housing Ombudsman Complaints Code:

In 2020 the Housing Ombudsman launched the complaints code and linked new powers of determination along with closer relationship working with the Housing Regulator. Every Local Authority and Housing Association were asked to complete the self-assessment of their current complaints policy and procedures with a deadline of completion and publishing by the 31st December 2020.

- Self-assessment completed and published by 31st December 2020. A follow up one was completed recently and also published to ensure transparency.
- Full consultation completed on new proposed complaints policy with Involved Tenants and open to wider tenant base via website
- An Involved Tenant successfully applied and gained a place on the Housing Ombudsman resident panel.
- Staff and Involved Tenants attended Housing Ombudsman webinars on the new complaints code to ensure compliance

Housing First:

A government funded project to buy four self-contained properties for the borough's most entrenched rough sleepers, providing intense one to one support to enable tenants to sustain tenancies and make improvements in all areas of their lives as a result we have:

- Completed on 4 properties to meet their specific needs
- Commissioned support in place and actively supporting 5 residents who have been identified as potential Housing First tenants





SECTION 4: DELIVERING ON OUR PRIORITIES



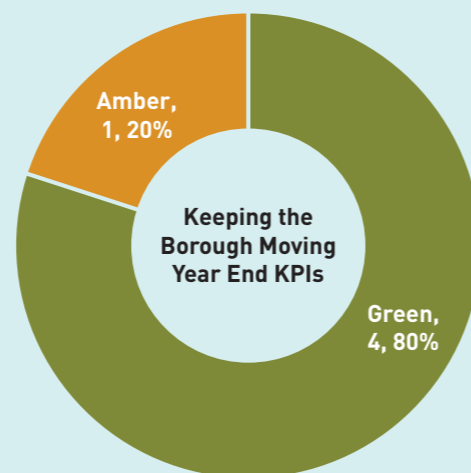
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KEEPING THE BOROUGH MOVING

During the COVID pandemic, the decrease in traffic levels combined with the proactive approach to address structural maintenance and improvements to the road network, detailed in the programmes below had a positive impact on these KPIs.



- Developed an Intelligent Transport Systems strategy including rolling out Smarter traffic signals that combined with CCTV cameras helping to respond to traffic demands throughout the day improving journey times

Greenways project: Ongoing project to create a network of generally traffic free routes connecting the new major developments to each other and to the existing communities and places of interest and employment. Progress through 2020/21 included:

- Completion of California Way
- Construction started on Cantley Park to Woosehill Greenway
- Consultation on Woosehill Meadow Greenway

Major new roads:

The £100million investment in new roads continued to deliver improvement with Observer Way (the Arborfield Cross Relief Road) opened, construction of the Winnersh Relief Road and North Wokingham Distributor Roads and the Eastern Gateway of the South Wokingham Distributor Road continuing.

My Journey:

A borough-wide active and sustainable travel behaviour change campaign that aims to help and inspire residents, employees and visitors to walk, scoot, cycle or use public transport. This year it has:

- Won the Bikeability Authority of the Year award
- Moved many of the borough's school-based programme online in response to lockdown
- Made bikes available to key workers

Local cycling and walking infrastructure plan:

Consulted residents and businesses on how we can encourage more walking and cycling throughout the borough.

Active Travel:

We continue to invest in cycling infrastructure with more than £6million spent since 2014. In 2020/21 we:

- Finished the London Road cycle scheme, which completing the borough's elements of the national cycle route 422 linking Newbury, Reading, Wokingham, Bracknell and Ascot on one single cycle route.
- Successfully bid for both the Emergency Active Travel Fund and implemented temporary social distancing measures in the Borough's town centres
- Successfully bid for Tranche 2 of Active Travel Fund and identified suitable schemes for initial consultation. Securing £650,000 from the ATF this year

08

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

Community Transport Programme:

This has successfully implemented a new structure for the Community Transport delivery model and supporting policies to minimise cost and ensure quality in the provision of needs-based transport for children and vulnerable adults. As a result the Council has:

- Established a new Community Transport Unit
- Strengthening stakeholder engagement and relationship in SEND and co-production of the Home to School Transport Policy
- Improved outcomes for Children and Young people with SEND

Structural Maintenance Programme:

Invested £8million in improving the borough's roads - double the investment compared to previous years. We used the reduction in road use during lockdowns to undertake improvement works completed on borough's key commuting routes

Congestion Project:

A £20million project to reduce congestion in the borough. So far it has:

- Completed construction of Thames Valley Park Park & Ride and secured planning permission for both Winnersh and Coppid Beech Park & Rides. Reducing congestion on the boroughs key transport routes, improving key public transport infrastructure and helping to reduce the boroughs carbon emissions
- Upgraded streetworks technology



SECTION 4: DELIVERING ON OUR PRIORITIES



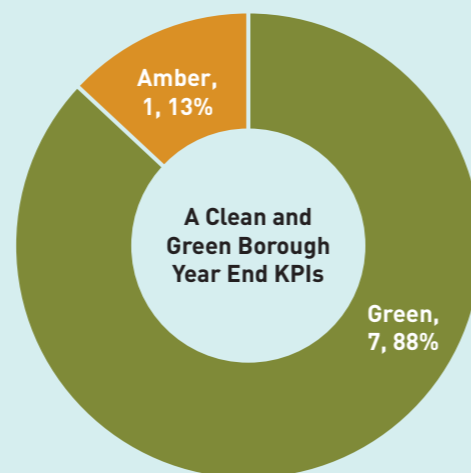
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A CLEAN AND GREEN BOROUGH

Performance in this space was overwhelmingly positive as we put significant effort into tackling the climate change emergency. One KPI, "Percentage of household waste reused, recycled and composted" was held back by a change to recycling wet cardboard, but we promptly introduced waterproof recycling bags to tackle this.



Adopt a Street programme:

This supports local communities to keep their areas clean and tidy through regular volunteer litter picking. During the year the number of streets participating in the scheme increased from 189 to 317.

Emerging Electric Vehicle Strategy:

The Electric Vehicles Strategy aims to develop a borough wide strategy to specify the infrastructure for Electric Vehicle charging point to encourage the uptake. As a result:

- New electric vehicle charging points have been installed
- Residents' have been consulted to assess off-street parking needs

Local Flood Risk Management Strategy:

This sets out how we will fulfil statutory obligations under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 and provides a framework to actively manage and reduce flood risk across the borough and deliver sustainable regeneration and growth. This year it has led to:

- The adoption of the Land Drainage Byelaws.
- Development of Surface Water Management Plans for Shinfield and Lower Earley.
- Development of a live asset database of critical flood assets in the borough.
- Development of numerous S19 Flood Investigation Reports

- Production of the Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs) Strategy
- Smart drainage trials in a number of locations across the borough.
- Successful bid for Defra flood defence funding for a surface water drainage scheme in Church Lane, Shinfield, to reduce flood risk to the road and to properties.
- Delivery of numerous capital drainage schemes to reduce surface water flood risk to properties in high-risk areas.

Fly-Tipping Strategy:

This details how we will deter illegal dumping of waste by investigating rubbish that is fly-tipped and taking enforcement action wherever possible. As a result, 863 fly-tips were investigated during the year resulting in 83 fixed penalty notices being issued.

Waste and recycling:

Rolled out waterproof recycling bags to replace black boxes in order to keep paper and card dry and therefore allow it to be recycled. Continued to expand use of food waste recycling with more than 500 tonnes recycled each month.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP):

This sets out targets and actions for the borough to become net-zero carbon by 2030 and focuses on increasing awareness and educating residents about the importance of changing behaviours and adopting more sustainable lifestyles. In 2020/21 we:

- Started building Dinton Activity Centre as the first net-zero carbon building in the borough
- Approved our annual climate emergency action plan report
- Attracted more than £2 Million of external funding to support the CEAP projects

- Retrofitted 700 homes to improve energy performance through the Help to Heat Green Homes Grant schemes helping residents reduce energy bills, improve efficiency and decrease carbon emissions
- Retrofitted ten schools with improvements such as LED lighting, insulation measures, controls upgrades, heating upgrades
- Achieved a 56% reduction of the council's carbon footprint through home working
- Started the 250k tree planting project and successful bid for £300,000 grant from the Woodland Trust's Emergency Tree Fund.
- Submitted a planning application for solar farm, which would see solar panels installed on council-owned farmland adjacent to Barkham Ride (High Barn Farm and part of Brook Farm), would generate enough energy to power thousands of homes and businesses across the borough for years to come.



SECTION 4: DELIVERING ON OUR PRIORITIES



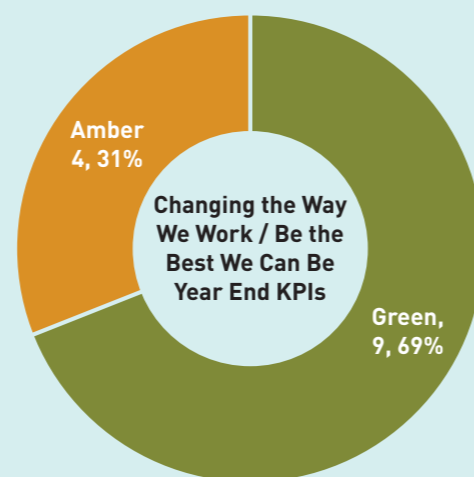
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CHANGING THE WAY WE WORK FOR YOU AND BEING THE BEST WE CAN BE

We are evolving how we work, moving to become a data-led organisation that focuses on what matters most to our residents, businesses and customers. The KPIs in the area show strong results.



Online Blue Badge Application:

We've improved our online offer to enable friends or family to apply on behalf of someone and made it easier to upload evidence, photos and pay. We've continued to provide a prompt service, delivering badges within five working days of a successful application. As a result, in August 80% of applications were made online, an increase of 30%.

Registrars Booking:

This booking system and improvements in processes has resulted in:

An online booking system to register a birth, arrange a citizenship ceremony and book a marriage notice appointment

- All death registrations can now be completed without the need for a face to face appointment using a phone call and online registration
- Approximately 50% of birth bookings are now made online
- 344 virtual citizenship ceremonies were held since the beginning of the first lockdown.

IT Improvements:

Investment in IT software and infrastructure to improve security, productivity, resilience and reliability has included:

- Continuously developed our website resulting in 37,000 customer transactions online and 961,404 individual visits.
- Seamless transition from office to home working for over 1,000+ staff
- Redevelopment of Customer Relationship Management system based on customer journey feedback resulting in 25% increase in uptake of online services that are delivered using this technology
- Improved infrastructure with better connectivity, utilising modern technology and technical capability
- Upgrades and adoption of Microsoft 365 cloud-based solution to support remote working for over 1,000 workers
- Programme of education, information and change across the Council to improve cyber security awareness & practice resulting in a 96% increase in password security in annual cyber security audit

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KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

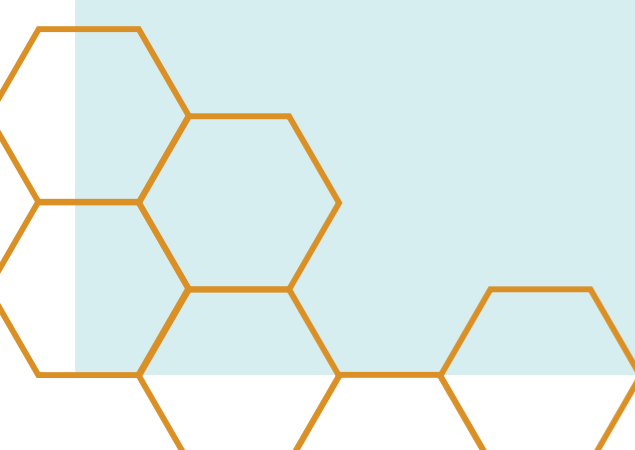
Customer Experience Development:

We have deployed a customer feedback tool to gather views, including on our website and everyone who calls our main number on a mobile telephone being given the opportunity to feed back on the quality of their service.

This allows us to target where improvements are needed and plan what is possible over short, medium and long term. Many improvements can be actioned immediately in real time, as soon as the feedback is available.

Improvements have included:

- Almost 120 broken internet links have been identified across the Council website and fixed
- When new recycling bags were delivered, some road names were missed from the website, this was quickly identified and fixed





SECTION 4: DELIVERING ON OUR PRIORITIES



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CHANGING THE WAY WE WORK FOR YOU AND BEING THE BEST WE CAN BE

People Strategy:

A package of colleague focused goals and plans which set out we will utilise the collective skill and talent of the Council's workforce. In 2020/21 it:

- Supported the COVID response by setting up redeployment processes to ensure the delivery teams were staffed. COVID response work included new internal health and safety measures for Council premises & school building and delivery of new wellbeing and remote working learning content to support employees
- Launch and delivery of new learning materials to support employees: management development of extended leadership team, new induction programme, performance management and wellbeing programme such as Mental health First Aiders
- Participated in the government's Kickstart scheme to support return to work
- Reviewed the current HR operating model
- Continued delivery of Apprenticeship programme
- Launch of new recruitment Application Tracking System in December 2020 to improve recruitment
- Improved employee engagement by launching open communication sessions with senior team such as 'the Big Chat'

The Graduate Academy:

In 2020/21, we recruited six National Management Trainee's via the Local Government Association's National Graduate Development Programme to our Graduate Academy, a 500% increase on the previous year.

This is not only the largest cohort in the Council's history, it is also the largest intake within Berkshire.

This Academy is set to grow and demonstrates the Council's determination and commitment to support and develop talent.

Continued Commercialisation:

During 2020/21 commercialisation projects included:

- The Grantfinder Scheme to enable officers to identify, bid and secure external funding
- The Premier Supplier Scheme enabling suppliers to be paid earlier for an agreed rebate on invoice charges.
- The ongoing success of the Community Investment Group, which has over £85 million invested in its portfolio that returns at over 5% per year gross

Digital Library Offer:

Providing more options to access services is a key element in continuing the increased usage of the library services. During 2020/21:

More than 300,000 items were accessed digitally, which is an increase of 135% on the previous year.

More than 11,000 pupils took part in the online Authors into Schools project.

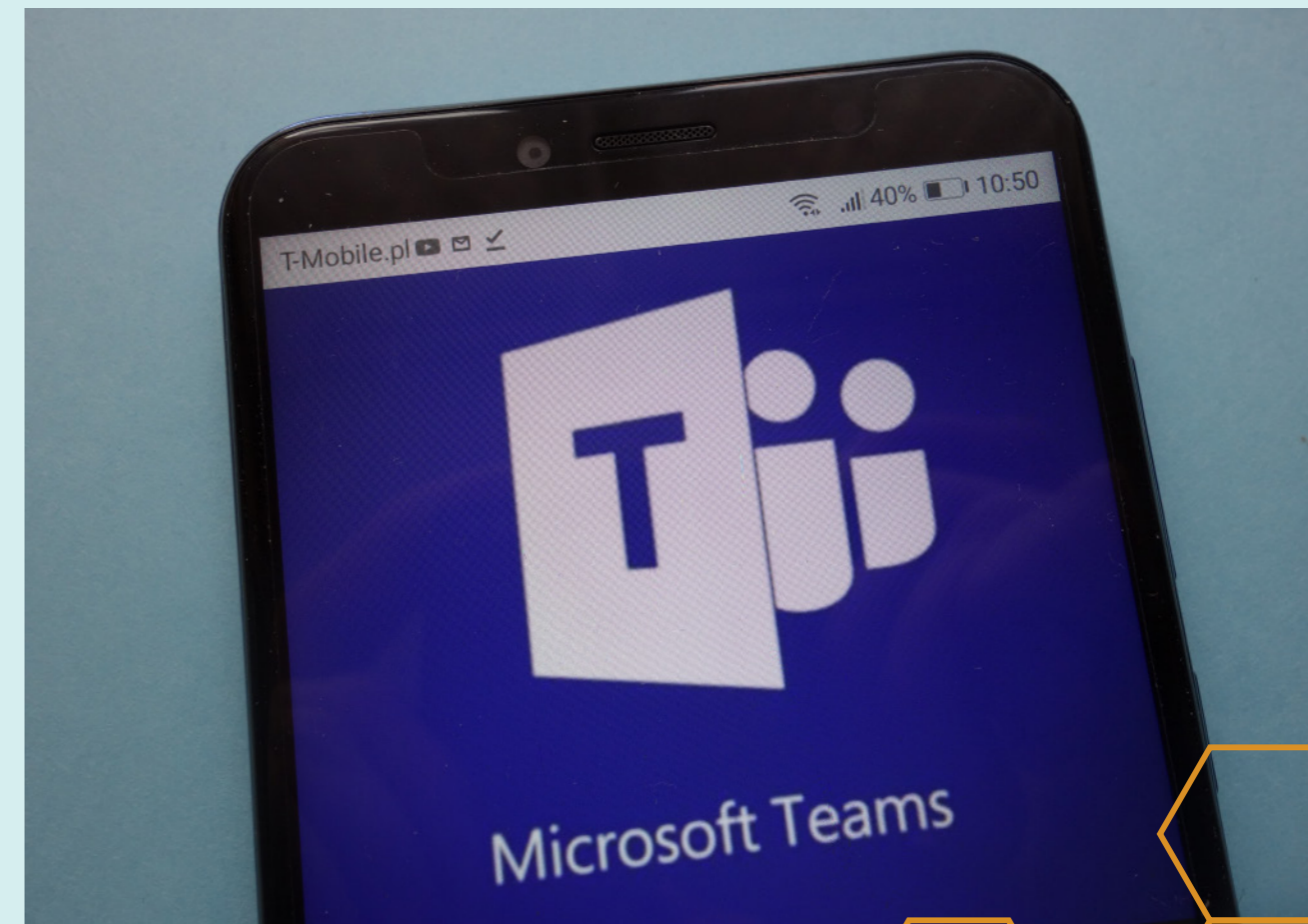
Communication and engagement:

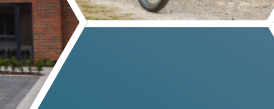
Direct communication and engagement with residents was improved by the introduction of e-newsletters (Wokingham Borough Connect). As a result, by the end of 2020/21, Wokingham Borough Connect had

- 65,000 subscribers signed-up to receive at least one newsletter
- 150,000 subscriptions (due to subscribers signing up to multiple newsletters)
- An average open rate above 50%

Public protection services:

Decision to take the majority of these service back in-house (from the current Public Protection Partnership). Moving services such as tackling anti-social in-house will allow us to focus on local residents' concerns.







ANNUAL REVIEW OF CORPORATE PLAN

For the second year running, Wokingham Borough Council has faced the challenge of Covid-19 throughout 2021/22.

The year began with the emergence of the Delta Variant, with about 30 cases identified in the borough by the end of May 2021 and is ending with a high rate of Omicron cases, in particular in schools.

Despite these ongoing challenges, the council has continued to deliver high quality services and projects for the community, some of which are set out in this appendix that provides a short overview of some of the council's achievements so far in 2021/22.

A full Annual Review of the Corporate Plan 2021/22, including KPIs, will be produced later this year.





COVID FOR ANNUAL REVIEW OF CORPORATE PLAN



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MOBILE RAPID TESTING UNITS:

In March 2021, the borough council was one of the first to roll out Mobile Testing Units in March 2021, using data to identify and target places with local take-up rates. We also continued to run lateral flow testing sites for key workers, opening these up to the wider community a few months after. At the time of writing, nearly 35,000 tests had been processed on site by the team and 47,000 home testing kits given to the public.

SURGE TESTING:

In June 2021, we ran a surge testing programme, following the rapid spread of the Delta variant in the borough. This led to more than 20,000 tests complete and nearly 15,000 residential properties visited to help raise awareness. 8,000 test kits were also delivered to schools, nurseries, pre-schools and businesses.

VACCINE ROLL-OUT

Although the vaccine programme is the responsibility of health partners, the borough council has supported this effort. From helping with signage, car parking and providing staff for local vaccine centres, to hosting the NHS Health on the Move Covid-19 vaccine bus and signposting to important information on our social media channels.

SURGE VACCINATION

In June 2021, we worked NHS partners to run the surge vaccine programme over a two-week period at Bulmershe Leisure Centre. Many WBC staff took part in this effort and a staggering 4,000 people were vaccinated at the centre as a result.

CONTINUING TO HELP COMMUNITY AND BUSINESSES

The council's Covid Support Officers have continued to promote best practice, carrying out mobile and foot patrols in town centres and other areas, signposting members of the public to nearby Covid-19 testing facilities and providing other important guidance. The council has also helped organisations access Covid-19 grants from Central Government. Millions has been paid out to local businesses that have been impacted by ongoing restrictions.

KEEPING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS SAFE

The Adult Social Care Covid-19 Taskforce has provided vital support to our care homes and their residents across the borough, ensuring they stay as safe as possible. This has included daily calls to share information and assist with any issues and concerns; support with risk assessments, problem solving and testing; the dedicated team has acted swiftly to put support in place when needed.

The Children's Covid-19 Taskforce have provided continual support schools and pre-schools/nurseries during the pandemic. They are in daily contact with headteachers by phone, email, and virtual meetings; providing advice, guidance, and important information to share with parents and guardians.





SAFE AND STRONG COMMUNITIES:



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CHARITY AND COMMUNITY HUB:

The Wokingham Charity and Community Hub is the new home for 10 charities and organisations. The Hub, which opened in January and is based in Wokingham is open for drop-ins for the public to seek advice. The charities now calling the hub home are:

- Involve (which is managing the hub)
- Cranstoun Wokingham
- Home Start Wokingham District
- Health Watch Wokingham Borough
- The Link Visiting Scheme
- Mind in Berkshire
- CLASP
- Promise Inclusion (Pinc)
- Wokingham Volunteer Centre
- Wokingham Foodbank (moving in over the next few weeks)
- Citizen's Advice Wokingham are already located at Waterford House on the second floor and are also part of the hub

DOMESTIC ABUSE:

The council's new Domestic Abuse Strategy (2021-2024) was approved in December 2021. The strategy will deliver on the council's response to the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and sets out the council and local partner organisations approaches to providing support for domestic abuse victims and their children, holding perpetrators to account and working towards long-term wellbeing.

HARDSHIP ALLIANCE AND DRAFT ANTI-POVERTY STRATEGY:

The council has combined with four local charities (First Days, Citizens Advice Wokingham, AgeUK Berkshire and Wokingham United Charities) to form the Hardship Alliance with core objectives of prevention, supporting people in poverty, strengthening communities in their resilience to poverty and improving life opportunities for people living in poverty. The alliance has produced a draft Anti-Poverty Strategy and taken it out to public consultation to seek wider views before it is finalised.

INVESTMENT IN PREVENTION SERVICES:

The council has agreed to boost its adult social care prevention programme working with the voluntary, community and faith sector (VCFS) by an additional £280,000 to £2.1million for the in 2022/23 (compared with £1.8million in 2021/22). The council's Adult Social Care Strategy and its Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy outline the importance of prevention services in supporting its residents to improve their health and wellbeing and aiming to prevent, reduce and delay the need for formal care and support.

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SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS:

Wokingham Borough ranked number one in the southeast and number two in the country on the Adult Social Cares Outcomes Framework under measure '1E: the proportion of adults with learning disability in paid employment' for 2020-21.





ESTABLISHED WOKINGHAM BOROUGH YOUTH COUNCIL:

launched in July 2021, the Youth Council is made up of students from across the borough, with each secondary school invited to put forward two representatives. The members have debated and feedback to the council on issues such as climate emergency and diversity and have also come forward to act as champions for issues of particular concern to them.

DINTON ACTIVITY CENTRE:

The £2.4 million activity centre opened in Sept 2021 to provide an accessible base for all to enjoy the park. It was the borough's first net zero carbon building, featuring eco-friendly materials and functions, supporting the Council's commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030.

CARNIVAL HUB:

Building work reached the milestone of topping out (the point at which the building work reaches the highest point) this year and the art and leisure centre is on track to open this summer. The new facility includes swimming pools, a spa, fitness studios, a café, a dual-purpose hall for sports and 400 seat cultural performances and a new large library

BRIDGES RESOURCE CENTRE:

The short break centre for children with complex needs and disabilities was awarded outstanding by Ofsted in an inspection in July 2021. Bridges Resource Centre in Woodley gives high quality short breaks to children who have complex needs, learning and/or physical disabilities between the ages of 8 to 18.

NEW DESTINATION PLAY AREAS:

The destination play area at California Country Park opened in April. The play area includes a range of inclusive and interactive equipment – including a spinning disc, swings, musical chime walkway and a trampoline that are suitable for wheelchair users. Another destination play area will open at Cantley Park in Wokingham later in the year.

HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES AND FOOD (HAF) PROGRAMME:

The programme provided children across the borough with a summer of fun. Funded by the Department for Education and the council, the HAF programme offered weekly activities to children across the borough who were eligible for benefits-based free school meals. More than 650 children attended the five -week programme, with activities for primary, secondary and those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), delivered in partnership with local organisations, and with over 10,000 free healthy meals provided.

UNICEF CHILD FRIENDLY CITIES AND COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

The borough council is now part of a global campaign to uphold and protect children's rights in everything it does. We have recently announced that we'll be working with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) after successfully applying to join its Child Friendly Cities and Communities initiative. This aims to give all children a meaningful say in decisions that shape their lives, whether on services like libraries or more specialist interventions for children in our care. We're one of eight local authorities in the UK to be accepted and it will take between three and five years before we're fully accredited.





LOCAL PLAN UPDATE:

More than 2,000 responses were received during the recent Revised Growth Strategy consultation

Wokingham Town Centre Regeneration: Continued to buck the national trend by attracting good quality businesses and national awards.

GORSE RIDE REDEVELOPMENT:

The first phase of the regeneration was completed in the summer of 2021 and consists of 46 new properties, three of which were sold to help offset the cost of development, and the remainder split between shared ownership and social rent. The second phase of the regeneration will see 178 existing dated properties replaced with 249 new energy efficient homes, 74% of which will be affordable. Work is already well underway with the majority of residents affected by the initial work already rehoused and the site being cleared and prepared for main construction this summer.

SHINFIELD COMMUNITY CENTRE:

The centre was built in partnership with the University of Reading and Shinfield Parish Council and funded through developer contributions as part of the Shinfield West development. It opened to the public in November 2021.

GREENWAYS:

The first section of the Greenways Route B, which runs through Cantley Park, was completed in May 2021 and it is now being enjoyed by our residents and park users. The council has recently consulted on a new greenway route through Woosehill Meadows from Reading Road to Heron road as part of the larger Greenways Route B.

DELIVERING NEW HOMES:

Continued annual housing delivery of more than 1000 new homes and more than 200 new affordable homes in the past year, as continued build out of the existing Local Plan.

DECENT HOMES STANDARD:

For the second year running all of Wokingham Borough Council's social housing stock met the decent homes standard for condition and repair. The standard, which is set by central government and applies to all local councils, was put in place to ensure council homes met decent levels for things such as general repairs, heating and thermal comfort as well as having reasonably modern facilities such as kitchens and bathrooms.

Planning permission for Shinfield Studios granted in October 2021. The 85,000 sq m complex would be built on part of the Thames Valley Science Park to the south of the M4, which is earmarked for employment use in the council's local plan, plus additional land to the north and south of Cutbush Lane.

It would be used to produce major international films and television programmes and would have 18 film stages and eight workshops to support set production plus office facilities and other supporting infrastructure.

Planning consent for the South Wokingham major development in May 2021. Planning applications approved:

- South Wokingham distributor road main section – from the Eastern Gateway to Finchampstead Road
- Western Gateway – improved junction of Finchampstead Road and Molly Millars Lane
- up to 1,434 new homes, a primary school, a community facility, and nature parks
- up to 215 new homes to the east of the development, adjacent to Bigwood
- St Anne's SANG – a nature park of 7.83 hectares which will connect to Buckhurst Meadows





KEEPING THE BOROUGH MOVING



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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£6million spent on road improvements: More than 130 roads across Wokingham Borough were improvements in the last year.

Wokingham Borough Council's annual road maintenance programme for 2020-21 is now complete, with more than £6million invested across the area. Work has been targeted to take place during lockdown periods since last April to make the most of quieter roads and reduce disruption for residents.

Investing in technology to reduce congestion – smart cameras and traffic lights : 80 video cameras were installed around the borough to help monitor traffic levels to help predict the exact impact of new housing on its road network.

The council was also awarded £250,000 for smart traffic lights and crossings across the area - these lights respond to traffic flows and so change phasing depending of time of day. Smart traffic light schemes are earmarked for ten locations across the borough.

SOUTH WOKINGHAM DISTRIBUTOR ROAD:

The Eastern Gateway, part of Wokingham Borough Council's South Wokingham Distributor Road, was opened in January 2022. The new road, which includes an off-road cycle path to encourage active travel, is among the new infrastructure for the authority's major development of 2,500 new homes at South Wokingham, which was agreed under its current Local Plan.

PARK AND RIDES:

Construction underway on the new park and ride at Coppid Beech and improvements to the Winnersh park and ride.

Barkham Bridge improvements: The project replaced the old narrow bridge with a two-lane bridge over the brook on Barkham Road. Before the changes between Barkham Street and Langley Common Road, a bottleneck existed at the old bridge but this has been removed and journeys are now smoother.

Wokingham Major Highways Project shortlisted for partnership Initiative of the Year at the British Construction Industry Awards. The council is nominated alongside contractor Balfour Beatty and SCAPE civil engineering.

Winnersh Relief Road opened: The new road opened in May 2021 in order to relieve congestion at the Winnersh Crossroads. It was part of the 2010 Core Strategy and funded by developer contributions

Beat the Streets scheme to encourage active travel among children and young people: Wokingham's Beat the Street saw more than 6,200 participants racking up 151,531 active travel miles. Beat the Street is a real-life game that challenges people to ditch the car and to walk, cycle or wheel to school to improve congestion and air quality.



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Barkham Solar Farm planning application approved in Sept 2021

The plan will see 67,340 solar panels installed on farmland to the north and south of Barkham Ride generating enough renewable energy to power thousands of local houses as well as reducing carbon emissions. The approved proposals include the planting of nearly 11,000 new trees on the site, wider landscaping to improve biodiversity and the creation of a new Greenway to better link Arborfield, Barkham and Finchampstead to the existing network of public rights of way to the north.

CEAP community engagement agreed – deliberative process bringing together residents and community groups from all backgrounds to share their thoughts on the best ways to tackle the climate emergency locally. Process approved in October 2021.

Garden Forest scheme: The scheme invites residents to apply for a tree, or trees, for their own garden. Over the next five years, we are looking to plant 250,000 trees across the borough to increase carbon sequestration rates. Carbon sequestration is a process whereby the trees will draw excess CO2 from the atmosphere and store it.

The Arborfield Cross Relief Road scooped an industry award for an innovative “green” bridge that helps animals move safely through the surrounding countryside. Observer Way, a 2.3km bypass with an off-road cycleway and paths which opened in November 2020, also includes a bridleway crossing with special features to provide a safe route for wildlife living nearby.

Solar panels installed at Shinfield St Mary’s Primary School 116 new solar panels installed on the school roof, allowing it to massively increase the amount of sustainable energy generated on site.

Our Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) rated one of the best in the country

Independent national organisation, Climate Emergency UK, have benchmarked of local council’s Climate Action Plans across the UK & Northern Ireland. And Wokingham Borough’s is rated 8th best Single Tier Authority in the UK for our Climate Emergency Action Plan. The CEAP scored very highly across all the key focus areas, and got full marks on some of the key ones such as Education, Ecological Emergency and Governance.



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TITLE	Gorse Ride Regeneration Project Changes to Delivery Model
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Council on Thursday, 24 March 2022
WARD	Finchampstead South;
LEAD OFFICER	Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers, Director, Place and Growth - Steve Moore
LEAD MEMBER	Deputy Leader of the Council - John Kaiser

PURPOSE OF REPORT (INC STRATEGIC OUTCOMES)

To seek agreement for the financing of the regeneration of social housing at Gorse Ride, to provide more affordable homes and support a strong community.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Executive recommends that Council:

- 1) approve that the development of homes within the Gorse Ride regeneration will be transferred to the Housing Revenue Account. (With market sale element in the general fund)
- 2) approve the expenditure budget up to the total cost of the scheme of £105,601,534 funded through a combination of HRA borrowing, capital receipts, developer contributions and right to buy receipts. (Further information provided in the report);
- 3) give delegated authority to the Director of Resources and Assets, in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing and Finance, to approve the use of additional Affordable Housing s106 commuted sums as a contingency against cost and funding variations such as any future design changes and/or fluctuations in costs and values of up to 15% of the cost of the scheme in the event of any other financial impacts;
- 4) agree that any appropriation of land between the HRA and general fund required to deliver the scheme will be delegated to the Director of Resources and Assets, in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing and Finance.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Gorse Ride regeneration project is a flagship scheme in the Council's response to the housing crisis, providing more and better affordable housing. The project recognises the value a thriving community can make to a successful housing regeneration project, by working collaboratively with the residents to ensure that the sense of community is preserved through a proactive engagement process.

The provision of well-planned and delivered affordable housing has never been more important. Data on a national and local level shows that homelessness is on the increase, with an escalating demand for temporary accommodation not only impacting the Council's future temporary accommodation budgets but having a major effect on those residents whose lives are disrupted by not having a stable and secure home. Meanwhile increasing house prices in Wokingham Borough continue to make home ownership unaffordable for many. The project is generally well supported by residents who along with the Tenant and Landlord Improvement Panel are updated on progress on a regular basis.

In May 2018, the Council's Executive approved the Gorse Ride regeneration project to replace the existing 178 poor quality, primarily Council owned, socially rented homes, with 243 new high quality, well designed and energy efficient homes, set in landscaped green space. If the recommendations within this report are adopted a total 249 new homes will be provided, of which 136 will be social rented homes, 49 shared ownership and 64 private sale homes. This equates to 51 more affordable housing properties than currently provided on the development.

Although, good progress has been made since the report went to council in 2018, the scheme has encountered a number of changes since its initiation which have impacted upon the project funding model. This includes reduction in anticipated Homes England grant funding, alterations to the design and the recent upward inflation pressures on construction costs. This report recommends a number of reasonable adjustments that can be implemented to help manage costs and reduce risks whilst ensuring that good quality homes are delivered as planned.

It is recommended that the regenerated properties in Gorse Ride are transferred to the HRA, rather than to the Council's housing company, Loddon Homes, as proposed in the 2018 report, which will allow access to the HRA borrowing capacity without the need for additional affordable housing contributions. Utilising the HRA also allows the use of Right to Buy receipts as an additional funding stream. Note that the private sector properties are excluded and will be transferred to the general fund to avoid the revenue costs associated with market sale properties within the HRA. Council is asked to agree that any appropriation of land between the HRA and general fund required to deliver the scheme will be delegated to the Director of Resources and Assets, in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing and Finance.

Council is asked to approve a total of £37,546,183 of HRA borrowing (note that affordable housing s106 of £28,015,683 has already been approved to fund the scheme). The interest and repayment of this borrowing will be through the rental income generated in the HRA. Due to the scale and complexity of a project of this size and the challenging market conditions in relation to material prices and supplies, it is further recommended that delegated authority is given to the Director of Assets and Resources, to approve the use of additional affordable housing s106 commuted sums as mitigation against any fluctuations in costs of up to 15% of the total cost of the scheme. The original report made no provision for contingency on this project which is unusual for a project of this size

BACKGROUND

The Gorse Ride is a community regeneration scheme that will help meet local affordable housing need and maintain a strong community in Gorse Ride. It supports the Wokingham Borough Corporate Delivery Plan (2020 – 2024) priority ‘Right Homes, Right Places’. The scheme also supports the Council’s Housing Strategy for (2020 – 2024) outcome to deliver regeneration programmes of older, poor quality housing stock. The scheme makes a major contribution to the four key priorities within the Housing Strategy to:

- 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
- Enrich people’s lives

The project team is working collaboratively with the Gorse Ride residents to keep the community together to ensure that the project adds to the quality of life and community cohesion of the residents living there. By engaging with the local community throughout the planning and design process it is expected that the new homes will better meet the needs of residents now and in the future. The project is generally well supported by residents and the Tenant and Landlord Improvement Panel, made up of social housing tenants and members, are regularly updated on progress.

Gorse Ride is a residential area in Finchampstead comprising a total of 178 properties, of which 133 are Council owned, socially rented homes and 45 are privately owned properties. The homes were built in the 1970s, with the purpose of providing accommodation for a limited period of time, which was reflected in the build quality. Over the years there have been a number of issues relating to the non-traditional construction, including poor thermal insulation, some structural defects and above and below ground drainage issues. These have all led to poor living conditions and high maintenance liabilities compared with other homes in the Council’s ownership.

The proposed regeneration will transform Gorse Ride through the provision of new, high quality, social rented and shared ownership homes, private market replacement homes and well-designed open spaces.

Previous Executive reports giving approval for the regeneration of Gorse Ride

In March 2017, the Executive agreed the intent to regenerate the Gorse Ride estate and in May 2018 the Executive approved a number of recommendations to progress with the redevelopment of the scheme. This included:

- Approval for the funding model based on a construction cost estimate of £69,500,000 and site assembly cost estimate of £18,700,000, with a total scheme cost of £88,200,000. The report also confirming the allocation of £28,015,683 of affordable housing s106 receipts as well as £1,300,000 from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for statutory compensation payments to tenants. Loddon Homes, was proposed as the appointed landlord, were to meet the remaining funding through borrowing, Homes England grants, sale of a proportion of properties on the open market and rental income.

- Approval of taking a community regeneration approach to the redevelopment with the intention of developing the site whilst keeping the well-established community together through tenant decanting and acquisition of privately owned properties.
- Recommendations for the indicative number of new homes and the proposed tenure mix, proposing a total of totalled 243 homes. Comprising of 136 social rented homes, 12 affordable rented homes, 19 shared ownership homes and 76 homes for private sale.
- The selection of Wokingham Housing Limited (WHL) as the development partner and Loddon Homes Limited as the end landlord for the new homes.

To allow better co-ordination of the decant process which enables residents to move to new homes within the development and keep the community together the construction has been divided into four phases. Phase 1, Phase 2a, Phase 2b, and Phase 2c

Phase 1 - is adjacent to Phase 2 and is now complete and has been transferred to Loddon Homes. Phase 1 properties are being used to decant residents from Phase 2a as part of site assembly/decant process to allow development in that Phase to proceed over the next two years. Phase 1 of Gorse Ride is outside the scope of this report. This report is only concerned with the financing for Phase 2 including Phases 2a, 2b and 2c.

Progress since the Executive report in May 2018

Significant progress has been made with progressing the delivery of the Gorse Ride regeneration project since May 2018. This includes:

- The completion of Phase 1 of the Gorse Ride redevelopment. (Note this part of the development will remain within Loddon Homes as the landlord)
- Successful on-going engagement with the Gorse Ride community including the establishment of a Steering Group. The community has been fully involved with the regeneration process being consulted on overall design and process with regular communications distributed. Most of the residents in the Phase 2a of development have now been successfully moved into new homes
- Granting of full planning consent in February 2021
- In July 2021, the demolition contract for the first phase was awarded. The appointment of construction company for preconstruction services is in progress.

Events that have impacted on the delivery and finances Gorse Ride regeneration project since the May 2018 Executive report

Since May 2018 a number of significant events have taken place that have impacted on the financial modelling and project times lines for the development.

- The Council restructured its housing companies in 2019 by bringing Wokingham Housing Limited and its development services inhouse. This process added some delay to the delivery of the project.
- The construction costs quoted in May 2018 were an estimate based on an outline early-stage design. Since then, significant detailed design and planning work has been undertaken with additional design costs for the project being identified for items such as the mitigation for flooding issues and upgrading environmental sustainability measures.

- Inflation of material costs and shortage of labour and skills triggered by the Covid pandemic have seen escalating construction costs (often in excess of twenty percent) which have increased the anticipated costs for the project.
- Changes to the Homes England funding criteria in December 2020 significantly reduced the amount of grant funding available for social housing on regeneration projects. This has resulted in an estimated decrease of £10 million for the project.

Gorse Ride is a development project of considerable size and as with all projects of this nature it is expected that there will be an element of review at different stages of the project. With planning permission agreed and the decant process coming to an end for the first stage of development, officers have undertaken a review of the project in its entirety to mitigate the events outlined above and to guard against future risks.

BUSINESS CASE

In reviewing the Gorse Ride project, the Council has identified a number of reasonable adjustments to mitigate some of the impacts identified above and ensure that costs are kept to a minimum. The main issues faced by the Gorse Ride project are escalating costs resulting from changes to the original design, reduced access to grant funding and inflating construction costs.

Recommendation 1

The assessment of project costs has identified that the Loddon Homes financial option cannot support the project without significant additional funding. It is therefore recommended to Council that Gorse Ride remains within the HRA (apart from the market sale properties which will transfer into the general fund), rather than moving to Loddon Homes, as indicated in the 2018 Executive report.

Recommendation 2

This report seeks Council approval for the expenditure budget to the total cost of the scheme of £105,601,534, including HRA borrowing of up to £37,546,183.

Table below sets out the indicative costs for the Gorse Ride project

Description of Cost	Value
Site Assembly/Decant process <i>Includes property acquisition, equity loans, home loss payments, relocation costs, CPO fees</i>	£17,500,000
Construction costs for the whole site	£75,157,940
Development Fees, On Costs and Interest	£12,943,594
Total	£105,601,534

The table below sets out the proposed funding structure for the project with the HRA as landlord.

Funding/Income Stream	Value
S106 Commuted Sums (approved in May 2018 Executive report)	£28,015,683
HRA borrowing	£37,546,183
Capital receipts from sales of new properties (market & shared ownership)	£35,174,668
HRA (Home Loss Payments)	£1,300,000
RTB Receipts	£3,565,000
Total	£105,601,534

Viability case for HRA borrowing

Annual interest rate for HRA borrowing on completion of £37,546,183 at 2.0% is £760,000 per annum (Based on current Public Works Loan Board fifty-year rate estimated in January 2022)

The estimated income from rent is anticipated to be between £1,060,800 – £1,300,000 per annum

This provides an estimated surplus of between £300,800 per annum and £540,000 per annum available for allocation within the HRA which will include the ability to repay borrowing

Recommendation 3

Although, the recommendation of locating the project within the HRA does not require the investment of further sums to make it viable, there is a risk of further unforeseen costs to the project, such as continued increase of construction costs. It is therefore recommended that the Council approves delegated authority to the Director of Assets and Resources, in consultation with the Lead Member for Housing and Finance to approve future adjustments to the funding model, including the use of additional s106 receipts for the provision of affordable housing, in response to any future design changes and fluctuations in costs and values up to 15% of the total cost of the project if required.

To further support the project, the Council will continue to identify other funding sources, such as funding streams from Central Government regeneration initiatives and Homes England.

Recommendation 4

To meet the statutory requirements in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, which sets out what costs can be charged to the HRA, Council are asked to agree that any appropriation of land between the HRA and general fund, required to deliver the scheme, will be delegated to the Director of Resources and Assets, in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing and Finance. This will ensure that the HRA is not charged with any revenue costs associated with market sales. The development costs and sales receipts for the market sale properties will be accounted for within the general fund.

Expected Outcomes and Project Times Scales

The recommendations will ensure that the Gorse Ride redevelopment project can proceed at pace in the knowledge that the financing is in place. The project will provide a total of 249 new homes of which 136 will be social rented homes, 49 shared ownership homes and 64 private sale homes equating to 51 additional affordable homes in the Borough. The current poor-quality housing will be replaced with new, well designed, energy efficient, quality homes. The community, who in the main have elected to return to the development, have been involved in the design process and kept fully updated on progress.

Once the Executive has agreed the recommendations the next steps will be to

- Finalise construction costs and get any design amendments approved by the Planning Authority – approximately four months
- Agree the Pre-Construction Services Agreement (PCSA) with the appointed construction company for the later phases of the site – approximately six months
- Apply for new CPO which will take up to twelve months
- Start on site for construction between summer 2022.

It is likely that further reports will be submitted for member approval for decisions on the CPO and development issues at various points in the lifetime of the project

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) 2021/22	£2,500,000	Yes, subject to the approval of Executive of recommendations in this report	See menu of funding steams in main report
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£29,300,000	Yes, subject to the approval of Executive of recommendations in this report	See menu of funding steams in main report
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£32,500.000	Yes, subject to the approval of Executive of recommendations in this report	See menu of funding steams in main report

Other Financial Information

See the main report for current scheme costs and funding model.

Stakeholder Considerations and Consultation

On-going engagement is being undertaken with the local community through the Community Regeneration Senior Specialist with the Community Steering Group

Public Sector Equality Duty

An Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) of the Scheme was undertaken in April 2018. The Council has considered each protected characteristic to identify whether the regeneration of the site or delivery of the scheme could have a detrimental impact of such protected characteristics. The EQIA identified a number of impacts on the protected characteristic and actions to be undertaken to address any negative impacts identified. The EQIA is a live document and was updated in January 2021. It will continue to be updated as the scheme progresses and is implemented to ensure that identified actions are undertaken to mitigate any impacts.

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 regeneration of Gorse Ride is anticipated to reduce energy demand by 17% through energy efficient fabric and building services. The dwellings have high levels of airtightness and thermal mass, and reductions in thermal bridging potential. In response to climate change and rising temperatures, the properties have been designed to have passive solar shading through the balcony design. Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery has also been incorporated into the design to ensure that the properties are well ventilated without losing heat and eliminating the condensation within a building.

Approximately 22.6% of the development's total energy demand will be supplied via a decentralised heating network serving the apartment blocks. Total energy consumption is anticipated to be reduced by 17% through energy efficient design, with 8.3% of the development's anticipated in-use demand being provided by low carbon technologies.

In response to Wokingham's Climate Emergency Action Plan individual properties have electricity only and are heated by internal Air Source Heat Pump, integrated into a hot water cylinder. EV points will be distributed around the development to encourage the use of electric cars.

List of Background Papers

None

Contact Rhian Hayes	Service Place Commissioning
Telephone Tel: 0118 974 6090	Email rhian.hayes@wokingham.gov.uk

TITLE	Delivering the Gorse Ride Regeneration Project - Procurement of Construction Works and Services
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Council on Thursday 24 March 2022
WARD	Finchampstead South;
LEAD OFFICER	Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers
LEAD MEMBER	Executive Member for Finance and Housing - John Kaiser

PURPOSE OF REPORT (INC STRATEGIC OUTCOMES)

To seek agreement for the procurement of the construction services and works for the regeneration of social housing at Gorse Ride, to provide more affordable homes and support a strong community.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Executive recommends Council to:

- 1) approve the procurement business case of the construction works and services as relevant to Gorse Ride Regeneration project;
- 2) give delegated authority to the Director of Resources and Assets and Director of Place and Growth to approve the awarding and execution of the construction works and services as relevant to Gorse Ride Regeneration within the funding envelope and the over-arching business case as presented to the Executive on 17th February 2022.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Gorse Ride regeneration project is a flagship scheme in the Council's response to the housing crisis, providing more and better affordable housing. The project recognises the value a thriving community can make to a successful housing regeneration project, by working collaboratively with the residents to ensure that the sense of community is preserved through a proactive engagement process.

The provision of well-planned and delivered affordable housing has never been more important. Data on a national and local level shows that homelessness is on the increase, with an escalating demand for temporary accommodation not only impacting the Council's future temporary accommodation budgets but having a major effect on those residents whose lives are disrupted by not having a stable and secure home. Meanwhile increasing house prices in Wokingham Borough continue to make home ownership unaffordable for many. The project is generally well supported by residents who along with the Tenant and Landlord Improvement Panel are updated on progress on a regular basis.

In May 2018, the Council's Executive approved the Gorse Ride regeneration project to replace the existing 178 poor quality, primarily Council owned, socially rented homes, with 243 new high quality, well designed and energy efficient homes, set in landscaped green space. If the recommendations within this report are adopted a total 249 new homes will be provided, of which 136 will be social rented homes, 49 shared ownership and 64 private sale homes. This equates to 51 more affordable housing properties than currently provided on the development.

In a report presented to Executive on 17th February 2022 it is recommended that the regenerated properties in Gorse Ride are transferred to the HRA, rather than to the Council's housing company, Loddon Homes, as proposed in the 2018 report, which will allow access to the HRA borrowing capacity without the need for additional affordable housing contributions.

Subject to approval of the report presented to the Executive on 17th February 2022, this report to the Executive seeks agreement to approve the procurement business case of the construction works and services as relevant to Gorse Ride Regeneration and give delegated authority to the Director of Resources and Assets and Director of Place and Growth to approve the awarding and execution of the construction works and services as relevant to Gorse Ride Regeneration within the funding envelope and the overarching business case as presented to the Executive on 17th February 2022.

BACKGROUND

The Gorse Ride is a community regeneration scheme that will help meet local affordable housing need and maintain a strong community in Gorse Ride. It supports the Wokingham Borough Corporate Delivery Plan (2020 – 2024) priority ‘Right Homes, Right Places’. The scheme also supports the Council’s Housing Strategy (2020 – 2024) outcome to deliver regeneration programmes of older, poor quality housing stock. The scheme makes a major contribution to the four key priorities within the Housing Strategy to:

- 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.) Enrich people’s lives

The project team is working collaboratively with the Gorse Ride residents to keep the community together to ensure that the project adds to the quality of life and community cohesion of the residents living there. By engaging with the local community throughout the planning and design process it is expected that the new homes will better meet the needs of residents now and in the future. The project is generally well supported by residents and the Tenant and Landlord Improvement Panel, made up of social housing tenants and councillors, are regularly updated on progress.

Gorse Ride is a residential area in Finchampstead comprising a total of 178 properties, of which 133 are Council owned, socially rented homes and 45 are privately owned properties. The homes were built in the 1970s, with the purpose of providing accommodation for a limited period of time, which was reflected in the build quality. Over the years there have been a number of issues relating to the non-traditional construction, including poor thermal insulation, some structural defects and above and below ground drainage issues. These have all led to poor living conditions and high maintenance liabilities compared with other homes in the Council’s ownership.

The proposed regeneration will transform Gorse Ride through the provision of new, high quality, social rented and shared ownership homes, private market replacement homes and well-designed open spaces.

Previous Executive reports giving approval for the regeneration of Gorse Ride

In March 2017, the Executive agreed the intent to regenerate the Gorse Ride estate and in May 2018 the Executive approved a number of recommendations to progress with the redevelopment of the scheme. This included:

1. Approval for the funding model based on a construction cost estimate of £69,500,000 and site assembly cost estimate of £18,700,000, with a total scheme cost of £88,200,000. The report also confirming the allocation of £28,015,683 of affordable housing s106 receipts as well as £1,300,000 from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for statutory compensation payments to tenants. Loddon Homes, was proposed as the appointed landlord, were to meet the remaining funding through borrowing, Homes England grants, sale of a proportion of properties on the open market and rental income.

2. Approval of taking a community regeneration approach to the redevelopment with the intention of developing the site whilst keeping the well-established community together through tenant decanting and acquisition of privately owned properties.
3. Recommendations for the indicative number of new homes and the proposed tenure mix, proposing a total of 243 homes. Comprising of 136 social rented homes, 12 affordable rented homes, 19 shared ownership homes and 76 homes for private sale.
4. The selection of Wokingham Housing Limited (WHL) as the development partner and Loddon Homes Limited as the end landlord for the new homes.

To allow better co-ordination of the decant process which enables residents to move to new homes within the development and keep the community together the construction has been divided into four phases. Phase 1, Phase 2a, Phase 2b, and Phase 2c

Phase 1 - is adjacent to Phase 2 and is now complete and has been transferred to Loddon Homes. Phase 1 properties are being used to decant residents from Phase 2a as part of site assembly/decant process to allow development in that Phase to proceed over the next two years. Phase 1 of Gorse Ride is outside the scope of this report.

This report is only concerned with the approval of the procurement strategy for the construction works and consultant services associated for the delivery of Phases 2a, 2b and 2c.

Progress since the Executive report in May 2018

Significant progress has been made with progressing the delivery of the Gorse Ride regeneration project since May 2018. This includes:

- The completion of Phase 1 of the Gorse Ride redevelopment. (Note this part of the development will remain within Loddon Homes as the landlord)
- Successful on-going engagement with the Gorse Ride community including the establishment of a Steering Group. The community has been fully involved with the regeneration process being consulted on overall design and process with regular communications distributed. Most of the residents in the Phase 2a of development have now been successfully moved into new homes
- Granting of full planning consent in February 2021
- In July 2021, the demolition contract for the first phase was awarded.

Events that have impacted on the delivery and finances of the Gorse Ride regeneration project since the May 2018 Executive report

Since May 2018 a number of significant events have taken place that have impacted on the financial modelling and project times lines for the development.

- The Council restructured its housing companies in 2019 by bringing Wokingham Housing Limited and its development services inhouse.
- The construction costs quoted in May 2018 were an estimate based on an outline early-stage design. Since then, significant detailed design and planning work has been undertaken with additional design costs for the project being identified for items such as the mitigation for flooding issues and upgrading environmental sustainability measures.

- Inflation of material costs and shortage of labour and skills triggered by the Covid pandemic have seen escalating construction costs (often in excess of twenty percent) which have increased the anticipated costs for the project.
- Changes to the Homes England funding criteria in December 2020 significantly reduced the amount of grant funding available for social housing on regeneration projects. This has resulted in an estimated decrease of £10 million for the project.

Gorse Ride is a development project of considerable size and as with all projects of this nature it is expected that there will be an element of review at different stages of the project. With planning permission agreed and the decant process coming to an end for the first stage of development, officers have undertaken a review of the project in its entirety to mitigate the events outlined above and to guard against future risks.

BUSINESS CASE

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

Type of Procurement	Level 1 Assistant Director & Director Approval	Level 2 Executive Approval	Level 3 Full Council Approval
Goods and Services	£50k – £500k	> £500k	Annual Value >£5m or TAV >£25m (if capital >£15m)
Schedule 3 services	£50k – £663k	> £663k	
Works	£50k – £4,733k	> £4,733k	

A detailed procurement business case, for the delivery of the works and services as relevant and necessary for the scheme, is attached in **Part 2**. As this covers a number of procurement activities yet to be initiated by the Council, this information held is commercial sensitivity and cannot be published yet.

The project is being delivered across multiple phases to align with the phased decant strategy. For each phase, there are broadly 3 areas of procurement activity:

- Site Enabling works / site investigations – the value of this element is anticipated to be less than £4.7m per phase and therefore will not require Full Council approval.
- Professional Services / Consultancy – the value of this element is anticipated to be less than £500k per phase and therefore will not require Full Council approval.
- Construction works – the value of this element is anticipated to be in excess of £15m for each phase and therefore will require Full Council approval in absence of delegated authority.

Options appraisal

For the purpose of the procurement business case, focus is given on the Construction works, as the other elements are below the threshold requiring Council approval and as such, these will be dealt with in accordance with the requirements of section 13 of the Constitution (Procurement and Contracts Rules and Procedures).

Due to the anticipated value of the construction works to be delivered in phase 2a, the contractor must be procured through an approved UK Public Procurement route, either:

- Public procurement – competitive tendering process, advertised internationally with the opportunity made available to all members of the Government Procurement Agreement (GPA), which the UK signed after leaving the European Union.
- Public procurement – call-off from competitively procured third party framework agreement.

Competitive procurement process of that scale, compliant with the requirements of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, would usually take 8-10 months, subject to sufficient resources available across the Council to undertake the relevant research and develop the tender documents.

Third party's framework agreements are procured through robust compliant procedures external to the Council organisations, pre-vetting / pre-qualifying suitable contractors and this way generating a list with qualified, capable, and financially stable contractors, enabling other contracting authorities to access those contractors and sign a contract with the one, who can demonstrate the ability to meet the buyer's requirements. Appointment from an approved framework can either be through a mini-competition process (competition between all contractors on the framework agreement) or by a direct award (award to one of the contractors on the framework agreement, selected by the contracting authority), depending on the framework procedures and the preferred adoption route by the contracting Authority.

Proposed procurement strategy

The strategy adopted to date is to procure the contracts relevant to each construction phase separately and to deliver the scheme in phases, rather than as a whole project, to enable maximum flexibility and efficiency, as well as to use the experience of delivering the previous phase. The benefits of this approach are:

- Reduces risk to WBC of implications of poor performance of appointed Contractor.
- Reduces cost commitment from the outset as only signing up on a phase-by-phase basis.
- Reduces risk of time and costs to WBC in the event the contractor was to cease trading during the scheme.
- Encourages successful contractor to maintain high standards of build quality on site with the potential to continue with the follow-on phases.
- Encourages contractor to maintain cost competitiveness, again with the potential of the follow-on phases.
- Allows experience gained from the first phase to be used to fine-tune the other phases, encourage innovation, and cost savings.

- Allows the successful contractor to continue to work as a team with the WBC team and the residents/wider community, and form trust, which will ensure an excellent outcome is achieved.
- Allows the successful contractor to form relationships and trust with the local residents and residents' groups. This is very important on a project with this type with overall duration of approximately 5 year build for all phases. The contractor will be working in and around a community where some residents will be living next to a building site for a considerable time.

To avoid any further delay, and without compromising the compliancy with the relevant procurement legislation, we recommend the use of an approved construction framework to procure the main contractor over the use of a traditional tender route. This has the benefit of improved appointment timescales which assist with overall project programme:

- As all frameworks have undergone the required robust Public Procurement regs processes there is an element of cost certainty, when it comes to generic items (prelims, contractor profit etc.) – this reduces the Council's risk exposure as these items will be in pre-determined value ranges.
- The framework contractors have been assessed on rigorous criteria, which include value for money, quality, performance and ongoing KPI's on other schemes, social responsibility, community engagement, sustainability, etc. All in accordance with the Procurement Regulations.
- Utilise the direct award mechanism for framework "call-off" process, enabling early engagement with a single contractor to progress the project within the required timescales. This also ensures the scheme design as it currently stands is scrutinised to ensure buildability and should drive costs savings by design tweaks to lessen time on site thus saving Prelims etc.

The appointment will be made in accordance with the framework conditions and with a 2-stage JCT Design & Build contract, as recommended by the Employer's Agent and Designer, as the most appropriate method.

Framework Review

There are a number of nationally recognised construction procurement frameworks that are available to use by Local Authorities, a review has been made of 5 potential frameworks.

- Crown Commercial Services: Construction Works and Associated Services Framework
- Homes England DDP3
- Pagabo
- Scape
- Southern Construction Framework

Following a review of the scope and the terms of these framework agreements, it is recommended that the Crown Commercial Services: Construction Works and Associated Services Framework be used for Phase 2a due to the following considerations:

- Crown Commercial Services: Construction Works and Associated Services Framework (CCS) is owned and operated by Central Government and sponsored by the Cabinet Office. The framework is founded on an Alliance structure to promote collaborative behaviour between Clients, Suppliers and Framework Managers.
- The framework supports the implementation of key government policies and strategies, including building information modelling (BIM), life cycle costing, prompt payment, project bank accounts, early contractor involvement and social value.
- The framework delivers a wide range of major and minor building and civil engineering projects for central government and the wider public sector. The flexible contract structure is designed to provide solutions for varying customer requirements.
- In 2019 CCS undertook a full OJEU European procurement exercise (pre-Brexit) to establish a Framework to deliver public sector building and civil engineering projects ranging in value from £0 to £80m+. The framework is arranged in to 11 Lots of varying levels of complexity, this includes general construction and specialist market areas: housing, high-rise, maritime, airfields, demolition/decommissioning and construction management.
- Individual lots are divided into regional sub-lots appropriate to the market sector and value range. All commonly used procurement routes, tendering methodologies, payment arrangements and standard forms of contract are available through the framework. There are standard common government “boiler plate” clauses included for things such as GDPR and intellectual property rights. The framework runs for a period of 7 years. There are 135 appointed suppliers across the 11 Lots.
- By accessing the Framework, public bodies can contract directly with a selected contractor/supplier rather than having to run lengthy and expensive procurement exercises each time a Building or Civil project is undertaken.
- During 2019/20 the CCS framework helped 18,000 Public and 3rd Sector customers achieve commercial benefits totaling over £1 billion of public money by using the framework.
- The CCS framework is free to use by Local Authorities and does not charge a fee, all other frameworks that are listed above and assessed were found to be commercially run companies that charge a wide range of fees dependant on the project value.

The CCS framework also allows the client to choose the Contract that is used for the execution of the works, something that some of the others do not. WBC on other construction projects has preferred to use the Joint Contracts Tribunal (JCT) suite of construction contracts as they have found to be robust, and the Council has excellent knowledge in operating them; this is very important when managing a project of this scale and value.

Analysis of the Business Strategy

The proposed procurement strategy is beneficial to the Council as it improves the delivery process, provides greater flexibility and minimises the timescales to appoint a contractor.

It also provides resilience and the ability to react to fluctuations within the construction market as recently experienced due to external factors such as Brexit, COVID 19 and fluctuations within the energy market prices.

Risks

If delegated approval is granted, risks will be managed and mitigated by

- Continuing to engage with the residents and other key stakeholders to ensure a collective buy-in to all key decisions made
- Increasing ability to continue to make progress seamlessly across work streams and phases, to tie in with the progress of decanting process
- Providing ability to retain key relationships throughout the progress of the works
- Ensuring adherence to the strategy as approved throughout the delivery process by a robust governance arrangement

Recommendation

The Executive is therefore recommended to approve the procurement business case of the construction works and services as relevant to Gorse Ride Regeneration and to give delegated authority to the Director of Resources and Assets and Director of Place and Growth to approve the awarding and execution of the construction works and services as relevant to Gorse Ride Regeneration within the funding envelope and the overarching business case as presented to the Executive on 17th February 2022.

Expected Outcomes and Project Times Scales

The recommendations will ensure that the Gorse Ride redevelopment project can proceed at pace in the knowledge that the procurement strategy is approved. The project will provide a total of 249 new homes of which 136 will be social rented homes, 49 shared ownership homes and 64 private sale homes equating to 51 additional affordable homes in the Borough. The current poor-quality housing will be replaced with new, well designed, energy efficient, quality homes. The community, who in the main have elected to return to the development, have been involved in the design process and kept fully updated on progress.

Subject to the Executive agreeing the recommendations, the next steps will be to

- Conclude the procurement of the Works contract for Phase 2a
- Agree the Pre-Construction Services Agreement (PCSA) with the appointed construction company for the later phases of the site
- Finalise construction contracts for subsequent phases
- Apply for a new CPO which will take up to twelve months as detailed in the report which will be presented to the Executive on the 31st March 2022
- New build construction works anticipated to commence around Summer 2022 for the first phase

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)	£2,500,000	Yes, subject to the approval of Executive of recommendations in this report	See menu of funding steams in the Executive report dated 17 th February 2022
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£29,300,000	Yes, subject to the approval of Executive of recommendations in this report	See menu of funding steams in the Executive report dated 17 th February 2022
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£32,500,000	Yes, subject to the approval of Executive of recommendations in this report	See menu of funding steams in the Executive report dated 17 th February 2022

Other Financial Information

See the report dated 17.02.2022 for current scheme costs.

Stakeholder Considerations and Consultation

On-going engagement is being undertaken with the local community through the Community Regeneration Senior Specialist with the Community Steering Group and they are duly involved in the overall delivery process and any key decisions made.

Public Sector Equality Duty

An Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) of the scheme was undertaken in April 2018. The Council has considered each protected characteristic to identify whether the regeneration of the site or delivery of the scheme could have a detrimental impact of such protected characteristics. The EQIA identified a number of impacts on the protected characteristic and actions to be undertaken to address any negative impacts identified. The EQIA is a live document and was updated in January 2021. It will continue to be updated as the scheme progresses and is implemented to ensure that identified actions are undertaken to mitigate any impacts.

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 regeneration of Gorse Ride is anticipated to reduce energy demand by 17% through energy efficient fabric and building services. The proposed dwellings have high levels of airtightness and thermal mass, and reductions in thermal bridging potential. In response to climate change and rising temperatures, the properties have been designed to have passive solar shading through the balcony design. Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery has also been incorporated into the design to ensure that the properties

are well ventilated without losing heat and eliminating the condensation within a building.

An estimated 22.6% of the development's total energy demand will be supplied via a decentralised heating network serving the apartment blocks. Total energy consumption is anticipated to be reduced by 17% through energy efficient design, with 8.3% of the development's anticipated in-use demand being provided by low carbon technologies.

In response to Wokingham's Climate Emergency Action Plan individual properties have electricity only and are heated by internal Air Source Heat Pump, integrated into a hot water cylinder. EV charging points will be distributed around the development to encourage the use of electric cars.

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2

The report in Part 2 covers a number of procurement activities yet to be initiated by the Council, this information held is commercial sensitivity and cannot be published yet. As such therefore the information in Part 2 is exempt under paragraphs 1 and 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

List of Background Papers

Part 2 – Procurement Business Case
Executive Report dated 17th February 2022

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

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TITLE	Electoral Review – Phase 1 Submission
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Council on 24 March 2022
WARD	None Specific
LEAD OFFICER	Andrew Moulton, Assistant Director Governance

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

Effective democratic representation through the submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) of the Council's preferred number of councillors from May 2024 onwards.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council agrees the phase 1 submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (as set out in Appendix A to the report) on the preferred number of Councillors of 54, as recommended by the Electoral Review Working Group at its meeting of 8 March 2022.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The LGBCE is undertaking a review of the electoral arrangements in Wokingham Borough. Changes will come into effect from May 2024. The objective of the review is to ensure that the actual and projected (to 2028) increases in the electorate are reflected in the numbers of Councillors from May 2024. This is essential to ensure that the number of electors is closely aligned across all wards in the Borough. This will enable each vote to have equal weight and is the cornerstone of the democratic system.

The review process has two phases. Phase 1, which is the subject of the report, is to identify the number of Councillors that are required for the effective functioning of the Council and the effective representation of residents. The submission to LGBCE is required by 25 March 2022.

Phase 2 will decide on the ward boundaries including their names. Phase 2 will be broken down into an initial consultation where interested parties (including the Council) can submit warding patterns to the LGBCE which will take place from July to October 2022 with a further consultation on the LGBCE's final proposals from January to March 2023.

The current population of the Borough in 2020 as per the Office of National Statistics (ONS) is 173,045. The ONS estimates the 2028 population at 182,846. An Electoral Review Working Group (ERWG) has examined four options on the future size of the Council. The options consider a range of factors including representational, strategic leadership and accountability, community leadership, Councillor workload, and costs. Having reviewed the factual evidence compiled by officers, the methodology for developing options, and the relative merits of each option, the cross-party ERWG unanimously agreed at its meeting of 8 March 2022 that Option C (54 Councillors) is recommended to Council as the Council's submission to the LGBCE.

Background

1. Introduction

- 1.1 At its meeting of 17 February 2022, Council received an update on the LGBCE review and agreed to set up a cross-party Electoral Review Working Group (ERWG) to consider and recommend to Council an agreed position on the number of councillors required from May 2024.
- 1.2 The ERWG held two meetings to consider the evidence and produce the submission. At its meeting on the 28 February the ERWG decided that all options should be divisible by three to ensure compatibility with election by thirds. At its meeting on the 8 March it unanimously approved the recommendation to Council that the appropriate Council size, based on the evidence examined, was 54 Members.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 established the LGBCE. The LGBCE has a responsibility to undertake reviews of the electoral arrangements of local authorities: the number of councillors, the names, number and boundaries of wards, and the number of councillors to be elected to each. The LGBCE is responsible for putting any changes to electoral arrangements into effect by submitting a Statutory Instrument for consideration by Parliament.
- 2.2 The LGBCE may make recommendations on:
 - The total number of councillors to be elected to the Council;
 - The number of wards within an authority;
 - The number of councillors to be elected for each ward;
 - The name of the wards.
- 2.3 In carrying out a review, the LGBCE is required to have regard to:
 - The need to secure equality of representation (i.e. the ratio of electors to councillors in each ward is, as nearly as possible, the same);
 - The need to reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
 - The need to secure effective and convenient local government.

3. The review timetable

- 3.1 The indicative timetable is shown below:-

Stage/Action	Timescale
Preliminary Period Informal dialogue with local authority. Focus on gathering preliminary information including electorate forecasts and other electoral data. Commissioner-level involvement in briefing group leaders on issue of Council size. Meetings also held with officers, group leaders, and members.	June 2021 to February 2022

<p>Phase 1 - Council size submission Deadline for submission by Council of proposals on Council size for the Commission to consider.</p>	25 March 2022
<p>Phase 1 - Council size decision LGBCE analyses submissions from local authority and/or political groups on Council size and takes a “minded to” decision on Council size.</p>	25 March to July 2022
<p><u>Formal start of Review</u> Consultation on future warding arrangements LGBCE publishes its initial conclusions on Council size. General invitation to submit warding proposals based on LGBCE’s conclusions on Council size.</p>	July to October 2022
<p>Development of draft recommendations Analysis of all representations received. LGBCE reaches conclusions on its draft recommendations.</p>	November to December 2022
<p>Consultation on draft recommendations Publication by LGBCE of draft recommendations and public consultation on them.</p>	January to March 2023
<p>Final recommendations Analysis of all representations received. LGBCE reaches conclusions on its final recommendations and publishes.</p>	June 2023
<p>Order made Statutory Instrument approved.</p>	Average is likely to be 4 months from being laid i.e. November 2023
<p>New arrangements come into place for elections on</p>	2 May 2024

4. Phase 1 Submission - Options Appraisal

4.1. The Electoral Review Working Group met on 28 February and 8 March to consider the relevant factors that determine council size as set out by the LGBCE.

4.2. The factors are:

- Residents per Councillor and Electors per Councillor (“representational load”)
- Democratic arrangements
- Councillor workload
- Cost

- 4.3. To determine “residents per Councillor,” Officers have calculated the forecast electorate in 2028 (see section 5 below) and benchmarked population against other local authorities in Berkshire and the Council’s CIPFA statistical “Nearest Neighbours.” Analysis of this benchmarking gives a range between 47 and 57 Councillors.
- 4.4. The Electorate per Councillor figure for WBC is 2,436 against a Berkshire Average of 2,496 and 3,100 against CIPFA nearest statistical neighbours. This shows that Wokingham Borough is closely aligned with other Berkshire authorities but less than our statistical neighbours. However, it is important to note that our statistical neighbours have a broad range of populations (29,990-377,981) and number of councillors (27-98). Using the Berkshire average, indicates a Council size of 53. However, the Borough is growing rapidly with electorate growth projected to be at least an additional 2.5% by 2028. Including this projected electorate growth indicates a Council size of 54.
- 4.5. The second factor requires the Council to consider its democratic arrangements including Executive, Scrutiny, other Committee, and representation on outside bodies. Officers have calculated the number of Councillors required to operate the current democratic arrangements giving a range between 48 and 54 Councillors. Democratic Services modelling showed that, in order to maintain effective governance at a reduced number of councillors, Committees would need to be reduced in size.
- 4.6. Councillor workload is evidenced through a survey of all Councillors that took place between 24 February and 3 March. 70% of Councillors responded to the survey. The results supported a Council size of 54 Members. The survey showed that currently Councillors are significantly older than the population they represent. 73% were 55 or over. 41% of Councillors are retired. Although there is significant variation in the hours worked per month amongst Councillors, the average was 74 hours per month. Councillors are deeply embedded in their communities playing a number of roles beyond that of Borough Councillors. 41% are also Town or Parish Councillors. They are active participants in their communities being school governors, charity trustees, members of the fire authority, local hospital, members of fostering panels and attend Neighbourhood Action Groups.
- 4.7. In the survey, Councillors expressed concern about increases in workload that would arise if there was a reduction in the numbers of Councillors.
- 4.8. The costs have been modelled on Members Allowances.
- 4.9. The Council has considered four options in a detailed study of the issues on the future size of the Council.
- 4.10. The four options are outlined below:
 - Option A: Reduction by six Councillors to a Council size of 48
 - Option B: Reduction by three Councillors to a Council size of 51
 - Option C: Retain the same number of Councillors, Council size of 54
 - Option D: Increase by 3 to a Council size of 57

4.11. While acknowledging that each authority is as unique as the communities that it serves, in reviewing each of these factors, the Council has benchmarked with other local authorities.

	Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D
Council Size	48	51	54	57
Representational load	Highest in Berkshire	Highest in Berkshire	Average in 2028	Current ratio retained in 2028
CIPFA Nearest Neighbours	Average	Above average	Above average	Well above average
Effective Governance	Would require a reduction in membership of 4 Committees	Would require a reduction in membership of 3 Committees	Proven effective Committee Governance	Proven effective Committee Governance
Councillor Workload	Increased workload	Increased workload	Slight increase in workload due to electorate increase	Same workload
Costs	Negligible savings	Negligible savings	Same	Increase

4.12. The ERWG expressed reservations about reducing the number of Councillors as it would negatively impact the ability to attract people from all parts of the community to stand for election, including those in full time employment, or with caring responsibilities. A reduction in the numbers of Councillors, and subsequent increase in the workload, would limit the Council to represent the communities it serves.

4.13. The cross- party working group was also keen to ensure that Councillors continue to play an active role in their communities recognising that Councillors who are engaged in other community leadership roles can help Councillors to represent their communities more effectively. The group also thinks that Councillors should have capacity to take up roles on outside bodies to enable the Council to have a strong voice locally, regionally and nationally.

4.14. Having reviewed the options the Electoral Review Working Group unanimously recommends that Council agrees Option C as the proposal to the LGBCE.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

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

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

There are no other financial implications associated with this report.

List of Background Papers

None

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Date 9 March 2022	Version No. 4

Wokingham Borough Council: Full Council March 2022

Council Size Submission: Template

Wokingham Borough Council

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How to Make a Submission

It is recommended that submissions on future governance arrangements and council size follow the guidance provided and use the format below as a template. Submissions should be treated as an opportunity to focus on the future needs of the council and not simply describe the current arrangements. **Submissions should also demonstrate that alternative council sizes have been considered in drawing up the proposal and why you have discounted them.**

The template allows respondents to enter comments directly under each heading. It is not recommended that responses be unduly long; as a guide, it is anticipated that a 15 to 20-page document using this template should suffice. Individual section length may vary depending on the issues to be explained. Where internal documents are referred to URLs should be provided, rather than the document itself. It is also recommended that a table is included that highlights the key paragraphs for the Commission's attention.

'Good' submissions, i.e. those that are considered to be most robust and persuasive, combine the following *key success components* (as set out in the guidance that accompanies this template):

- Clarity on objectives
- A straightforward and evidence-led style
- An understanding of local place and communities
- An understanding of councillors' roles and responsibilities

About You

Full Council March 2022

The Context for your proposal

Your submission gives you the opportunity to examine how you wish to organise and run the council for the next 15 - 20 years. **The consideration of future governance arrangements and council size should be set in the wider local and national policy context.** The Commission expects you to challenge your current arrangements and determine the most appropriate arrangements going forward. In providing context for your submission below, please demonstrate that you have considered the following issues.

- When did your Council last change/reorganise its internal governance arrangements and what impact on effectiveness did that activity have?
- To what extent has transference of strategic and/or service functions impacted on the effectiveness of service delivery and the ability of the Council to focus on its remaining functions?
- Have any governance or capacity issues been raised by any Inspectorate or similar?
- What influence will local and national policy trends likely have on the Council as an institution?
- What impact on the Council's effectiveness will your council size proposal have?

Wokingham Borough is a great place to live and work and as a consequence is growing and will continue to grow into the future. In this context, the Council's approach to its governance arrangements is one of evolution to respond to the changes in the community it serves. The Council formally reviewed our Executive governance arrangements in 2013.

In response to the transfer of Public Health responsibilities, the Council introduced a Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and a Health and Wellbeing Board.

The recent LGA peer review has found that our governance arrangements are robust but highlighted that the Overview and Scrutiny function could be improved. We are reviewing our O&S function.

There is an ongoing consultation on the electoral cycle. In order to ensure that the Council size is appropriate for either outcome the Council has only considered Council sizes that are divisible by three.

Local Authority Profile

Please provide a short description of the authority and its setting, in particular the local geography, demographics and community characteristics. This should set the scene for the Commission and give it a greater understanding of any current issues. The description should cover all of the following:

- Brief outline of area - are there any notable geographic constraints for example that may affect the review?
- Rural or urban - what are the characteristics of the authority?
- Demographic pressures - such as distinctive age profiles, migrant or transient populations, is there any large growth anticipated?
- Community characteristics – is there presence of “hidden” or otherwise complex deprivation?
- Are there any other constraints, challenges, issues or changes ahead?

Further to providing a description, the Commission will be looking for a submission that demonstrates an understanding of place and communities by putting forth arguments on council size based upon local evidence and insight. For example, how does local geography, demographics and community characteristics impact on councillor casework, workload and community engagement?

Wokingham Borough is a unitary authority in the South East of England. It is situated 30 miles west of London in central Berkshire and has good transport links to the M4 and M3 motorways, Cross Rail, and the Waterloo/Reading line.

The Borough is semi-rural with three large established towns; Wokingham, Woodley and Earley. The Borough has experienced significant housing growth in recent years and this is projected to continue with an additional 4,815 completions by 2028. (Source 2021 5 Year Housing Land Supply)

Development has been focused in four Strategic Development Locations (SDL's). These areas have been in North Wokingham, South Wokingham, Shinfield and Arborfield. The Council has focused on ensuring that these are strong communities not just houses.

The Borough is bounded in the North and North East of the Borough by the river Thames and is bisected East to West by the M4 motorway and the A329M runs through the centre of the Borough. There is a substantial area of green belt in the north of the Borough.

The Council is the largest Unitary Authority in Berkshire with elections by thirds. The total adult population forecast by the ONS projects for the Borough in 2028 is 141,358. The Borough is fully parished (with 17 town and parish councils). The Council currently has 54 Councillors who are elected from 25 wards. There is a mix of three, two and one-member wards. The Conservative group holds a majority of seats (31) and forms the administration. Other seats are held as follows; Liberal Democrat (18), Labour (2), Independent Group (2) and one vacancy.

The ONS forecasts that the Borough's total population will grow from 173,045 in 2020 to 182,846 in 2028. A high proportion (30%) of Wokingham residents are aged between 35-54 but there are fewer young adults. People are living longer and the forecast is for a higher proportion of older residents living in the Borough in future. The number of adults with a learning disability is higher than in other parts of the country. Wokingham is 87% White. While 92% of residents over 50 are white the 20-24 year old population is 31% from ethnic minorities.

The current Councillor demographic is older than the population (73% of Councillors are 55+) and contains a higher proportion of retired people (41% of Councillors are retired). The Council is engaging the community to ensure that Council candidates represent the diversity of the community.

A comparison of relevant electoral data showing Wokingham against other Local Authorities in Berkshire and its CIPFA Statistical Nearest Neighbours is attached as Appendix A to this Submission.

Council Size

The Commission believes that councillors have three broad aspects to their role. These are categorised as: **Strategic Leadership, Accountability (Scrutiny, Regulatory and Partnerships), and Community Leadership**. Submissions should address each of these in turn and provide supporting evidence. Prompts in the boxes below should help shape responses.

Strategic Leadership

Respondents should provide the Commission with details as to how elected members will provide strategic leadership for the authority. Responses should also indicate how many members will be required for this role and why this is justified. **Responses should demonstrate that alternative council sizes have been explored.**

Topic		
Governance Model	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>What governance model will your authority operate? e.g. Committee System, Executive or other?</i> ➤ <i>The Cabinet model, for example, usually requires 6 to 10 members. How many members will you require?</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>If the authority runs a Committee system, we want to understand why the number and size of the committees you propose represents the most appropriate for the authority.</i> ➤ <i>By what process does the council aim to formulate strategic and operational policies? How will members in executive, executive support and/or scrutiny positions be involved? What particular demands will this make of them?</i> ➤ <i>Whichever governance model you currently operate, a simple assertion that you want to keep the current structure does not in itself, provide an explanation of why that structure best meets the needs of the council and your communities.</i>
Analysis	<p>Wokingham Borough Council has been operating a Leader and Cabinet (Executive) style of governance since 2001, in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000.</p> <p>Full Council</p> <p>All 54 elected Councillors are expected to attend full Council meetings. Meetings are usually held in January, February, March, May, July, September and November. The February meeting is reserved for consideration of the budget and associated financial reports and the May meeting reserved for Annual Council.</p> <p>The main role of full Council is to approve the annual budget and the policies that make up the Council's Policy Framework as well as agreeing changes to the Council's Constitution.</p> <p>At the Annual Council meeting the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are appointed for the forthcoming Municipal Year and Councillors are appointed to committees, panels, working groups etc and outside bodies. In addition, the Leader of Council will be appointed (if applicable) and the Leader will advise the names of those Councillors of the Executive and their respective portfolios.</p> <p>Subject to prior notification Councillors and Councillors of the public can ask questions of Executive Councillors and Chairs of Committees etc and can present petitions.</p> <p>There is also a Special Council Executive Committee which deals with matters of urgency and has delegated authority to exercise all the powers and duties of Council. The Committee comprises of six Councillors,</p>

		including the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. The Committee meets as and when required.
Portfolios	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>How many portfolios will there be?</i> ➤ <i>What will the role of a portfolio holder be?</i> ➤ <i>Will this be a full-time position?</i> ➤ <i>Will decisions be delegated to portfolio holders? Or will the executive/mayor take decisions?</i>
	Analysis	<p>The Executive, which usually meets nine times per year, is a single party committee comprising up to 10 Councillors (including the Leader) from the majority party (Conservative) and is chaired by the Leader of Council.</p> <p>The role of the Executive is to make key decisions of the Council within the policy and budget framework of the Council. Decision making is usually undertaken collectively by the Executive, although there are some matters which have been delegated to individual Executive Councillors.</p> <p>Being an Executive Member represents a significant time commitment. During 2021 13 Executive meetings were held, including 5 Extraordinary meetings. There were 64 Executive decisions considered at these meetings and 22 Individual Executive Member decisions taken during this year. In addition, Executive Councillors have regular briefing meetings with the Council's senior leadership team (CLT) and meetings with the Directors and senior staff responsible for services within their portfolios. From the questionnaire responses the average time commitment of an Executive Member was shown to be at least 13 hours a week on top of their role as a Councillor.</p> <p>Executive Councillors liaise with partners and represent the Council externally on several organisations/joint committees/boards and outside bodies. Executive Councillors also attend overview and scrutiny meetings to be held to account for their actions and decisions. These requirements are in addition to their role as a ward councillor.</p> <p>The Executive currently comprises of the Leader and nine Executive Councillors with the following portfolios:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deputy Leader of the Council, Finance and Housing • Business and Economic Development • Children's Services • Environment and Leisure • Health and Wellbeing and Adult Services • Highways and Transport

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbourhood and Communities • Planning and Enforcement • Resident Services, Communications and Emissions <p>In addition, four Deputy Executive Councillors are appointed to assist the Executive by focusing on particular tasks and projects. In accordance with legislation Deputy Executive Councillors do not have any formal decision-making powers. They are able to attend Executive Councillors and speak or answer questions on behalf of an absent Executive Member. Currently there are four Deputy Executive Councillors who are leading on the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equalities, Poverty, the Arts and Climate Emergency • Insight and Change • Health, Wellbeing and Adult Services • Environment and Communities <p>There are currently no committees or sub-committees of the Executive.</p> <p>Given the wide range of services and responsibilities covered by the Council it is believed to be important that each main area has a dedicated Executive Member overseeing the work of that area. It is therefore felt that the number of Executive Councillors should not be reduced but remain at 9 plus the Leader</p>
Delegated Responsibilities	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>What responsibilities will be delegated to officers or committees?</i> ➤ <i>How many councillors will be involved in taking major decisions?</i>
	Analysis	<p>There is an Officer Scheme of Delegation which is set out in Chapter 11.3 of the Constitution. The majority of decisions, particularly operational matters, are made by officers under delegated powers.</p> <p>Council delegates several responsibilities to Committees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit • Standards • Licensing and Appeals • Planning • Overview and Scrutiny • Personnel Board • Health and Wellbeing Board <p>More details on these committees are given below.</p> <p>Major decisions.</p>

		All councillors are involved in agreeing the policy framework and all items include in it and in setting the budget at meetings of the full Council. They support policy development at overview and scrutiny. Attendance at Council and Committee meetings is consistently high.
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Accountability

Give the Commission details as to how the authority and its decision makers and partners will be held to account. The Commission is interested in both the internal and external dimensions of this role. **Responses should demonstrate that alternative council sizes have been explored.**

Topic	
Internal Scrutiny	The scrutiny function of authorities has changed considerably. Some use theme or task-and-finish groups, for example, and others have a committee system. Scrutiny arrangements may also be affected by the officer support available.
<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>How will decision makers be held to account?</i> ➤ <i>How many committees will be required? And what will their functions be?</i> ➤ <i>How many task and finish groups will there be? And what will their functions be? What time commitment will be involved for members? And how often will meetings take place?</i> ➤ <i>How many members will be required to fulfil these positions?</i> ➤ <i>Explain why you have increased, decreased, or not changed the number of scrutiny committees in the authority.</i> ➤ <i>Explain the reasoning behind the number of members per committee in terms of adding value.</i>
Analysis	<p>The role of Overview and Scrutiny is to provide independent ‘critical friend’ challenge and to work with the Council’s Executive and other public service providers for the benefit of the public.</p> <p>Wokingham Borough Council currently has an Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee which comprises of 12 non-Executive Councillors and meets approximately 8 times per year. The Management Committee and the other three Overview and Scrutiny Committees also establish, as required, time limited task and finish groups to undertake reviews on particular matters. Currently there is only one task and finish group in existence, the Tree and Biodiversity Task and Finish Group which is due to finalise its report during this municipal year.</p> <p>During 2021 Overview and Scrutiny undertook two in-depth reviews: one relating to Climate Emergency and the other on the Council’s response to the Covid-19 Pandemic.</p>

The Management Committee is responsible for agreeing the annual work programmes for itself and the other three Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

The other three Overview and Scrutiny Committees are:

- Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committees – consists of 8 Councillors and meets approximately 5 times per year
- Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee – consists of 10 Councillors and meets approximately and meets approximately 6 times per year
- Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee – consists of 8 Councillors and meets approximately 8 times per year. This Committee takes on the role of scrutinising the forthcoming budget each year, which usually necessitates the holding of additional meetings.

The Chairman and Vice Chairman of each of the above Committees are also Councillors of the Management Committee. Given that Executive Councillors and Councillors of the Audit Committee cannot sit on any Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Deputy Executive Councillors cannot sit on the Management Committee or the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that reviews matters relating to the areas they are responsible for it is often difficult to find sufficient Councillors to take up all the Overview and Scrutiny seats, including substitute roles.

The Democratic Services' Team is relatively small therefore although the Council has a Statutory Scrutiny Officer that person also covers other areas of work within the Team as do the Clerks who service the three Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

From the questionnaire responses the average time commitment of Councillors of O&S was an additional 7 hours a week

The LGA peer review found that the Council can strengthen Overview and Scrutiny however the Council does not believe that this will be achieved by reducing the number of Councillors involved in O&S. Benchmarking data relating to the O&S function across Berkshire can be found at Appendix C. This shows that WBC are broadly in line in terms of structure and committee composition. The Council does not feel that a reduced Councillorship would enable it to improve O&S arrangements in the way that that it wishes.

Statutory Function	This includes planning, licencing and any other regulatory responsibilities. Consider under each of the headings the extent to which decisions will be delegated to officers. How many members will be required to fulfil the statutory requirements of the council?
Planning	<p>Key lines of explanation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>What proportion of planning applications will be determined by members?</i> ➤ <i>Has this changed in the last few years? And are further changes anticipated?</i> ➤ <i>Will there be area planning committees? Or a single council-wide committee?</i> ➤ <i>Will executive members serve on the planning committees?</i> ➤ <i>What will be the time commitment to the planning committee for members?</i>
	<p>Wokingham Borough Council has one Planning Committee which carries out functions relating to town and country planning (including the determination of planning applications), highways and public rights of way which have not been delegated to Officers. For political balance reasons the Planning Committee has been increased from 9-11 Councillors and meets on a monthly basis. Executive Councillors can sit on the Planning Committee and there are two who do so this Municipal Year.</p> <p>Most planning applications are delegated to Officers for decision with only 2.8% of planning applications received by the Council being determined by the Planning Committee in 2021. This figure has been consistent over several years and there are currently no plans to change the delegation arrangements.</p> <p>In addition to attending Committee meetings Councillors of the Planning Committee also attend site visits as required and often have significant reports and plans to review prior to every meeting. The average time spent by Councillors was 7 hours per week.</p> <p>The current Councillorship is at the lower end of the Berkshire benchmarks as can be seen in Appendix C. The Councillorship of the Planning Committee could be reduced back to 9, subject to political balance requirements, which might shorten the length of meetings, however it would be unlikely to reduce the workload of its Councillors.</p> <p>There is also a Commons Registrations Committee which comprises the same membership as the Planning Committee and only meets as and when required. This Committee has not met since 2018.</p> <p>Due to the geography of the Borough area planning committees would not be suitable. There is no natural north/south or east/west split in the Borough. To reflect the</p>

		communities that we have at least 3 sub-committees would be required and this would result in more Councillors being required.
Licensing	Key lines of explanation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>How many licencing panels will the council have in the average year?</i> ➤ <i>And what will be the time commitment for members?</i> ➤ <i>Will there be standing licencing panels, or will they be ad-hoc?</i> ➤ <i>Will there be core members and regular attendees, or will different members serve on them?</i>
	Analysis	<p>The Licensing and Appeals Committee, which comprises of 15 Councillors and meets four times per year, is responsible for carrying out functions relating to licensing and registration as set out in the relevant legislation.</p> <p>In addition, there is a Licensing and Appeals Hearings Sub-Committee which determines hearings and appeals held under the Licensing Act 2003 and other relevant legislation. The Sub-Committee consists of three Councillors drawn from the Licensing and Appeals Committee and meets as and when required. In 2021 the Hearings Sub-Committee only met on three occasions, in 2020 on one occasion and in 2019 four occasions.</p> <p>The Committee was set up in 2003 and it was agreed at that time that given the number of licensing hearings envisaged that it would be prudent to have 15 Councillors on the Committee.</p>
Other Regulatory Bodies	Key lines of explanation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>What will they be, and how many members will they require?</i> ➤ <i>Explain the number and membership of your Regulatory Committees with respect to greater delegation to officers.</i>
	Analysis	<p>Audit Committee</p> <p>The Audit Committee provides independent assurance over the governance, risk management and the systems of internal control operating within the Council. It oversees the Council's financial reporting processes and approves the Council's financial statements and the Annual Governance Statement.</p> <p>The Audit Committee consists of seven non-Executive Councillors and meets five times per year.</p> <p>The Council has considered amalgamating Audit with the Standards Committee but feel that this would dilute the critical role both committees play in ensuring good governance.</p> <p>Standards Committee</p> <p>The Standards Committee's role is to promote high standards of behaviour amongst Councillors from both the Borough Council and Town and Parish Councils. In addition, it monitors the operation of various codes of conduct and</p>

		<p>procedures, including the Councillors' and Officers' Codes of Conduct.</p> <p>The Standards Committee currently consists of seven Council Councillors and three co-opted non-voting Town and Parish Councillors and is scheduled to meet four times a year.</p> <p>Personnel Board</p> <p>Personnel Board is responsible for discharging the Council's functions relating to the appointment, dismissal or disciplinary action in respect of certain Council Officers and considers major reorganisations within the Council as well as determining certain requests for early retirement or redundancy.</p> <p>Personnel Board consists of seven Councillors and meets as and when required. 16 substitutes are also appointed to the Board who can substitute for Board Councillors when the appointment, dismissal or disciplinary action of an Officer is being considered. New processes for the appointment of permanent Assistant Directors, which are currently under consideration, are likely to increase the workload and number of meetings that Councillors of the Board are required to attend.</p> <p>Wokingham Borough Wellbeing Board</p> <p>The Wellbeing Board identifies the current and future social care and health needs of the Borough to provide a framework for the commissioning of health and social care services as well as driving integrated working between commissioners of health services, Public Health and social care services, for the purposes of advancing the health and wellbeing of Wokingham Borough residents.</p> <p>The Wellbeing Board consists of four Council Councillors and a number of outside representatives and meets on a monthly basis. Half of these meetings are formal meetings of the Board and half are informal meetings.</p>
External Partnerships	<p>Service delivery has changed for councils over time, and many authorities now have a range of delivery partners to work with and hold to account.</p>	
<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Will council members serve on decision-making partnerships, sub-regional, regional or national bodies? In doing so, are they able to take decisions/make commitments on behalf of the council?</i> ➤ <i>How many councillors will be involved in this activity? And what is their expected workload? What proportion of this work is undertaken by portfolio holders?</i> ➤ <i>What other external bodies will members be involved in? And what is the anticipated workload?</i> 	

Analysis	<p>Councillors provide community leadership in a number of ways. The Council appoints to the following Panels/Working Groups/Joint Committees and various other bodies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption Panel – 1 Member • Adopt Thames Valley Regional Adoption Agency Governance Board – 1 Member • Berkshire Local Transport Body – 1 Member and 1 substitute • Borough Parish Liaison Forum – 5 Councillors and 3 substitutes • Community Safety Partnership – 2 Councillors • Constitution Review Working Group – 4 Councillors • Fostering Panel – 1 Member • Highwood Management Conference – 2 Councillors • Joint Public Protection Committee – 2 Councillors and 1 substitute • Joint Waste Disposal Board – 2 Councillors • Schools Forum - 1 Member • Secure Accommodation Panel – 1 Member plus substitutes • Tenant and Landlord Improvement Panel – 4 Councillors • Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel – 1 Member and 1 substitute • Wokingham Learning Disability Partnership – 1 Member <p>Councillors also sit on outside bodies. The Council appoints 46 Councillors to 34 outside bodies and each Member appointed is expected to report back to the Council on an annual basis on the activity of that body. WBC is keen to maintain and enhance its role in leading the community and would not want to reduce the level of Member involvement.</p> <p>39% of those appointed to outside bodies are Executive Councillors. Executive Councillors also sit on sub regional and regional partnerships</p> <p>Currently 89% of the appointments are Councillors of the Conservative Group and 11% are Councillors from the Opposition Groups.</p> <p>The Council owns four local authority owned Housing companies where Councillors sit on the boards as Non-Executive Directors. Three Councillors sit on the Board of WBC (Holdings) Limited which is the parent company that provides strategic direction and performance oversight on behalf of the Council (as shareholder) over the operation of the remaining three companies in the group. Two Councillors are on the board of Loddon Homes Limited (registered housing provider), one Councillor is on the board of Berry</p>
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	<p>Brook Homes Limited (private housing provider) and Wokingham Housing Limited (housing developer).</p> <p>Wokingham also jointly owns three Adult Social Care companies with the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead. There is Member representation on the Boards of Optalis Holdings Ltd and Optalis Ltd</p> <p>Councillors spend an average of 11 hours a month on their role as a Non-Executive Director. These roles are currently unremunerated by the companies. Given the level of risk around the services to residents that our companies deliver and the critical role of Council NED's in ensuring the Council's interests are understood by the LATCo's the Council does not feel that reducing representation would be prudent.</p>
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Community Leadership

The Commission understands that there is no single approach to community leadership and that members represent, and provide leadership to, their communities in different ways. The Commission wants to know how members are required to provide effective community leadership and what support the council offers them in this role. For example, does the authority have a defined role and performance system for its elected members? And what support networks are available within the council to help members in their duties? The Commission also wants to see a consideration of **how the use of technology and social media by the council as a whole, and by councillors individually, will affect casework, community engagement and local democratic representation. Responses should demonstrate that alternative council sizes have been explored.**

Topic		Description
Community Leadership	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>In general terms how do councillors carry out their representational role with electors?</i> ➤ <i>Does the council have area committees and what are their powers?</i> ➤ <i>How do councillors seek to engage with their constituents? Do they hold surgeries, send newsletters, hold public meetings or maintain blogs?</i> ➤ <i>Are there any mechanisms in place that help councillors interact with young people, those not on the electoral register, and/or other minority groups and their representative bodies?</i> ➤ <i>Are councillors expected to attend community meetings, such as parish or resident's association meetings? If so, what is their level of involvement and what roles do they play?</i> ➤ <i>Explain your approach to the Area Governance structure. Is your Area Governance a decision-making forum or an advisory board? What is their relationship with locally elected members and Community bodies such as Town and Parish Councils? Looking forward how could they be improved to enhance decision-making?</i>

	Analysis	<p>The Council does not currently have area Committees.</p> <p>Councillors are proactive in engaging with their constituents. 49% of Councillors hold regular local surgeries, 83% write blogs and newsletters and 94% go door-to-door (spending on average 2 hours a week). Councillors are high profile in their communities and are actively engaged with electors. 62% of Councillors spend more than 3 hours a week responding to contacts from residents. In addition Councillors “walk the ward” identifying, reporting and escalating issues with the Council and other partners.</p> <p>Wokingham is part of the Unicef Child Friendly Community Programme and places the voice of the child at the heart of policy making. The Borough has a youth MP and a Youth Council which includes secondary school pupils from each of the Borough’s Schools. This provides a formal route for young people to engage with the Council. Wokingham has also established a Residents’ Equality Forum that promotes equality, diversity and inclusion and enables underrepresented groups to engage with Councillors.</p> <p>41% of Councillors are also town and parish councillors so provide a vital link between towns and parishes and the Borough Council. Councillors also attend Neighbourhood Action Groups and identify, escalate and resolve issues.</p> <p>The Borough is fully parished. The Council has a Town and Parish Forum where Borough and Town and Parish Councillors meet to formally discuss matters of mutual interest.</p>
Casework	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>How do councillors deal with their casework? Do they pass it on to council officers? Or do they take a more in-depth approach to resolving issues?</i> ➤ <i>What support do members receive?</i> ➤ <i>How has technology influenced the way in which councillors work? And interact with their electorate?</i> ➤ <i>In what ways does the council promote service users’ engagement/dispute resolution with service providers and managers rather than through councillors?</i>
	Analysis	<p>For 37% of Councillors Individual case work takes between 3 and 5 hours a week, with 31% spending between 1 and 2 hours a week. This involves speaking to residents, officers and others to identify resolutions to residents’ problems. The approach varies greatly depending on the matter. More complex matters require an in-depth approach to supporting complex or cross cutting issues that require a whole resident perspective.</p> <p>WBC have a small Democratic Services’ Team whose focus is mainly on effective governance and committee management. Councillors are supported in the high-volume areas of work. For example, the Highways Team have an</p>

		<p>email address for Councillors to raise queries directly. There are two political assistants that provide support to the Conservative and Liberal Democrat groups.</p> <p>The use of Teams during the pandemic has supported Councillors to attend more meetings including those held on the same night at different locations. Teams has also had beneficial impacts on those with work or caring responsibilities. However due to the Local Government Act requirement for decisions to be made in person there is limited ability in the current legislative environment to hold meetings on Teams.</p> <p>Councillors receive an IT allowance as part of their Basic Allowance which is conditional on them being accessible via email and other electronic means. All Councillors are signed up to this.</p> <p>Social media has increased the accessibility of Councillors and more enquiries are directed to Councillors via these routes. Residents often expect a rapid response to their queries.</p> <p>The Council has a strong approach to communications, uses engagement software to consult with residents and utilises service user groups to improve its services. The Council has a Customer Services Strategy, including customer feedback mechanisms and a complaints procedure that residents utilise. However due to the high level of community engagement amongst Councillors residents often see them as the face of the Council and engage directly with them on service issues and dispute resolution.</p>
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Other Issues

Respondent may use this space to bring any other issues of relevance to the attention of the Commission.

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Summary

In following this template respondents should have been able to provide the Commission with a robust and well-evidenced case for their proposed council size; one which gives a clear explanation as to the governance arrangements and number of councillors required to represent the authority in the future.

Use this space to summarise the proposals and indicate other options considered. Explain why these alternatives were not appropriate in terms of their ability to deliver effective Strategic Leadership, Accountability (Scrutiny, Regulation and Partnerships), and Community Leadership.

<p>The Council has considered four options for the size of the Council.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option A – 48 Councillors

- Option B – 51 Councillors
- Option C – 54 Councillors
- Option D – 57 Councillors

Given that the ONS forecasts the population will increase by 9,800 there is an increased workload on Councillors. To retain the current Councillor to Resident ratio the number of Councillors would need to increase to 57 Councillors.

In terms of the electorate per Councillor our current ratio of 2,436 is marginally less than the Berkshire average of 2,496 but factoring the growth of the electorate to 2028 the current figure of 54 Councillors would give WBC an average number of Councillors. Although the Council has considered the CIPFA Statistical Nearest Neighbours benchmarking to inform its work, it feels that due to the large variation in electorate (29,990-377,981), geographical areas (109km squared – 3,485 km squared) and number of Councillors (27-98) that this information provides a guide but is not definitive.

Using the benchmarks with our neighbours as a guide the Council has evaluated the impact that the changes would have on the governance of the authority and the workload for Councillors. The Council believes that allowing the increase in the ratio of Councillors to Residents to the Berkshire average would enable Councillors to still perform their role effectively.

The consensus amongst Councillors is that the current workload of Councillors is high. 75% of Councillors felt that they would not be able to dedicate more time to the role and among those that could only one (11% was employed full time). This reflects the active role that they play in their communities and beyond. Councillors play a significant role in the leadership role in the authority. They lead the Council's engagement with the community and ensure that it is able to influence the Berkshire, Regional and National policy in the areas that matter most for our residents. Many 41% of Councillors of the Council are also Town and Parish Councillors and provide a strong link to the local community. Councillors are keen to continue to perform this important role.

The Council is concerned that an increase in workload for Councillors would reduce the diversity of candidates. Councillors are conscious of the age demographic of the current Councillors and are keen to ensure the diversity of Councillors is preserved and that those with full time jobs and/or caring responsibilities are still able to represent the community.

The Council believes that 54 Councillors would support our commitment to robust governance arrangements while managing the workload for Councillors.

Appendix A – Benchmarking Council Size

1. Berkshire Neighbours

Authority	Population (ONS, 2020)	Councillors	Residents per Councillor	Electors per Councillor
Bracknell Forest	124,165	42 (40 from 2023)	2,956	2,135
Reading	160,337	46 (48 from 2022)	3,486	2,541
Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead	151,273	41 (pre-review 57)	3,561	2,673
Slough	149,577	42 (pre-review 41)	3,685	2,385
West Berkshire	158,465	43 (pre-review 52)	3,690	2,805
Wokingham	173,945	54	3,221	2,436
Average	111,411	45	3,433	2,496

2. Cipfa nearest Neighbour Local Authorities

Authority	Population (ONS, 2020)	Councillors	Residents per Councillor	Electors per Councillor
Wokingham	173,945	54	3,221	2,436
Rutland	40,476	27	1,499	1,111
West Berkshire	158,465	43	3,685	2,805
Solihull	210,555	51	4,129	3,198
Bedford	173,418	40	4,335	3,317
Bath	196,357	61	3,219	2,298
RBWM	151,273	41	3,690	2,673
Central Bedfordshire	294,096	59	4,985	3,659
Herefordshire	193,615	53	3,653	2,757
North Somerset	215,574	50	4,311	3,338
Stockport	294,197	63	4,670	3,544

South Gloucestershire	287,816	61	4,718	3,626
Wiltshire	504,070	98	5,144	3,857
Cheshire East	386,667	82	4,715	3,752
Bracknell	124,165	42	2,956	2,135
Average	226,979	55	3,929	2,904

TITLE	Recruitment and Appointment of Directors and Assistant Directors (Permanent and Interim)
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Council on 24 March 2022
WARD	None Specific
LEAD OFFICERS	Andrew Moulton, Assistant Director Governance Christine Bennett, Interim Assistant Director Human Resources

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

Clarification of recruitment processes for Directors and Assistant Directors.

RECOMMENDATION

Personnel Board recommends to Council that:

- 1) changes to the appointment processes for Directors and Assistant Directors, as set out in the report, be agreed;
- 2) changes to the appointment processes for Directors and Assistant Directors will not apply to any recruitment process that has already started.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

This report was previously considered at Personnel Board on 7 February 2022 where it was resolved that

- 1) CLT be consulted on the proposal that the relevant Executive Member, Chairman of Personnel Board and the Leader of the Opposition be consulted prior to the extension of the contract of an Interim Director or Assistant Director following an initial 12-month appointment;
- 2) The views of CLT and the report be brought back to the next Personnel Board meeting for consideration.

Under the current constitutional arrangements, the recruitment and appointment of permanent Directors is a matter for Personnel Board. This report proposes that the same constitutional arrangements are introduced for the recruitment and appointment of permanent Assistant Directors.

The report also proposes new provisions for the recruitment and appointment of interim Directors and Assistant Directors that include formal requirements for officers to consult with lead members. This reflects changes to the work environment whereby there are increasing business needs to make temporary appointments at Director and Assistant Director levels requiring a recruitment process that is timely, flexible, and includes appropriate levels of member scrutiny/engagement.

CLT has considered the issue and proposed that the process for an extension to an interim contract is consistent with the appointment process for interims.

This report was further considered and agreed at the Personnel Board meeting held on 15 March 2022. In addition, Personnel Board recommended to Council that changes to the appointment processes for Directors and Assistant Directors would not apply to any recruitment process that had already started.

BACKGROUND

The Council engages a variety of workers to deliver services to the community. A range of workers may be employed on different types of contracts. For directly employed council workers, this may be in a fixed term, casual, sessional, or permanent (part time or full time) contract of employment.

Members seek assurances that the Council recruits the right person to deliver on its corporate commitment and therefore wish to enhance their oversight of appointments at Assistant Director level (roles that provide critical support to directors).

Currently, Members are directly involved in permanent Chief Officer appointments (Directors, the Monitoring Officer, and the Chief Executive). This is set out in Section 11.6 of the Council's Constitution, and it is not proposed to make any changes to these arrangements.

In the future, Members wish to have oversight of appointments at interim Director level and at Assistant Director (interim and permanent). The following proposed changes to the Constitution bring these changes into effect.

CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION

Section 11.6 – Delegated Powers Relating to Staffing Matters

a. Interim Directors

Rule 11.6.5.3 currently states:

Interim Appointment of Directors (excluding Statutory Chief Officers)	The Head of Paid Service will appoint on an interim basis a director for a period not exceeding 12 months, pending permanent replacement
---	--

It is requested that this timing be extended to allow more flexibility to the length of appointment for Interim Directors and also requires the Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive) to consult with lead Members. The following amendment (in bold italics) is therefore proposed:

Interim Appointment of Directors (excluding Statutory Chief Officers)	The Head of Paid Service <i>in consultation with the Leader, relevant Executive Member(s) and Chairman of Personnel Board</i> will appoint on an interim basis a director for a period not exceeding 12 months, pending permanent replacement. <i>Subject to the agreement of the Chairman of Personnel Board and the Leader this period can be further extended as required.</i>
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11.5.5 Interim Appointment of Directors (excluding Statutory Chief Officers) will also be amended to reflect this change.

11.5.5 Interim Appointment of Directors (excluding Statutory Chief Officers)

The Head of Paid Service *in consultation with the Leader, relevant Executive Member(s) and Chairman of Personnel Board* will appoint on an interim basis a director for a period not exceeding 12 months, pending permanent replacement. ***Subject to the agreement of the Chairman of Personnel Board this period can be further extended as required***

b. Interim Appointment of Assistant Directors

The Constitution is currently non-specific about appointments an Interim Assistant Director level. The following additions are proposed to 11.6.5.3:-

Interim Appointment of Assistant Directors (excluding Statutory Chief Officers)	<i>The Director in consultation with the Leader, relevant Executive Member(s) and Chairman of Personnel Board will appoint on an interim basis an Assistant Director for a period not exceeding 12 months, pending permanent replacement. Subject to the agreement of the Chairman of Personnel Board and the Leader this period can be further extended as required.</i>
---	--

c. Permanent Appointment of Assistant Directors

In order to mirror the existing arrangements for permanent Directors, the following changes are proposed for Assistant Directors. Changes are shown in bold italics. 11.5.2 Recruitment of Head of Paid Service, Directors, S151 Officer, and Monitoring Officer ***and permanent Assistant Directors***

Where the Council proposed to appoint any of the aforementioned and it is not proposed that the appointment be made exclusively from among their existing Officers, the Council will:

- a. draw up a job description and person specification;
- b. make arrangements for the post to be advertised in such a way as is likely to bring it to the attention of persons who are qualified to apply for it; and
- c. Make arrangements for a copy of the job description and person specification to be sent to any person on request.

11.5.4 Permanent Appointment of other Directors ***and Assistant Directors*** (excluding S151 Officer)

- a) Executive members will be informed of Personnel Board's decision and given an opportunity to make a well-founded objection to the appointment then;
- b) subject to the majority of Executive Members not objecting, Personnel Board to make the appointment.

11.5.6 Other Appointments

Officers below **Assistant** Director

Appointment of Officers below **Assistant** Director is the responsibility of the Head of Paid Service or his/her nominee and may not be made by Councillors. The exception to this is:

- b) Assistants to Political Groups – appointment of an assistant to a political group shall be made in accordance with the Council's recruitment procedure and involve that political group in the selection process and decision.

It is proposed that the Personnel Board's terms of reference be amended as followed to reflect the amended arrangements for the appointment of permanent Assistant Directors (excluding the Monitoring Officer).

8.6.1 Functions of the Personnel Board

The Personnel Board shall comprise seven Members of the Authority, appointed by the Council in accordance with the rules of political balance. At least one Member of the Board shall be a Member of the Executive. In addition, Council shall appoint substitute Members who shall be entitled to deputise for, and inherit the voting rights of, a Member of the Board when the appointment **of permanent Assistant Directors or the appointment** or dismissal of or disciplinary action in respect of the Head of Paid Service or Directors is being considered:

- a) To deal with the appointment and Terms and Conditions of service of the Head of Paid Service, and Directors **and Assistant Directors**. In relation to the Head of Paid Service, the Personnel Board shall make a recommendation to the Council.
- b) To discharge the Council's functions relating to the appointment **of Assistant Directors and the appointment**, dismissal or disciplinary action in respect of the Head of Paid Service, or Directors.

8.6.7 Procedure for the Appointment of Head of Paid Service, or Directors or **Assistant Directors**

Meetings of the Personnel Board to shortlist, interview or appoint **the** Head of Paid Service, or Directors **or Assistant Directors** shall be convened by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairman of the Board. **For Director appointments the Head of Paid Service will attend all relevant recruitment meetings and provide advice to the Board. For Assistant Director appointments the relevant Director will attend all relevant recruitment meetings and provide advice to the Board.** Detailed arrangements for the meetings shall be set out in the Agenda for the meeting which shall be dispatched in accordance with the normal Access to Information Procedure Rule set out in Chapter 3.2.

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	Yes	Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£0	Yes	Revenue
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£0	Yes	Revenue

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

None

Cross-Council Implications

This report impacts senior management posts across the Council.

Public Sector Equality Duty

The Council is an equal opportunities employer with the appropriate policies and practices in place.

List of Background Papers

None.

Contact Andrew Moulton	Service Governance
Telephone No 07538 757887	Email andrew.moulton@wokingham.gov.uk

TITLE Independent Member of Audit Committee

FOR CONSIDERATION BY Council on 24 March 2022

WARD None Specific

LEAD OFFICER Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

To enable Members of the committee to consider the appointment of an Independent Member to the Audit Committee as per the CIPFA Best Practice Guidance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council agree, as recommended by the Audit Committee, that:

- 1) an Independent member is co-opted on to the Audit Committee on a non-voting basis and the Constitution is updated accordingly to reflect this;
- 2) the independent member role profile, as set out in the report, is approved;
- 3) the appointment of the independent member is delegated to the Audit Committee;
- 4) the process for selecting and recommending an appropriate candidate is delegated to the Assistant Director Governance in consultation with the Chair of the Audit Committee.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The Audit Committee recently undertook a self-assessment against CIPFA guidance on best practice for audit committees in local government. One of the areas identified for further consideration was the inclusion/appointment of an independent member to the Committee.

The report sets out the benefits of appointing an independent member, clarifies the voting rights of the independent member and sets out the profile/role description for the position.

Background

1. At the Audit Committee meeting of 15th September 2021 the results of the self-assessment exercise highlighted an action in relation to the consideration of including at least one independent member to the Audit Committee.
2. The action plan detailed that a report would be tabled to this Committee which facilitated the consideration of an independent member.

Review of Independent member role

3. The guidance to support those acting as audit committee members in local authorities recognises CIPFA's publication "Audit Committees: Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police (2018)" as representing "proper audit committee practices."
4. This guidance defines the way in which audit committees should be established and undertake its functions, including the functional reporting requirements to the governance group charged with providing independent assurance on the adequacy of the control environment, comprising risk management, control and governance.
5. Best practice dictates that governance, risk management and strong financial controls be embedded in the daily and regular business of an organisation. The existence of an audit committee does not remove responsibility from senior managers, members and leaders, but provides an opportunity and resource to focus on these issues. CIPFA considers that Audit Committees must also actively explore the appointment of at least one independent member to the Committee. This is in line with good practice to demonstrate good governance principles and independence from the executive and other political allegiances.
6. Good practice shows that co-option of independent members is beneficial to the audit committee. It is a requirement for police audit committees, English combined authorities and for local authorities in Wales, and it is usual practice for non-executives to be committee members in health and central government audit committees. The injection of an external view can often bring a new approach to committee discussions.
7. Authorities that have chosen to recruit independent members have done so for a number of reasons:
 - To bring additional knowledge and expertise to the committee;
 - To reinforce the political neutrality and independence of the committee; and
 - To maintain continuity of committee membership where membership is affected by the electoral cycle.
8. Under the Council's Constitution, the approval of the Annual Statement of Accounts is one the delegated functions for the Audit Committee is:-

"4.4.3.3 Accounts a) To agree the annual statement of accounts. Specifically, to consider whether appropriate accounting policies have been followed and whether there are concerns arising from the financial statements or from the audit that need to be brought to the attention of the Council.

9. Under S102(3) of the Local Government Act 1972, Co-opted members are not permitted to be members on Committees which are responsible for “regulating and controlling the finance of the local authority”.
10. CIPFA do acknowledge these limitations recommending that Local Authorities should have regard to Section 13 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 which relates to the voting rights of non-elected committee members. This states that “A person who – (a) is a member of a committee appointed under a power to which this section applies by a relevant authority and is not a member of that authority; shall for all purposes be treated as a non-voting member of that committee.”
11. Their view is that where an audit committee is operating as an advisory committee under the Local Government Act 1972, making recommendations rather than policy, then all members of the committee (including a co-opted member) should be able to vote on those recommendations. However, where a council has delegated decisions to the committee, for example the adoption of the financial statements, then independent members will not be able to vote on those matters for decision.
12. CIPFA do though acknowledge where authorities make use of independent members there are practical things to borne in mind:-
 - Over-reliance on the independent members by other committee members can lead to a lack of engagement across the full committee;
 - Lack of organisational knowledge or ‘context’ among the independent members when considering risk registers or audit reports;
 - Effort is required from both independent members and officers to establish an effective working relationship and establish appropriate protocols for briefings and access to information.
13. While operating as a member of the audit committee, the independent member is required to follow the Council’s Standing Orders and the Code of Conduct for elected members. They should also register any interests. As stated above, where there are recommendations for decision, the independent member would not have the right to vote on those decisions.
14. The primary considerations when considering audit committee membership should be maximising the committee’s knowledge base and skills, being able to demonstrate objectivity and independence, and having a membership that will work together.
15. CIPFA also acknowledge that there are currently no statutory requirements that determine that local authorities must appoint independent co-opted members, albeit such appointments are a requirement within police authorities, English combined authorities and for local authorities in Wales. This was a recommendation made by Sir Tony Redmond within the Redmond review, and subsequently this could become a requirement (as with police authorities, English combined authorities and local authorities in Wales) in the future.
16. The NAO has recommended that government work with local authorities and stakeholders to assess the implications of, and possible responses to the

effectiveness of audit committees and how to increase the use of independent members.

17. Analysis across Berkshire shows that only one of the other Authorities currently have independent members co-opted onto their audit committees. This is Slough Borough Council.
18. A role profile is attached at appendix A which would be used in order to advertise and recruit for the independent member. It is proposed that an annual remuneration of £1,000 plus reasonable travel expenses (where this is within the Borough) be offered for the position.
19. Should the Committee recommend to Full Council that an independent member is co-opted onto this committee, a panel comprising of the Chair of this Committee, the Assistant Director Governance together with another member of this Committee would convene in order to recruit to the position.

CONCLUSIONS

20. At present there are no statutory requirements on the authority to appoint an independent member to the audit committee. The NAO has recommended that further work be done by government with local authorities and other stakeholders to examine how the use of independent members on audit committees can be increased. This has also been supplemented by the recommendation by Sir Tony Redmond within his review.
21. Guidance from CIPFA notes both positive and cautionary reasons for such appointments and decisions of this nature need to take account of each local authority's own circumstances.
22. The Audit Committee reviewed and discussed the proposal to co-opt an independent member onto the Committee at their meeting held on 2 February 2022 and agreed to recommend the proposals to Council for approval.

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	Yes	Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£1,000	Yes	Revenue
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£1,000	Yes	Revenue

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision
None

Cross-Council Implications
None

Public Sector Equality Duty
This is a report for information.

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>
No specific implications.

List of Background Papers
CIPFA Audit Committees Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police National Audit Office (NAO) Report – Local Authority Governance

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APPENDIX A – ROLE DESCRIPTION

Appointment of an Independent Audit Committee Member (Independent Person)

Wokingham Borough Council has a strong track record of good corporate governance and robust financial management, but remains keen to implement continuous improvement in these areas. To support this ongoing process, we are now seeking to recruit a proficient Independent Person to serve on the Council's Audit Committee.

About the Audit Committee

The Audit Committee is a key component of Wokingham Borough Council's corporate governance. It provides an independent and high-level focus on the audit, assurance and reporting arrangements that underpin good governance and financial standards.

Its role is:

- To provide independent assurance to Councillors of the adequacy of the risk management framework and the internal control environment;
- To provide independent review of the Council's governance, risk management and control frameworks and oversees the financial reporting and annual governance processes;
- To oversee internal audit and external audit, helping to ensure efficient and effective assurance arrangements are in place.

The full list of functions of the Audit Committee can be found in the Council's constitution.

ROLE DESCRIPTION

Responsible to: The Authority

Liaison with: Monitoring Officer, Members of the Authority, officers, the Chair of the Audit Committee and key stakeholders within the community.

Duties to include:

- 1) Assisting the Committee with scrutinising the authority's statement of accounts for its approval
- 2) Reviewing the Council's corporate governance arrangements
- 3) Receiving reports/presentations from the Council's Head of Internal Audit, considering the main issues identified and monitoring management action in response
- 4) Receiving and considering the external auditor's opinion and reports and monitoring management action in response to any issues raised
- 5) Considering the effectiveness and adequacy of the authority's risk management arrangements, the control environment and associated anti-fraud and anti-corruption arrangements.
- 6) Considering the adequacy of the action being taken on risk related issues identified by auditors and inspectors
- 7) Ensuring effective scrutiny of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy and Policies

SELECTION CRITERIA - SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

Experience

- Experience of working in a medium/large organisation at a senior level or other experience which would give similar benefits.
- Financial Management experience (accountancy, audit or management of a large budget) would be advantageous.

Skills

- An ability to understand complex issues and the importance of accountability and probity in public life
- An ability to analyse and question written and verbal reports on audit and risk management activities
- An understanding of the need for independence of audit from daily management responsibilities
- An ability to demonstrate integrity and discretion
- Effective interpersonal skills
- Be able to maintain strictest confidentiality of sensitive information

Knowledge

All members of the Audit Committee should have, or should acquire as soon as possible after appointment:

- An understanding of the objectives and key activities of the Council and current major initiatives and significant issues for the Council
- An understanding of the Council's structures and responsibilities, including key relationships with partners, businesses and organisations
- An understanding of the organisation's culture
- An understanding of any relevant legislation or other rules governing the organisation
- An understanding of corporate governance arrangements in place across the Council
- An understanding of the government environment generally
- An understanding of risk management
- Ensure effective scrutiny of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy and Policies

Eligibility for Appointment

You must:

- Have local connections and live within the Borough or carry out the main part of your work in the Borough
- Agree to abide by the provisions of the Council's Standing Orders and the Members Code of Conduct while serving on the Committee

You must not:

- Be a Councillor or Officer of the Council or have been so in the preceding five years prior to appointment

- Be related to, or a close friend of, any Councillor or Officer of Wokingham Borough Council
- Have been convicted of any offence
- Be an undischarged bankrupt
- Have significant business dealings with the Council
- Have a formal connection with any political group
- Have a proven history of vexatious and/or frivolous complaints against Wokingham Borough Council
- Be holder of a significant office in an organisation being grant aided/supported by Wokingham Borough Council

You should demonstrate in your application how you meet the above criteria as this will assist the short-listing process.

Means of assessment will be by application form and panel interview.

Commitment

You will be expected to attend at least 5 of 6 meetings per year. Meetings usually take place in February, June, July, September, November. They are usually held at the Council Offices, Shute End, Wokingham and start at 7pm. They last approximately 2 hours. Time will also be needed prior to each meeting for preparation.

Remuneration

An allowance of £1,000 per annum would be applied to the post. An allowance for reasonable travel expenses (where this is within the Borough) would also be reimbursed.

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WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Committees

Annual Reports 2021/22

Produced: February 2022
Received by Council: 24 March 2022

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**Foreword by Councillor Pauline Helliars-Symons,
Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny
Management Committee**

Welcome to the Annual Reports of Wokingham Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees for 2021/22.

The role of Overview and Scrutiny is to hold decision makers to account, both inside and outside the Council. The Committees provide independent "critical friend" challenge to the Council and other public service providers across the Borough. The Committees also play a role in developing and reviewing policy and ensuring that the Council and its partners are working effectively to improve services for residents, businesses and visitors. Effective scrutiny is an important element of the successful functioning of local democracy.

Previous Annual Reports highlighted the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic alongside a number of major challenges facing the Borough. These included financial uncertainty, demand and cost pressures, the funding of social care, provision of school places, housing numbers, traffic congestion and the Climate Emergency. These challenges have not gone away. The Council has spent much of the past year in continuing to respond to the pandemic. The response has continued to be positive and has once again demonstrated the dedication and commitment of Council and school staff, partner organisations and the hundreds of community volunteers across the Borough. During the year Members scrutinised the Council's Covid Recovery Strategy and welcomed the strengthening of partnerships with the voluntary and community sector, culminating in the opening of the Wokingham Charity and Community Hub in Erfstadt Court.

Members recognise that the impact of Covid-19 will continue for the next few years as it moves from pandemic to endemic. Its financial impact will force the Council to seek new ways of working and new ways of delivering services. To date the signs are positive that the Council will be able to maintain key front-line services allied to innovation and continuous improvement. Members scrutinised the Council's continuous improvement programme alongside its plans for developing customer excellence. These are ambitious plans which will benefit from ongoing scrutiny as the Council seeks to become a high performing authority.

The Annual Reports for 2021/22 demonstrate the wide range of issues considered during the year. They reflect the hard work and commitment of residents, community stakeholders, Members and officers who contributed to the work of the Overview and Scrutiny function.

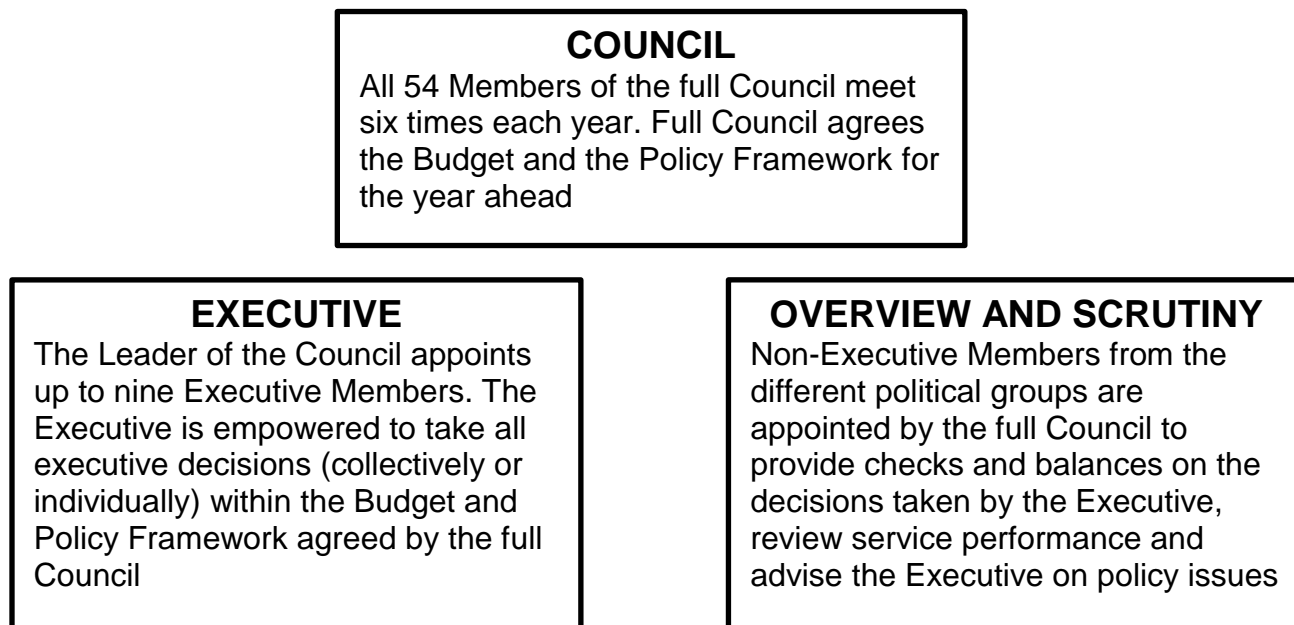
**Pauline Helliars-Symons,
February 2022**

SECTION 1 – WHAT IS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY?

Wokingham Borough Council is a large, complex organisation with over a thousand employees and an annual budget of £145m. The Borough’s Community Vision (February 2020) is to make the Borough “a great place to live, learn, work and grow and a great place to do business”. The Council makes major strategic decisions which affect the long-term future of the area and its communities. It also makes decisions on a daily basis which affect the lives of some of the Borough’s most vulnerable residents. Other public service providers such as the NHS, Thames Valley Police and the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service also make key decisions which affect the residents of the Borough. In order to ensure that the Council and other service providers spend public money wisely and make well informed decisions about key services it is essential that an effective system of checks and balances is in place.

A distinction is drawn between “Overview” which focuses on the development of policy and “Scrutiny” which looks at decisions that have been made, or are about to be made, to ensure that they are fit for purpose. In this document “Scrutiny” refers to both Overview and Scrutiny.

The Council’s Executive takes decisions within the financial and policy framework set by the full Council. Non-Executive Members of the Council (representing each of the political groups) are appointed to the Council’s Overview and Scrutiny Committees to review those decisions and the performance of key services. The relationship between Council, Executive and Overview and Scrutiny is illustrated in the diagram below:

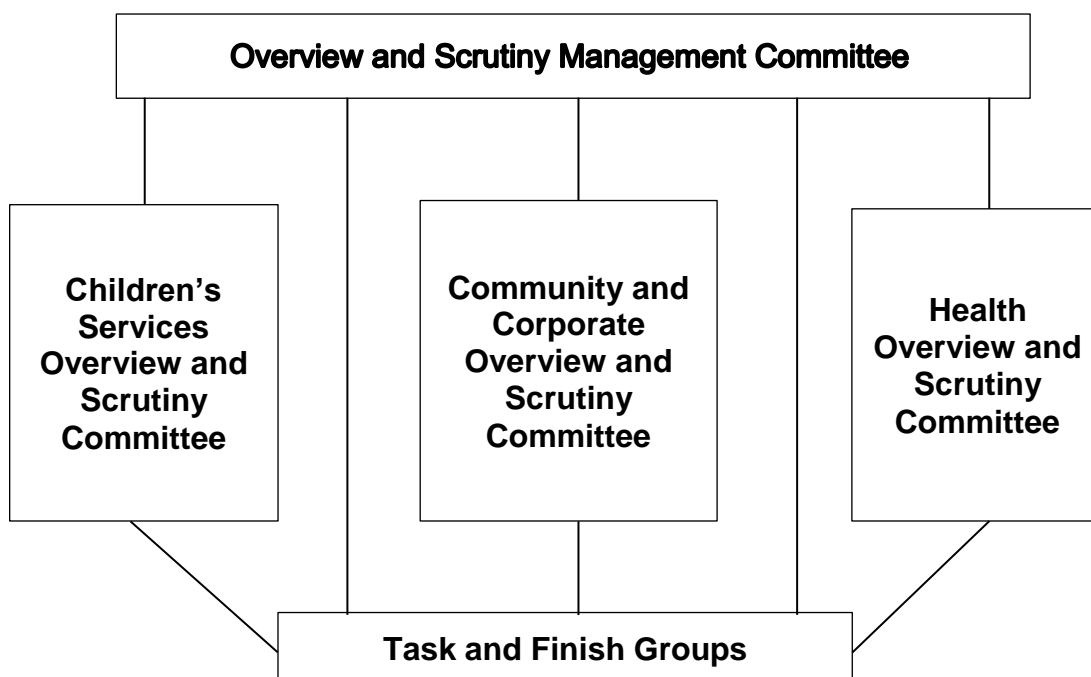


In order to deliver the Overview and Scrutiny function the Council has established the following Committees:

- Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee – responsible for overseeing the Scrutiny function and developing an annual work programme for each of the Committees.

- Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee – responsible for scrutiny of services relating to schools, safeguarding and child protection, looked after children and children with special educational needs and disabilities.
- Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee - responsible for scrutiny of Council services, crime reduction and community safety and flood risk management.
- Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee – responsible for scrutiny of local NHS bodies, public health arrangements and the work of the Local Healthwatch service.

The Committees consider issues at their regular meetings or by setting up time-limited Task and Finish Groups. The Council’s Overview and Scrutiny structure is illustrated below:



Four Principles of Effective Scrutiny

- Constructive “critical friend” challenge to the Executive and external service providers;
- Channelling the “voice” of the public and representing all the Borough’s residents;
- Members reaching bipartisan conclusions based on the weight of evidence;
- Driving continuous improvement which promotes community wellbeing and quality of life.

Limitations

Overview and Scrutiny is not about the investigation of minor matters or individual complaints. The Council has a separate corporate complaints procedure which is used to investigate individual complaints about services. Similarly, Overview and Scrutiny does not look at quasi-judicial matters such planning or licensing issues. Finally, Overview and Scrutiny is not used for raising issues of a party political nature as these matters can be addressed through debate at full Council meetings.

SECTION 2

REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE



Pauline Helliar-Symons, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee has three important roles. Firstly, to develop and oversee the annual work programmes of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees. Secondly to investigate specific issues within its own work programme. Thirdly, to ensure that Scrutiny Members have the relevant skills, training and support.

During 2021/22, the Council continued its wide-ranging response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Committee scrutinised a number of related issues including the Council's Covid Recovery Strategy and the impact of the pandemic on the most vulnerable residents through, for example, scrutiny of the Council's emerging Anti-Poverty Strategy. The Committee met with the Council Leader and Chief Executive to discuss priorities over the year ahead and considered a number of other issues including the quarterly performance management report on key services, unauthorised encampments, the Council's website and the emerging Domestic Abuse, Waste and Tree Strategies. We also held a "Call-In" meeting to review an Executive Member decision relating to an Off Street Car Parks Order.

The Climate Emergency Task and Finish Group submitted its second report in June 2021. The report made further recommendations aimed at strengthening the Climate Emergency Action Plan in areas such as transport, homes, renewable energy and behaviour change. The majority of the Group's recommendations were accepted by the Executive. A second Task and Finish Group was established during the year to consider Tree Protection and Biodiversity.

The Committee also requested an annual report, to each November meeting, on progress made on Motions passed at full Council as Members, even those proposing and seconding them, often did not know what action had been taken and with what results. This year the report will come to the March meeting when it will contain information from the last three years since it is the first report, and thereafter annually in November.

Looking ahead, the Management Committee will continue to focus on initiatives to strengthen the Overview and Scrutiny process. This will include further emphasis on pre-decision scrutiny and policy development, additional training and support for Members, greater involvement from residents and community groups and closer liaison with the Council's Executive. Finally, I would like to thank the Members, officers, residents and community groups who contributed their time, effort and insights during another challenging year.

Pauline Helliar-Symons

Remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee oversees the Council's Scrutiny function and is responsible for developing and co-ordinating the work programmes and support for the three Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Membership

Councillor Pauline Helliard-Symons (Chairman).

Councillors Alison Swaddle (Vice-Chairman), Sam Akhtar, Rachel Burgess, Paul Fishwick, Jim Frewin, Guy Grandison, Norman Jorgensen, Sarah Kerr, Rebecca Margetts, Jackie Rance and Rachelle Shepherd-Dubey.

Substitute Members: Councillors Keith Baker, Chris Bowring, Anne Chadwick, Jenny Cheng, Stephen Conway, Peter Dennis, Gary Cowan, Carl Doran, Lindsay Ferris, Barrie Patman and Simon Weeks.

Officer contact: Neil Carr neil.carr@wokingham.gov.uk

Highlights from the Year

Covid-19 Pandemic

Following the Committee's earlier review of the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020/21, Members scrutinised the Council's Covid Recovery Strategy. The Strategy set out a number of key areas of focus including physical and emotional health and wellbeing, resilient communities, supporting the local economy and developing the Council's staff and its operating systems. Members welcomed the increased focus on mental health and wellbeing and the improved transparency, communication and engagement arising out of the response to the pandemic.

Anti-Poverty Strategy

The Committee considered an update on the emerging Anti-Poverty Strategy, being developed in partnership with partners in the voluntary and community sector (VCS). Members were informed that the Strategy would focus on challenging the stigma of poverty and delivering more joined up solutions which impacted positively on those in most need. Members welcomed progress on the Strategy but were keen to ensure that it was co-produced with VCS partners. To this end, VCS representatives were invited to attend a meeting of the Committee to give their feedback on the process.

Performance Management

The Committee received quarterly Performance Management reports setting out details of the Council's performance against a number of financial and operational indicators. Members used the quarterly data to probe on areas of underperformance and select issues for more in-depth scrutiny. The importance of genuinely SMART targets (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timely) was stressed. Members welcomed proposals to introduce a more effective performance management system in 2022/23, which would help to generate reports which were more focussed and timely. This would enable the Committee to invite specific Executive

Members and officers to provide evidence on recent service issues based on accurate, recent and relevant data.

Climate Emergency

The Climate Emergency Task and Finish Group met again and produced its second report in June 2021. The Task and Finish Group comprised Councillors Swaddle (Chairman), Croy, Helliar-Symons, Kerr and Richards. The Group's report focussed on transport, homes, renewable energy and behaviour change. The Group received evidence from WBC officers, the Executive Member, Reading Buses, Giki Zero and a range of external academics and policy experts. The Group's report was submitted to the Executive in September 2021. The majority of its recommendations were accepted. The Committee subsequently scrutinised the Council's proposals for establishing community deliberative processes in order to engage effectively with residents on the key themes in the Climate Emergency Action Plan.

Tree Protection and Biodiversity

The Committee established a second Task and Finish Group with a remit relating to Tree Protection and Biodiversity. The Group comprised Councillors Bowring (Chairman), Cowan, Firmager, Fishwick and Rance. The Group scrutinised the Council's existing policies, the impact of the Environment Act and the effectiveness of partnership working with Town and Parish Councils and local groups such as the Wokingham District Veteran Tree Association. The Task and Finish Group was also asked to advise on a Council Motion which proposed the declaration of an Ecological Emergency alongside the Climate Emergency declaration already in place. The Group's report is expected in March 2022.

Member Training

The Committee recognises the importance of ongoing training and development to ensure that Members' skills and knowledge are constantly upgraded. Training sessions have been held on key elements of effective Overview and Scrutiny including preparing for meetings, questioning techniques and the development of key lines of enquiry. Specific sessions were also held on Budget Scrutiny and Scrutiny of Health and Adult Social Care. We will deliver further training for Members in 2022/23 and will work with the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny to ensure that our policies and procedures are in line with best practice.

Scrutiny Impacts

Effective Scrutiny should have a defined impact on the ground, with the Committees making recommendations that make a tangible difference to the work of the Council and other public service providers. Over the past year the following impacts are highlighted:

- Covid-19 Pandemic – the Committee highlighted the impact of the pandemic on vulnerable groups and the importance of developing strong partnerships in order to ensure that everyone received the necessary help and support.
- Climate Emergency – the Task and Finish Group highlighted the importance of training for Members and staff and the embedding of Climate Emergency awareness into every service and every key decision.
- Unauthorised Encampments – the Committee requested improved information on the Council website and additional support for private landowners.

SECTION 3

REPORT OF THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



Norman Jorgensen, Chairman of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Committee's work is split almost equally between children's social work and educational attainment. As well as monitoring all the recommendations put in place by earlier Committees and Task and Finish Groups, the new work that has been carried out is outlined below. This keeps the Committee in touch with how the Service and schools, especially in the context of the current challenges brought in by the pandemic, are performing.

This year there was a continuous focus on the local authority's response to the pandemic in relation to children's social care and education.

The Committee was pleased to note the dedication and hard work which was displayed by the Service under the additional pressures brought on by the pandemic, with particular praise to the work undertaken by the Covid Task Force.

I would like to thank all members of the Committee, and the substitutes for their commitment to and interest in the work that we do, and for all the positive and genuinely useful contributions that they have made.

Norman Jorgensen

Remit of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee is responsible for scrutiny and policy development in relation to services for children and young people. This includes schools, early years' settings and children's centres, safeguarding and child protection, children in care and services for children with special educational needs and disabilities.

Membership:

Councillors: Norman Jorgensen (Chairman), Rebecca Margetts (Vice-Chairman), Prue Bray, Anne Chadwick, Pauline Helliard-Symons, Morag Malvern, Andrew Mickleburgh and Jackie Rance.

Parent Governor: two vacancies

Substitute Members:

Councillors: Sam Akhtar, Phil Cunnington, Guy Grandison, David Hare, Sarah Kerr, Barrie Patman and Alison Swaddle.

Representatives of the Church of England Diocese and the Roman Catholic Diocese are also able to attend meetings of the Committee when Education issues are being considered. At the moment these posts are vacant.

Officer contact: Luciane Bowker luciane.bowker@wokingham.gov.uk

Highlights from the Year

Children's Services response to Covid-19

The Service adapted in order to continue delivering its statutory duties throughout the pandemic. The Early Help service, which is not statutory, also continued to provide support to families via telephone and online. Support continued to be provided to schools and early years settings. Help with interpreting legislation and updates on new government guidance was provided at weekly meetings with senior school leaders, as well as assistance with dealing with local outbreaks and advising on mitigating measures.

The Education Welfare Service (EWS), which is normally a traded service, was provided for free during the pandemic and school attendance remained good in the Borough. The Committee asked that the EWS continue to be offered beyond the pandemic.

There was a holistic approach to provide mental health and emotional wellbeing support to children and young people. The service worked with Social Care, Health and other professionals to provide a joined up offer. The Committee asked that the offer of Kooth (digital mental health care) be extended to 25 year olds.

Performance Indicators

The Committee took the decision to scrutinise performance indicators at certain times during the year, when this is most relevant. The Committee challenged the information contained in the reports, suggesting areas of improvement. It was noted that there had been an

improvement in the timeliness of completion of Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP), as compared to previous years. However, the total number of EHCPs was increasing and this was challenging. This was a complex situation, and the service was developing a number of strands of work to tackle this challenge.

Unicef application

The Committee was pleased to be informed of the successful bid by the Council to join the Unicef's programme Child Friendly Cities and Communities Programme. The aim of this programme is to give all children a chance to have their voice heard, and Wokingham is very proud to take part in this project. The Committee will continue to follow with interest the progress of this initiative.

Education, Schools Performance Indicators, Ofsted Reports and Schools Causing Concern

Education in the Borough continued to be one of the main focus of the Committee and this was monitored at every meeting.

Ofsted suspended inspections at the beginning of the pandemic and were undertaking Section 8 survey visits which did not produce a rating. The School Improvement Team continued to monitor schools by visiting schools virtually and asking the same questions that Ofsted used to ask during research visits. Ofsted inspections have now been reinstated, although there is a delay of approximately six months. It was pleasing to note that the Forest School was awarded a 'Good' rating, which was an improvement since its last inspection. The Committee will continue to monitor the outcomes of inspections.

Due to the suspension of Ofsted inspections, the Committee temporarily ceased to receive the Schools Causing Concern report, this is now being reinstated.

Additionally, there were no performance tables available for two years running, as formal tests have not taken place, with no national or local data available. The service is continuing to give advice to schools in preparing to use the Teacher Assessment grades system. This process is new and has added to teachers' workload.

The Committee was pleased to be informed of the work being undertaken with schools in relation to equality and diversity, learning that a wide range of offer is in place.

Secondary School Sufficiency

The Committee was informed that additional places were created in agreement with some schools, and this agreement had secured places for all Year 7 applicants. Most children were allocated one of their preferences. It was noted that parental preference had not been sufficiently taken into account at an early planning stage and this was a learning opportunity for future planning of school places.

A bulge was being projected until 2027 and the Committee urged officers to make plans for this, including considerations of where (geographically) surplus places might be needed.

Children Missing Education

The EWS provided assistance to schools in respect of school attendance and helping children re-engage with education. It was noted that in order to improve school attendance it was

important to be able to offer suitable places to meet the children's needs. It was of concern that there was a disproportionate number of permanent exclusions of Special Educational Needs (SEN) children. The Committee requested to continue to review the data on permanent exclusions and added a review of EWS in its forward programme.

Children's Services Strategy

A Children's Services Strategy is being developed to cover a period of three years, it is being designed to align the service delivery of the priorities. The Committee thoroughly scrutinised the strategy and made comments and suggestions to improve it, including strengthening the voice of children.

It is of concern that the new SEND school will not open in September 2022 as anticipated. However, the Committee was re-assured that places were being secured for children in alternative provisions. Negotiations are ongoing with the DfE to establish when the school would open.

Review of Home to School Transport Processes

The Committee challenged the service about the processes which had been undertaken that had resulted in some residents being dissatisfied with service. There had been lessons learnt during the review of home to school transport, and the Committee would continue to monitor the development and delivery of this service, which involved Children's Services and Corporate Transport.

Wokingham Education Partnership

The Committee was informed of the newly formed Wokingham Education Partnership. The partnership sought to enable collaboration and co-production to find solutions to strategic issues in relation to education in the Borough. The Committee was in support of this initiative and will receive regular updates on its development.

Children's Services Covid Task Force

Much work had been undertaken to support schools during the pandemic, including coordinating additional resources, disseminating and signposting information, working with local and other partners, supporting schools with local outbreaks, helping to interpreting national guidance from central government and health agencies.

The Committee commended the work undertaken by the Task Force.

Scrutiny Impacts

- Improved transparency and accountability across all services.
- Response to the Coronavirus pandemic – challenging the Service to achieve the best outcomes in the current context and to extend best practices beyond the pandemic.

SECTION 4

REPORT OF THE COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



**Guy Grandison, Chairman of the
Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

During the past year, the Committee has continued its focus on the delivery of Council services to ensure that they provide value for money for the Borough's Council Tax payers. Executive Members and officers were invited to attend meetings of the Committee to give evidence and answer questions on priorities and performance. Conducting Committee meetings in a hybrid format has allowed greater access and convenience for the public to engage with the Overview and Scrutiny process.

This year marked the third consecutive year that Overview and Scrutiny have looked at the proposed Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) in detail, prior to its journey through the February 2022 Executive and Budget Council meetings. This exercise has continued to add value to the Budget setting process by challenging Executive Members and Directors to explain the rationale for spending proposals in a clear and understandable way.

The Committee considered a range of other issues during the year including receiving regular progress updates regarding bringing the functions of the Public Protection Partnership back in-house, receiving the annual update from the Community Safety partnership, and overviewing aspects of the Council's vegetation maintenance strategy.

In developing its work programme the Committee is keen to ensure that the "voice" of local residents and community groups plays a bigger part in its deliberations. The Committee recognises that involving residents, community groups and local "experts" in Overview and Scrutiny reduces the risk of a partisan approach as Members are able to hear directly from those stakeholders whose interests they are representing. The Committee will continue to promote greater public involvement in Overview and Scrutiny over the coming year and will share any relevant learning with the other Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

I thank the Members of the Committee, officers, residents and other stakeholders who took part in our meetings for their valuable contributions during the year.

Guy Grandison

Remit of the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee is responsible for the scrutiny of internal Council operations and partnership working across the Borough. It also has responsibilities under the Police and Justice Act 2006 which involves oversight of the operation of the Borough's Community Safety Partnership. The Committee is also responsible for the scrutiny of flood risk management.

Membership

Councillor Guy Grandison (Chairman).

Councillors Alison Swaddle (Vice-Chairman), Sam Akhtar, Shirley Boyt, Anne Chadwick, Phil Cunnington, Paul Fishwick and Clive Jones.

Substitute Members: Councillors Rachel Burgess, Pauline Helliard-Symons, Norman Jorgensen, Rebecca Margetts, Barrie Patman, Jackie Rance, Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey and Caroline Smith

Officer contact: Callum Wernham: callum.wernham@wokingham.gov.uk

Highlights from the Year

Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2022-25

The Committee undertook a detailed overview of the proposed 2022-25 MTFP. Executive Members and Directors were invited to attend the meetings to present their bids and explain in detail how the requested funding would be used to deliver key services. Members welcomed the continued inclusion of 'plain English' detailed bid sheets which provided key figures and descriptive narratives in a format that Members and members of the public could understand and interpret. The Committee probed bids within key service areas, including a demand management strategy within Children's Services, a new dementia care home within Adult's Social Care, income generation projects within Resources and Assets, substantial capital bids for example highways infrastructure within Place and Growth, and the Continuous Improvement Programme within Communities, Insight and Change. The role of the Committee was to challenge assumptions within the budget setting process and to encourage key decision makers to think about their proposals from a different perspective. The Committee appreciated this continued level of transparency on the proposed MTFP and budget setting process, and looked forward to this process continuing and improving in future years.

Bringing the Public Protection Partnership Back in-House

The Committee have received a series of updates detailing progress in bringing the functions of the Public Protection Partnership back in-house. Delivery of this project forms a key part of the Council's strategy to deliver more localised services to residents, backed up by increased local knowledge and involvement from residents, Town and Parish Councils and Ward Councillors. Members received assurances regarding the engagement and consultation process with staff, and were given updates on the experienced senior management who would be joining the new in-house service. Members were pleased to be able to review and question this key process throughout the 2021/22 municipal year.

Review of Library Service Provision

The Committee received an update regarding the provision of library services across the Borough. Officers explained that the three larger town libraries were well used by a variety of residents, however the smaller libraries and 'micro libraries' across the Borough also served as key community hubs for activities and groups. Members were pleased to hear committed support for libraries in a variety of localities which would become gateways for cultural events, art exhibitions, and learning opportunities in addition to their core function of providing literature to residents. The Committee thanked officers within the Library Service for their tireless work to innovate and improve on existing offerings.

Vegetation Maintenance Strategy

An update was provided on the three primary maintenance contracts: the grounds maintenance contract with Tivoli Group Ltd, the highways reactive maintenance contract with Volker Highways, and the street cleansing contract with Volker Highways, which was sub-contracted to Urbaser Ltd. Members probed issues including the different service level agreements for each contract, how highways inspectors picked up on issues related to vegetation, and how issues could be raised by the public. The Committee reiterated a previous suggestion for officers to explore the possibility of developing a WBC app for reporting vegetation and street cleansing issues directly to the relevant team.

Scrutiny Impacts

- Budget and budget setting process transparency – information regarding the budget and the budget setting process has been thoroughly reviewed by the Committee, and made publically available in an easy to read 'plain English' format. Transparency around crucial issues such as the Budget forms an essential part of the checks and balances that Overview and Scrutiny provides. Agreement was reached to assess the mid-year financial position during the 2022/23 municipal year, to ensure that assumptions made within the proposed MTFP were being met within the backdrop of a number of uncertainties including inflation, future funding arrangements, and the high cost of construction.
- Close working relationship with Executive Members and Directors – Executive Members and Directors were invited to, and attended, a number of Committee meetings. Answers to Member queries were frank and detailed, providing a solid foundation for transparent Overview and Scrutiny.
- Oversight of delivery of key Council Services – continued monitoring of key Council Services to ensure that they are delivering value for money for residents. Probing Services to think about service delivery and value for money is key in delivering cost effective services for residents. Services demonstrated continued resilience in delivering vital services during periods of national restrictions due to the ongoing pandemic.
- Ensured that the process of bringing the functions of the Public Protection Partnership back in-house was being monitored in a public setting. Policy directives of such importance and impact on our residents should be monitored by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee, where appropriate and possible.

SECTION 5

REPORT OF THE HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



**Alison Swaddle, Chairman of the
Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

This year the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee has focused on health and social care matters that affect local residents.

The Committee has received updates on a range of issues, including NHS Dental provision, GP practices and GP services, the Covid and flu vaccination programmes, public toilet availability and how the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust has been operating during the pandemic.

Throughout the year we have monitored performance against the Adult Social Care Key Performance Indicators.

We continue to work well with Healthwatch Wokingham Borough, the independent consumer champion created to gather and represent the views of residents, and have been kept informed of their work and issues of resident concern, at most meetings.

All members of the Committee and their substitutes are invited to attend training to keep up to date with any new legislation and service developments. Training is also arranged during the year should a specific need arise.

I would like to thank the members of the Committee, substitutes, Officers, and other partners who took part in meetings for their contribution throughout the year.

Alison Swaddle

Remit of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) scrutinises issues relating to the planning, provision and operation of health and wellbeing services in the Borough. This includes acute and community health services, adult social care services, family and public health services and health related services commissioned jointly by the Council, health bodies and the voluntary sector. The Committee exercises powers conferred to it through the Health and Social Care Act 2012 and the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013.

Membership

Councillor Alison Swaddle (Chairman).

Councillors Jackie Rance (Vice-Chairman), Sam Akhtar, Rachel Bishop-Firth, Jenny Cheng, Carl Doran, Michael Firmager, Tahir Maher, Adrian Mather, and Barrie Patman.

Substitute Members: Chris Bowring, Rachel Burgess, Anne Chadwick, Guy Grandison, David Hare, Pauline Helliard-Symons, Clive Jones, Norman Jorgensen, Caroline Smith, and Simon Weeks.

All attendees at HOSC meetings, including members of the public, may ask questions after each report or presentation is presented.

Officer contact: Madeleine Shopland madeleine.shopland@wokingham.gov.uk

Highlights from the Year

Adult Social Care Priorities

At its meeting in July 2021 the Committee was briefed on the Adult Social Care priorities for 2021-22, in addition to responding to the pandemic. Priorities included the launch of the first voluntary sector hub, a review of the voluntary care sector contracts procurement exercise, the launch of new Voluntary sector Mental Health Service, and the Care and support Procurement Framework.

Adult Social Care Key Performance Indicators

Throughout the year the Committee has monitored performance against the Adult Social Care Key Performance Indicators.

Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust

The Committee received an update on the operation of the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust at its November 2021 meeting, from Raghuv Bhasin, Director of Systems Partnerships. Members scrutinised issues such as how service provision had been impacted by Covid, how backlogs in services were being addressed, current key areas of focus, impact of Covid on finances, staff morale during the pandemic, retention and recruitment and how the Trust communicated with the wider community, including local authorities.

Winter Plan - The Committee received a presentation on the delivery of the Winter Plan at an extraordinary meeting in February 2022. Members heard about the different approaches

taken to get messages out into the community, such as use of different social media platforms, printed materials, videos and a bus campaign. Areas which had been particularly successful had been those of very small focus such as encouraging people to sort out their repeat prescriptions prior to Christmas.

Maternity Services – Members sought an update on maternity services at an extraordinary meeting in February 2022, following a survey of residents by Healthwatch Wokingham of services used by residents during the pandemic, in which Maternity Services had scored less well. The update covered what issues the service had faced particularly during the pandemic, such as staffing levels, the service’s response to Healthwatch’s report Experiences of Perinatal Mental Health Support in Wokingham Borough, and action being taken in response to the 2020 inspection by the CQC. Members were pleased to note the work undertaken with regards to recruitment.

Response to Covid – Vaccinations

The Committee sought an update on the Covid vaccination programme at an extraordinary meeting in September 2021. Information regarding the different phases of the programme was provided. The Committee also received an update on the seasonal influenza vaccination programme. Members asked questions around matters such as locations of vaccine sites, how information was communicated successfully to the community, take up amongst particular groups, and pressure on the services delivering the vaccinations.

GP Provision and GP services

This year access to GP services has continued to be a national and local issue, and has worsened during the pandemic. Healthwatch regularly raised this as an issue of concern to residents to the Committee. In November 2021, the Committee received a presentation on GP Provision and GP services. The Committee was provided information on the pressures that Primary Care were facing during the pandemic. Members sought information on and asked questions about, what action was being taken to increase access, particularly face-to-face appointments. They learned that many patients, particularly those who worked, preferred a hybrid approach to appointments. Members agreed that the system had to fit patient need. The Committee was informed that funding was being provided to improve access and availability.

The Committee expressed concern that four GP practices in the Borough continued to score less well in the national GP Patient Survey.

Health Scrutiny Arrangements across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire West Integrated Care System

In July 2021, the Committee considered and recommended to Council, a proposal to form a new, mandatory, joint committee with health scrutiny powers to consider matters affecting patient flows across the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire West Integrated Care System geography. This would help to improve the planning, development, operation and integration of health and care services, and in turn would improve health outcomes for local residents.

NHS Dentistry

At the Committee’s September 2021 meeting, Hugh O’Keeffe, Senior Commissioning Manager Dental, NHS England and NHS Improvement – South East, provided a briefing on

access to NHS dentists during the pandemic. The Committee sought information on issues such as waiting lists, action being taken to increase appointment availability, funding, and service resilience.

Optalis

David Birch, Chief Executive Officer Optalis, and Matt Pope, Director Adult Services, provided a presentation on the performance of Optalis to the Committee's September 2021 meeting, and advised that whilst maintaining operational standards through the pandemic had been a challenge, staff had met it well. Members were pleased to note the success of schemes such as the Out & About service and the Ability Travel Scheme.

Health Integration

In February 2022, the Committee received a presentation on an annual project review of the work of the Wokingham Integrated Partnership. Members were informed of the progress and success of the various projects such as the implementation of the MIND Service, and Moving with Confidence.

Public Toilet Provision

The Committee sought to understand the toilet facility provision available to the public across the Borough, to establish whether it was sufficient in number and location. Members received information regarding the Local Loo scheme and also information from Crohn's and Colitis UK about difficulties that sufferers could face. The Committee recommended that the Council lead the undertaking of a review of signage and publicity of the Local Loo Scheme and other toilets publicly available within Wokingham Borough, facilitating information from businesses and the Town and Parish Councils.

Healthwatch

The Committee have continued to work well with Healthwatch Wokingham Borough and receive frequent updates on their work and issues of resident concern such as:

- Residents' views on services accessed during the pandemic;
- Accessing GP and NHS dentist appointments;
- Caring during Covid;
- Ageing Well;
- Continence service.

Scrutiny Impacts

- Ensuring that residents' needs are considered as part of the commissioning and delivery of local health services and continuing to work with Healthwatch Wokingham Borough to raise the profile of matters raised by residents.
- Gaining an overview of key health and social care services that serve the Borough.
- Championed the undertaking of a review into the accessibility and publicity of toilets available for public use, in the Borough.

SECTION 6

GETTING INVOLVED IN OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

The Council is committed to making Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings accessible to all residents of the Borough. A key aim is to increase public involvement in the process and to remove barriers to participation.

Residents can get involved in Overview and Scrutiny by attending meetings - all Overview and Scrutiny meetings are open to the public and are held in the early evening to make attendance easier. In addition, copies of Agendas including reports to be considered are published five working days before each meeting and can be accessed on the Council's website:

www.wokingham.gov.uk/council-and-meetings

During the Covid-19 pandemic, meetings were held virtually using Microsoft Teams. These meetings are accessed via a You Tube link set out on the meeting Agenda. Residents are now able to attend in person or view the meetings on line.

Residents can also elect to receive automatic notification when new Overview and Scrutiny Agenda and Minutes are published.

Each Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting includes a Public Question Time session which allows residents to raise issues of general interest and/or specific issues relating to the items under consideration.

Members of the public are also able to contribute to Scrutiny reviews by giving evidence either as an individual or as part of a community group. Residents can also request that a specific item is considered by Overview and Scrutiny as a review item. Residents can complete an online Scrutiny review suggestion form at:

www.wokingham.gov.uk/council-and-meetings/decisions/ask-for-a-scrutiny-review

During 2022/23 the Council will continue to use local and social media to raise awareness of issues coming before the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and to allow residents to provide comments and feedback.

The Council's Twitter feed is accessible here: [WokinghamBorough@WokinghamBC](https://twitter.com/WokinghamBC)

If you want to learn more about Overview and Scrutiny or want to discuss a specific issue, please contact Neil Carr, the Council's Scrutiny Officer:

by telephone: 0118 974 6000, or

by email: neil.carr@wokingham.gov.uk or by post:

Democratic Services, Wokingham Borough Council, Shute End, Wokingham, RG40 1BN.

REPORTS FROM MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES 2021/22

NAME OF ORGANISATION	REP(s)	PAGE NO.
Age Concern Twyford & District	Lindsay Ferris	3
Age UK Berkshire	Pauline Helliar-Symons	4
Atomic Weapons Establishment – Local Liaison Committee	Barrie Patman	5
Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust	Jenny Cheng	6
Berkshire Maestros	Sarah Kerr	7
Berkshire Museum of Aviation Trust	Bill Soane	8
Berkshire Pension Fund Advisory Panel	John Kaiser	9
Citizens Advice Wokingham	John Kaiser	10
Finchampstead Baptist Church Advisory Board	Simon Weeks	
Keep Mobile	Shirley Boyt	11
Local Government Association General Assembly	John Halsall, John Kaiser, Stuart Munro and Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey	12
Mid & West Berks Local Access Forum	Angus Ross	13
Readibus Management Committee	Guy Grandison	14-15
Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	Alison Swaddle, Pauline Helliar-Symons, Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey and Angus Ross	16-18
Royal Berkshire Hospital Foundation Trust Board of Governors	Parry Bath	19-20
Sonning & District Welfare and Educational Trust	Michael Firmager	Not met due to Covid-19
South East Employers	John Kaiser, Stuart Munro, Barrie Patman, Imogen Shepherd-DuBey	21
South East Reserve Forces and Cadets' Association (SERFCA)	Angus Ross	22
Standing Conference on Archives	Pauline Jorgensen	23
Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group of the LGA (SASIG)	Gregor Murray	24-25
Thames Basin Heaths Joint Strategic Partnership	Angus Ross, Simon Weeks	26

Thanks Valley Local Enterprise Partnership	Stuart Munro	27-28
The Piggott Trust	Graham Howe	29
The Polehampton Charity	John Halsall	
The Poors Land Charity	Abdul Loyes	30
White Waltham Airfield Consultative Committee	Graham Howe	
Wokingham and District Association for the Elderly (WADE)	Barrie Patman	
Wokingham Borough Sports Council	Michael Firmager	Not met due to Covid-19
Wokingham Borough Sports Sponsorship Fund	Parry Batth	31-32
Wokingham Job Support Centre Management Committee	Stuart Munro	33
Wokingham Volunteer Centre	Phil Cunnington	34
Wokingham Waterside Centre	Parry Batth	35-36
Wokingham Youth Counselling and Information Service (ARC)	Phil Cunnington	37
Woodley Town Centre Management Initiative	Jenny Cheng, Bill Soane	38-39
Woodley Volunteer Centre	Abdul Loyes	Not met due to Covid-19

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM

MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2021-2022

Name of Organisation	AGE CONCERN TWYFORD
Name of Member	LINDSAY FERRIS
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	WBC REPRESENTATIVE
Number of meetings called to attend	12
Number of Meetings attended	10
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate	One on leave, one could not connect remotely, despite several attempts
<p>Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year. Age Concern Twyford provides a day care facility at Lady Elizabeth Hall in Twyford. This includes presentations and lunches. Due to Covid, there were periods during the year when the Hall was closed. However there have also been periods when it was open.</p>	
<p>What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role? I was provided with all the appropriate documents and was treated as if I was actually a trustee. I acted on a number of occasions as an interface between them and WBC, in particular in relation to assistance with grants and Covid Government financial support.</p>	
<p>Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply? Very effective. Now that Covid is past its peak, Age Concern Twyford has managed to increase the number of elderly people attending the various sessions</p>	
Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?	Yes
<p>Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative Age Concern provides a valuable service. A number of attendees are funded by WBC and it is necessary to ensure a good link between the Council and Age Concern</p>	
<p>Please provide any additional information that fellow Members might find useful</p>	

Councillor: Lindsay Ferris

Dated: 22 February 2022

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM

MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2019-2020

Name of Organisation	Age Concern Berkshire	
Name of Member	Pauline Helliard-Symons	
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	WBC representative	
Number of meetings called to attend	2	
Number of Meetings attended	1	
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate		
<p>Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year. Support for older people. Key areas covered were working with other voluntary sector partners to form the friendship alliance which seeks to make Wokingham a more friendly place and reduce loneliness and social isolation. There is a new dementia strategy and they are delivering more dementia activities to Wokingham residents including online and face to face cafés, dementia walks and maintenance cognitive stimulation therapy. They also run carers groups and activities. They are delivering gardening projects in Reading and Twyford designed to improve mental health and wellbeing through horticulture. The CEO has been an active member of the Voluntary Services' participation in the Poverty Strategy that WBC is developing, and signed the draft document.</p>		
<p>What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role? An introductory meeting with the CEO.</p>		
<p>Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply? Without a doubt; one of our priorities is to look after the vulnerable, and older people specifically.</p>		
<p>Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?</p>		Yes/No
<p>Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative It is important we remain involved in activities that are happening for vulnerable old people and their carers.</p>		
<p>Please provide any additional information that fellow Members might find useful</p>		

Councillor: Pauline Helliard-Symons

Dated: February 28th, 2022.

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM

MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2021-2022

Name of Organisation	AWE Local Liaison Committee	
Name of Member	Barrie patman	
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Member	
Number of meetings called to attend	4	
Number of Meetings attended	3	
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate	Problems with virtual meeting	
Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year.		
Performance Safety change of ownership safety zone expansion future development		
What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role?		
Full information provided on the role of the committee plus monthly updates Not always clear on the role of the committee but restricted by security		
Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply?		
It is difficult to see the direct relevance to our objectives but their activities can impact on the areas where housing development is proposed in the Borough		
Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?	Yes	
Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative		
It is important for the Borough to be aware of what is happening in AWE as it is important that we keep our residents informed of what is affecting their area.		
Please provide any additional information that fellow Members might find useful		
AWE as now been taken back from private control and is back under Government control		

Councillor: Barrie Patman

Dated: 4th March 2022

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM

MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2021-2022

Name of Organisation	Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust	
Name of Member	Jenny Cheng	
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Governor	
Number of meetings called to attend		
Number of Meetings attended		
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate		
Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year.		
The Trust was accredited as a 2021 Global Digital Exemplar. The Trust is expanding its crisis provision by developing a Children and Young People's intensive and community and home treatment crisis function in line with the NHS Long Term Plan.		
What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role?		
I attending a training session when I first became a governor		
Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply?		
The trust is both very reactive to the neds of its patients and has a long term vision.		
Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?	Yes/xx	
Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative		
Please provide any additional information that fellow Members might find useful		

Councillor: Jenny Cheng

Dated: 14.03.22

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM

MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2021-2022

Name of Organisation	Berkshire Maestros
Name of Member	Sarah Kerr
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Observer
Number of meetings called to attend	5
Number of Meetings attended	4
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate	Unwell
Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year. Berkshire Maestros has continued providing music lessons to children in Berkshire. As we have emerged from lockdown, much of the music hub's teaching has been back to face-to-face.	
What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role? We receive detailed agendas and reports prior to each meeting, but nothing related to the aims and objectives of the organisation. However, I used to work for the organisation so understand this in depth.	
Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply? Berkshire Maestros is an integral part of providing music tuition in the borough and across the county. It provides a range of services including first access teaching to children in primary schools, and seeks to provide opportunities to children from a diverse range of backgrounds.	
Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?	<u>Yes</u> /No
Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative It's important that we work in a joined-up manner and Berkshire Maestros will be integral in helping WBC deliver on it's arts and culture strategy.	
Please provide any additional information that fellow Members might find useful	

Councillor: Sarah Kerr

Dated: 9th February 2022

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM

MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2021-2022

Name of Organisation	Berkshire Museum of Aviation	
Name of Member	Bill Soane	
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Observer	
Number of meetings called to attend	1	
Number of Meetings attended	Nil	
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate	Clash with WBC meeting	
Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?	Yes	

Councillor: Bill Soane

Dated: 7 March 2022

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM

MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2021-2022

Name of Organisation	Berkshire Pension advisory panel
Name of Member	John Kaiser
Capacity appointed, e.g., trustee, director, observer etc	Advisor
Number of meetings called to attend	4
Number of Meetings attended	4
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate	
Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year.	
To ensure and observe the working and investment of the fund.	
What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role?	
Training, yes	
Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g., has it met or contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply?	
Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?	Yes
<i>Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative</i>	
To ensure the fund is performing and investing correctly	
Please provide any additional information that fellow Members might find useful	

Councillor: John Kaiser

Dated: 16th Feb. 2022

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM

MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2021-2022

Name of Organisation	Citizen Advice	
Name of Member	John Kaiser	
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Trustee	
Number of meetings called to attend	1	
Number of Meetings attended	1	
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate		
Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year.		
Resident support		
What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role?		
Training and exams, Yes		
Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply?		
Excellent provider of services		
Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?	Yes	
Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative		
To understand the requirements and support needed and to help it achieve its objective		
Please provide any additional information that fellow Members might find useful		

Councillor: John Kaiser

Dated: 16th Feb 2022

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM

MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2021-2022

Name of Organisation	KEEP MOBILE
Name of Member	SHIRLEY BOYT
Capacity appointed, eg trustee, director, observer etc	NOT SURE
Number of meetings called to attend	6
Number of Meetings attended	3
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate	CLASHES WITH OTHER MEETINGS
<p>Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year.</p> <p>The meetings I was invited to were committee meetings which discussed things like staff disciplinary measures and mechanical issues with vehicles. The meetings were 45 minutes in duration. Straight after those meetings a Trustees meeting took place. I was not invited to those meetings.</p>	
<p>What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role?</p> <p>I was given verbal information about the charity including how Covid had impacted their operation. To be honest I am not sure what the role actually involves. I was asked some questions related to WBC</p>	
<p>Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply?</p> <p>I think the organisation is good at providing community transport for the elderly and disabled in our Borough. This is important for aiding social inclusion and maintaining independent living. I have no idea of the organisation's financial standing or whether it provides value for money, as at the meetings I invited to, no treasurers report was presented.</p>	
Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?	*Yes/No
<p>Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative</p> <p>*The role needs to be reassessed. The representative should be invited to the Trustees meetings where I assume strategy and bigger issues are discussed, instead of the committee meetings which are simply operational meetings.</p>	

Councillor: Shirley Boyt

Dated: 04/03/22

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM

MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2021-2022

Name of Organisation	Local Government Association
Name of Member	Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Member
Number of meetings called to attend	1
Number of Meetings attended	1
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate	;
Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year. There was only one meeting this year due to covid. The virtual conference was a single day.	
What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role? We received briefings on council funding proposals, Covid response proposals and new proposed planning reforms (many of which were removed between the conference and the end of the year) Also new housing target proposals .	
Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply? The LGA was able to help during the covid Pandemic and we got to talk to the health minister about covid response proposals	
Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?	Yes
Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative We need to have input to maintain the emergency services provision for WBC.	
Please provide additional information that fellow Members might find useful	

Councillor: Rachelle Shepherd-Dubey

Dated: 20 Feb 2022

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM

MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2021-2022 Name of Organisation	Mid & West Berks Local Access Forum
Name of Member	Cllr Angus Ross
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Appointed WBC Member
Number of meetings called to attend	4 - virtual
Number of Meetings attended	4
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate	n/a
<p>Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year.</p> <p>LAF continues to monitor and comment on the three councils (West Berks, Reading & Wokingham) Rights of Way Improvement Plans (ROWIPs) and the maintenance of Public Rights of Way (PROW). Also commenting on possible access opportunities post Brexit and continuing issues with use of Byways. We continue to promote the work WBC is doing with cooperation from the Loddon Valley Ramblers (including installation of a number of kissing gates to replace stiles), Greenways and the Loddon and Blackwater Paths.</p>	
<p>What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role?</p> <p>Have been rep for a number of years. The Constitution is well established as it is a statutory body.</p>	
<p>Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply?</p> <p>Effective and contributes to support the H&WB agenda providing good PROW for exercise and outdoor enjoyment.</p>	
Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?	Yes Statutory
<p>Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative</p> <p><i>Need WBC to be represented by an elected member on this statutory body</i></p>	

Councillor: Angus Ross

Dated: 16 Feb 2022

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM

MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2021-22

Name of Organisation	ReadiBus
Name of Member	Guy Grandison
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Trustee/director
Number of meetings called to attend	8
Number of Meetings attended	5
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate	Other Meetings and work commitments
<p>Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year.</p> <p>ReadiBus is the dial-a-ride bus service for people with restricted mobility in and around Reading. The bus service is for people of all ages who cannot make use of the mainstream bus services offered in the area. When ReadiBus started out, mainstream bus services and other forms of public transport were much more difficult for people with restricted mobility to use.</p>	
<p>What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role?</p> <p>Before all Meetings, we receive additional information from the General Manager and other Trustees as to the operational capacity and financial stability of ReadiBus. This information is highly detailed and informative and should further information be required then all that is needed to be done is ask the General Manager for further information either before or during a meeting.</p>	
<p>Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply?</p> <p>ReadiBus continues to develop as an organisation and continues to have a growing and loyal userbase.</p> <p>The change last year from the block model to the service contract has lead to increased client satisfaction along the service in general, the challenges bedding in has now mostly been resolved. And considering the challenges of covid to be able to produce and supply a balanced budget without impacting on core services has been a hard task.</p>	

From last year the Contention against another council has been resolved with the ombudsman siding with Readibus and the other council issuing in apology with Readibus now moving forward.

The number of complaints in the last year has dropped and punctuality has improved again. The number of miles travelled per bus has decreased but the efficiency of passengers carried per mile has increased.

Having been on the buses there is a great community atmosphere between users and all are felt welcome during trips.

ReadiBus has some challenges ahead and is rising to meet them and they deserve the continued support of Wokingham Borough Council as they perform a vital community service to local residents and there is more that WBC can do to support them beyond the purely financial side, especially in regards to changes to petrol and diesel buses due to their higher operating and capital costs.

It is a fantastically run organisation both in terms of passion and belief in what is being done and has been running in the reading area for over 35 years now.
long may it continue.

Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?	Yes
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Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative They provide a vital community service for thousands of WBC residents.
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Please provide any additional information that fellow Members might find useful Nothing currently

Representative: Guy Grandison

Signed: *Guy Grandison*

Dated: 11/03/22

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM

MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2021-2022

Name of Organisation	Royal Berkshire Fire Authority
Name of Member	<p>Pauline Helliard-Symons, Vice Chairman, Vice Chairman of Management committee and Lead member for Organisational Development</p> <p>Angus Ross, Strategic Assets Lead and Thames Valley Fire Control joint committee representative, and member of Management committee</p> <p>Rachelle Shepherd-duBey, Leader of Liberal Democrat members, and member of Management committee</p> <p>Anne Chadwick until February, then Alison Swaddle, member of Audit and Governance committee</p>
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	WBC representatives on the Fire Authority
Number of meetings called to attend	Varies according to each member and their role.
Number of Meetings attended	Almost 100% in all cases.
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate	
Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year	
<p>There have been a number of changes to the structure and personnel of the Senior Leadership Team. Last June we appointed a new Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, Wayne Bowcock, previously CFO for Gloucestershire. Wayne has fitted our ethos perfectly of One Team for Berkshire. Nikki Richardson was appointed internally as the Deputy Chief Executive, and the previous Assistant Chief Fire Officer as the Deputy Chief Fire Officer. A new Assistant Chief Fire Officer is currently being appointed, from a very strong field of candidates. Relations between members and officers remain very strong, with all of us working as 'one team' in the interests of fire safety in Berkshire.</p> <p>Our HMI inspection last summer rated us one of the very few 'Good' Fire Services in the whole country, and this attracts good people to apply to work with us.</p> <p>During the past Municipal Year. we've covered the funding problems due to being one of the bottom 10 FRS services in the country and why we need the 'Fiver for fire'; after lobbying our local MPs, this was granted, and became this year's Council tax increase - an increase of £5 for the whole year, or about 10p a week extra. The budget of course remains very tight,</p>	

but is well managed thanks to our superb Finance team and the Lead member for Budget (another Borough's councillor).

The service, with support from Cllr Ross as Armed Forces Champion, has set up a series of Veterans' Hub meetings to provide access for Military Veterans to support organisations and to meet fellow Veterans. Three meetings already held, two virtual and one in person.

The joint fire control room (TVFCS) has been exemplary in continuing its role over the Covid period. The control room has been isolated to minimise cross infection. The Joint Committee (2 each from Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire) now meets twice yearly plus 2 working group meetings, all chaired this year by Cllr Ross. Plans are starting for the first major hardware and software update since opening in 2015.

Another area was how the fire service was able to assist the NHS during the pandemic by assisting vaccination centres and helping drive ambulances. The RBFRS is now creating fire stations as tri-service stations for RBFRS, Thames Valley Police and South Central Ambulance service and there are now three tri-service stations – Theale, Crowthorne and Hungerford.

The tri-service community fire station at Theale opened with state of the art more inclusive and efficient facilities, space for the Police and Ambulance services and a community room. It replaces Pangbourne and Dee Road (Tilehurst) stations and those sites are being sold, together with the closed Wargrave station. An art competition at Theale Green school attracted 40 entries for a piece of art to be on the wall in the reception area with some superb entries, and the competition was won by a year 9 boy who will work with a professional graphic designer to have it made ready to go on the wall.

As Lead Member for Strategic Assets, Cllr Ross has worked with RBFRS to continue to develop the Property, Vehicle and ICT programmes.

What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role?

We received briefings on how the service was maintaining service targets during the pandemic and how we're assisting the NHS. Also briefings on the government funding and how we were only receiving a single year grant rather than the three year plans which enable better long-term planning of appliances, IT resources and the new emergency radio network.

In addition there are two officer/member workshops each year to devise future long, medium and short term objectives, and this is followed up by meeting with local members to shape the objectives for their own local Council's area.

There is also a member development working group chaired by Cllr. Helliar-Symons, which puts together an annual development programme to keep members up to date with developments in the fire service, to empower them to make good decisions. This is backed by one to ones with the Group leaders to establish each member's skills and areas of interest and any development needs for the coming year.

<p>Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply?</p> <p>Very well the RBFRS was able to maintain service target despite the pandemic.</p>	
<p>Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative</p> <p>We need to have input to maintain the emergency services provision for WBC, and how Council taxes are spent.</p>	
<p>Please provide any additional information that fellow Members might find useful</p>	

Councillors: Pauline Helliard-Symons,
 Angus Ross, Shepherd DuBey and Alison Swaddle.

Dated: February 28th 2022.

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM

MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2021-2022

Name of Organisation	Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust
Name of Member	Councillor Parry Bath
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Partner Governor
Number of meetings called to attend	6 plus other adhoc meetings
Number of Meetings attended	Council of Governor Meetings – 1 Membership Committee – Governor Noms & Rems Committee – 1 Governors Assurance Committee - 1
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate	n/a
<p>Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year.</p> <p><u>Governors Assurance Committee</u> The Committee receive updates from the Non-Executive Directors who highlight significant matters of interest or concern, and the Board's response, to governors</p> <p><u>Nominations and Remuneration Committee</u> The Nominations and Remuneration Committee considers the salaries and appointments of the Non-Executive Directors of the Board.</p> <p><u>Council of Governors</u> Hold the Non-Executive Directors to account for the performance of the Board; Representing the interests of members and the public.</p> <p><u>Membership Committee</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - keep under review the Trust approach to engaging with the membership community - develop, implement and review, annually, a membership strategy for the Trust and to prepare an annual report for the Council and the Annual General Meeting with regard to the steps taken to secure representative membership, the progress of the membership strategy and any changes to the membership strategy - keep under review the membership of the Trust to ensure that the actual membership is representative of those eligible to be members of each constituency - oversee preparations for the Annual Members' Open Day - consider any disputes concerning membership of a constituency, right to membership of the Trust and the conduct of individual governors - To seek the views of members and the public on material issues being discussed by the Trust and to conduct arrangements for collecting and reviewing views of members and the public on key issues and their experience of the Trust in general 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To recommend objectives to the Council of Governors which are achievable and within the resources available - To keep under review the implementation of the objectives - To oversee the annual evaluation of the Council and its performance and to recommend any subsequent action - To recommend a governor training and annual development programme - To make recommendations to the Council on how it interacts with members and the public on Trust strategy and feedback their views to the Council. 	
<p>What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role?</p> <p>Provided with relevant governance documents as well as schedule of meetings for the year ahead. Copies of all meeting agendas as well as Trust Board meetings to attend as an observer.</p>	
<p>Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council’s Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply?</p> <p>Very effective. Well led and chaired, yes the organization has met the Council’s Vision and priorities fully.</p>	
<p>Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative</p> <p>The Trust’s Constitution includes the rationale for having representatives from all local authorities in our constituent areas as part of the Council of Governors.</p>	
<p>Please provide any additional information that fellow Members might find useful</p>	

Councillor: Parvinder Batth

Dated: 8th March 2022

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM

MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2021-2022

Name of Organisation	South East Employers	
Name of Member	Stuart Munro	
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Member representing WBC and Executive board member	
Number of meetings called to attend	3	
Number of Meetings attended	2	
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate		
Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year. Please see attached information sheet		
What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role? A Full briefing was given by the Director when first joining.		
Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply? This is a well-used service and is a good vehicle for WBC to understand pay negotiations, benchmarking and employment trends		
Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?	Yes	

Signed Councillor...Stuart Munro **Dated:** 09/02/22

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM

MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2021-2022

Name of Organisation	South East Reserved Forces & Cadet's Association (SERFCA)	
Name of Member	Cllr Angus Ross	
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	LA Representative	
Number of meetings called to attend	3 and others promoting Armed Forces Champion & RBCMPB work.	
Number of Meetings attended	5 mostly virtual	
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate	Clash with WBC meeting	
Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year.		
Education about the Reserved Forces and the Cadet organisations, links for the Employer Recognition Scheme and promoting the needs of ex-Service Men and Women in our communities. Also, creation of the Royal Berks Civil Military Partnership Board and representing WBC on this. Proposed that WBC renewed its commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant in 2021.		
What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role?		
As a former officer in the RAF and keeping association with linked organisations, I was well aware of the aims and objectives. The role now incorporates being the Armed Forces Champion, a role I already played for the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority.		
Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply?		
Provides links for WBC to support the 3 Air Cadet Squadrons and 3 Army Cadet units in the borough plus two CCF units. Also, for WBC has taken on more responsibility having re-signed the Armed Forces Covenant to work in support for all Military Personnel and Veterans living in the borough and gained the Bronze Employers' Recognition Scheme. Supports the Lord Lieutenant's awards programme and annual event.		
Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?	Yes	
Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative		
As above and re work in WBC for supporting ex-Service Men and Women in our community.		

Councillor: Angus Ross

Dated: 17 Feb 2022

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL
APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM
MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2021-2022

Name of Organisation	Berkshire Archives
Name of Member	Pauline Jorgensen
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Chairman of the Standing Conference
Number of meetings called to attend	2
Number of Meetings attended	2
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate	n/a
<p>Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year. Berkshire Archives are slowly returning to Normal after the COVID closures, self service has been reintroduced and the office has reopened for booked sessions. The receipt of new collections has returned to pre pandemic levels. Recent acquisitions related to Wokingham Borough include the admissions register for Hurst primary school 1874- 1918, and the County Councils trading standards prosecutions. The Thames conservancy records have been catalogued and formed the basis of an exhibition 'Where smooth waters glide'.</p> <p>Funding has been received as part of a consortium bid to the Wellcome trust to catalogue and conserve the archives of eleven new towns, one of which is Bracknell, our share is £40,179. The funding for a two storey extension to the records office has been approved and is now progressing through planning, build is expected to start this FY. Finally, our accredited status has been renewed by the National Archives who complimented the service's sustained and effective work.</p>	
<p>What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role? Briefing from the county archivist on first joining - Yes</p>	
<p>Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply? Despite Covid the archive has continued to provide a good service and has improved the digital accessibility of the archives</p>	
Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?	Yes
Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative	

Councillor: Pauline Jorgensen

Dated: 14/3/22

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM

MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2021-2022

Name of Organisation	Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group
Name of Member	Gregor Murray
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Observer
Number of meetings called to attend	Three
Number of Meetings attended	Two
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate	Illness
<p>Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year.</p> <p>It has been another challenging year for aviation, with the industry still feeling the affects of the Covid-19 pandemic and the impact of re-instituted lockdown protocols.</p> <p>While all airline and airport operators rightly focused their attentions on ensuring their survival and rebuilding their business following the easing of restrictions, it is still likely that the full impact of the pandemic on the aviation industry will not be fully felt or understood for many years to come.</p> <p>From a strategic and operational perspective the role of SASIG during this period has been more observational rather than influential, seeking to support the industry in its efforts to rebuild and recover, rather than influence its direction or policy. Having said that, it is rewarding to see that SASIG has been working with the industry to influence efforts in relation to sustainability and de-carbonisation.</p> <p>SASIG's aim is to promote sustainable aviation and consequently the Group takes a close interest in noise, air quality, CO2 emissions, airspace change, and planning and safeguarding issues. It has generated responses to a number recent consultations, has flagged other key issues to DfT and has taken a strong position opposing additional regulatory burdens being imposed on local authorities.</p> <p>SASIG members were involved in the DfT's JetZero workshops and fed into the JetZero Consultation. Representations were made to the ICCAN review on Civil Aviation Noise, and to the Civil Aviation Authority in respect to its Flight Information Service.</p>	
<p>What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role?</p>	

Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply?	
I was provided with a documentary briefing as well as access to the SASIG members portal.	
Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?	Yes
Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative	
Aviation is a large employer for residents of Wokingham Borough, we are on the flight path to and from Heathrow, as well as having a number of smaller airfields in close proximity to our Borough.	
Please provide any additional information that fellow Members might find useful	

Councillor: Gregor Murray

Dated: 1/3/2022

**WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL
APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM
MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2021-2022**

Name of Organisation	Thames Basin Heaths Joint Strategic Partnership	
Name of Member	Cllr Angus Ross	
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Appointed WBC Member	
Number of meetings called to attend	2	
Number of Meetings attended	2 virtual	
Reasons for not attending,	n/a	
Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year.		
The partnership provides a vehicle for the joint working, liaison and exchange of information between the 12 local authorities, Natural England and other organisations affected by the Thames Basin Heaths SPA. The particular focus in the last year has again been on how the wardens operate under Covid-19 restrictions and how best the financial reserves are invested for the future.		
What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role?		
I have been the WBC rep since the setup of this organisation in 2007		
Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply?		
It meets the support for the introduction and management of SANGs in WBC area and protects the monies received from each new dwelling. It supports the SAMM spend of and policy behind the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring contribution and investment of funds now held for future management.		
Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?	Yes	
Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative		
We are represented along with the other 11 Local Authorities affected by the SPA and the EU Directive for protection of three species of birds who live and breed in the SPAs		
Please provide any additional information that fellow Members might find useful		
It is worthwhile to reiterate the benefit the SANGs provide to mitigate the impact on the protected birds in the SPAs – and also the considerable additional open space provided by new developments in the borough to improve residents' H&WB.		

Councillor: Angus Ross

Dated: 17 Feb 22

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM

MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2021-2022

Name of Organisation	Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership
Name of Member	Stuart Munro
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Member of the Thames Valley Berkshire LEP Forum
Number of meetings called to attend	5
Number of Meetings attended	4
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate	
<p>Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year.</p> <p>The Local Enterprise partnership (LEP) is a Government body set up to promote the Economy in the Thames Valley area and is a partnership between private sector and Local Government. As such each unitary Council in Berkshire has one representative on the board which is known as the Forum. Thames Valley Berkshire LEP was endorsed by the government on 28 October 2010 and incorporated on 16 December 2011 as a company limited by guarantee.</p> <p>Activity has been based on the decision by the Government to place all investment capital via the LEPS. In recent years the 39 LEPS competitively bid for this investment capital. The TVB LEP successfully negotiated £160m which includes the full, pre-allocated transport funds as well as indicative transport funding from 2017/18 onwards.</p> <p>In the past year the Forum has approved some limited funds to Local Councils in Berkshire in support of infrastructure projects, including in Wokingham Borough Council. In addition, funds have been approved to support business which offer real growth opportunities in the area mostly based around high tech business. In addition it has made loan offer</p> <p>The LEP has developed a Strategic Economic Plan that sets out the vision and business priorities for economic growth in Thames Valley Berkshire. This sets out a framework of delivery activity which is about to be implemented.</p> <p>The LEP is in the process of continuing support to businesses during the Recovery post Covid 19 lockdown.</p>	
<p>What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role?</p> <p>A Full briefing was given by the LEP CEO, and was comprehensive.</p>	

Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply?

It is essential that WBC plays a key role in the LEP Forum as much of central Government future investment will come through the LEP, although the complete future of the LEP and role may change.

Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?

Yes

If No, please state why

Please provide any additional information that fellow Members might find useful

Councillor...Stuart Munro

Dated 09/02/2022

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM

MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2020-2021

Name of Organisation	THE PIGGOTT TRUST
Name of Member	GRAHAM HOWE
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	WBC REPRESENTATIVE
Number of meetings called to attend	2
Number of Meetings attended	1
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate	Other Council commitments.
Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year. GRANTS TO LOCAL YOUTHS IN EDUCATION AND OTHER YOUNG PEOPLE WITH FINANCIAL NEEDS	
What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role? BRIEFING FROM CHAIR AND MEMBERS	
Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply? PIGGOTT TRUST IS PROACTIVE IN PROMOTING HOW IT CAN HELP YOUTH AND WORKS COLLABORATIVELY WITH LOCAL SCHOOLS	
Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?	Yes/No YES
Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative HELPS WBC STAY IN CONTACT WITH NEEDS OF YOUTH EDUCATION IN THE LOCAL AREA	
Please provide any additional information that fellow Members might find useful	

Councillor: GRAHAM HOWE

Dated: 11th March 2022

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM

MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2021-2022

Name of Organisation	The Poor's Land Charity	
Name of Member	Abdul Loyes	
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Trustee	
Number of meetings called to attend	Zoom Meetings	
Number of Meetings attended	-	
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate	-	
<p>Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year.</p> <p>The charity has indicated that they have set aside a budget for work to be carried out such as roof replacement, kitchen & bathroom replacement, external decorations of cedar. The Relief in Need spending will come up to £10,000 out of £15,000 allocated to areas such Woodley, Sandford and Charvil. Applications were also welcome from those who are qualified. A high point in the last year was the charity celebrating 75 years since the foundation of the Alms-houses Association.</p>		
<p>What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role?</p> <p>End of year accounts were received. The constitution has been upgraded. Their aim was to help and continue to support the people of Woodley and surrounding areas with accommodation and financial help.</p>		
<p>Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply?</p> <p>The charity supports the Council's vision to enrich lives, creating a safe and strong committee and communication with residents so they are kept informed. The charity has helped with issues that residents may be experiencing such as paying rent etc.</p>		
Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?	Yes/No	

Councillor: Abdul Loyes

Dated: 05/03/2022

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM

MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2021-2022

Name of Organisation	Wokingham Borough Sports Sponsorship Fund (WBSSF).	
Name of Member	Cllr Parry Batth	
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Panel member	
Number of meetings called to attend	1	
Number of Meetings attended	1	
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate		
<p>Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year.</p> <p>To provide grants to young people who have reached a regional or national standard in their sport but not yet in receipt of national funding.</p> <p>To provide funding or organise courses for coaches in their sport to improve the opportunities and abilities for young people.</p>		
<p>What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role?</p> <p>Wokingham Borough Sports Sponsorship Fund constitution and information from WBC officer on how the panel work and score applications</p>		
<p>Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply?</p> <p>The Sponsorship Fund recognises the achievements of our young athletes and provides financial support to individuals who show talent and have represented their county, region or nation.</p> <p>Council's Vision and Priorities Fostering Enjoyment and Sporting Excellence (pathways)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Increase the number of sport sponsorship participants performing at a high level (county and national standard).</i> 		
Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?		<u>Yes/No</u>
Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative		

The Panel will normally meet twice a year in March and September, with the latter acting as the Annual Meeting. Further meetings or agreement by email can be called to approve urgent funding, e.g. For coaching courses.

Each meeting will be quorate with three members.

At each meeting all Declarations of Interest will be recorded.

At the Annual Meeting items will include:

- a. To approve the previous year's accounts
- b. To elect officers from the Panel for the ensuing year- Chairman and Secretary & Treasurer'
- c. To review and confirm the Constitution

Representation ensures that the funds are used correctly and that panel members are able to make decisions for the good of our athletes and the councils use of funds.

Please provide any additional information that fellow Members might find useful

Councillor: Parry Batth

Dated: 15/02/2022

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM

MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2021-2022

Name of Organisation	Wokingham Job Support Centre Management Committee WJSC	
Name of Member	Stuart Munro	
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	WBC Representative	
Number of meetings called to attend	1	
Number of Meetings attended	1	
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate		
Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year.		
Since Appointment of the new board of trustees, the review of the funding from WBC (ongoing) WJSC continues as before.		
What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role?		
I am given a full briefing by the Trustees Chairman, Martyn Lambert who I have known for many years and receive a copy of their quarterly report.		
Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply?		
The Organisation provides an essential and well-respected service to the community		
Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?	Yes	
Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative		
As well as a well-used service, this is a good vehicle for WBC to understand employment trends in the Economic Development area, particularly in current Covid 19 times.		
Please provide any additional information that fellow Members might find useful		

Councillor...Stuart Munro.....Dated 09/02/2022

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM

MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2021-2022

Name of Organisation	Wokingham Volunteer Centre	
Name of Member	Phil Cunnington	
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Council Representative	
Number of meetings called to attend	2	
Number of Meetings attended	2	
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate		
<p>Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year.</p> <p>Returning to providing core services post-pandemic. Green 'n' Tidy gardening service is up and running and teams are making extensive improvements and maintaining gardens of those unable to do it for themselves. Transport scheme remains a main part of the activity of WVC and as hospital appointments are now being held in person, demand for this service is returning to pre-pandemic levels. WVC assist in finding volunteers for placement in many charitable and community organisations in Wokingham and it continues to do this including running the volunteer recruitment fair at Wokingham Town Hall.</p>		
<p>What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role?</p> <p>Brief outline and some documentation on current programs.</p>		
<p>Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply?</p> <p>No doubt WVC is well run and adapted its services during the pandemic to help meet the need in Wokingham along with other charitable and community organisations. It was a key partner in the Council's delivery during the past year.</p>		
<p>Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?</p>		<p>Yes/ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative</p> <p>In order to maintain good understanding of any changes which might require additional support from WVC but also to ensure WVC helps the Council in meeting its objectives and obligations.</p>		
<p>Please provide any additional information that fellow Members might find useful</p> <p>WVC was awarded ongoing grant funding during the recent CVS Awards scheme and therefore has secure funding for at least the next 3 years. Additionally WVC moved in the CVS Hub in Erfstadt Court.</p>		

Councillor: Phil Cunnington

Dated: 4 March 2022

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM

MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2021-2022

Name of Organisation	Wokingham Waterside Centre Ltd	
Name of Member	Parvindar Batth	
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Trustee	
Number of meetings called to attend	4	
Number of Meetings attended	3	
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate	Missed one board meeting due to a clash of commitments	
<p>Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year.</p> <p>Covid largely restricted activities to outdoors during 2021. The Centre was exceptionally busy with (socially distanced) canoeing activities during the late Spring and Summer 2021, with regular school and social activities continuing well into October.</p>		
<p>What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role?</p> <p>Yes – I had a personal tour and briefing by the Company Secretary shortly after my appointment in May 2021. I was given a document describing the Centre’s background, organisation, aims, and objectives. I was also given the current Annual Trustees Report and Annual Accounts and minutes of the last AGM and quarterly board meetings.</p>		
<p>Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council’s Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply?</p> <p>Very effective – it enriches lives by providing safe water-based leisure activities for communities in the whole Wokingham Borough. Despite Covid restrictions, it has continued to provide outdoor activities to young people (such as scouts), to schools and to people with disabilities (especially during last summer).</p>		
<p>Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?</p>		<p>Yes</p>
<p>Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative</p> <p>The Centre is a valuable asset to the Borough. WBC is a founder member of the Centre and drew up the Memorandum and Articles for the Centre in 2000 which require WBC to appoint a representative. The Centre leases the building from WBC and the representative is able to</p>		

monitor the management of the Centre to ensure that WBC interests are followed (the fabric of the building, the activities carried out and the finances of the Centre).

Please provide any additional information that fellow Members might find useful

The Centre provides safe organised activities for local schools and for people of all ages especially those with disabilities.

Councillor: Parry Batth

Dated: 15/02/2022

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM

MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2021-2022

Name of Organisation	ARC Youth Counselling service	
Name of Member	Phil Cunnington	
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Management Board member	
Number of meetings called to attend	3	
Number of Meetings attended	3	
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate		
<p>Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year.</p> <p>ARC has continued to deliver outstanding mental health treatment and support to young people and some adults in the borough. There has been a significant increase in mental ill-health in young people during the pandemic and this has seen the number of referrals increase but has also brought demand for ARC to support CAMHS in managing their waiting lists. ARC continues to train counsellors which will help to maintain or grow the number of counselling appointments available.</p>		
<p>What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role?</p> <p>Full briefing and copies of previous management meeting and AGM details</p>		
<p>Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply?</p> <p>Very effective organisation and makes the most use of the funds available to it.</p>		
<p>Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?</p>		<p>Yes/ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative</p> <p>WBC have responsibilities to ensure adequate mental health provision in the Borough and has a lead on wellbeing of children and adults. ARC is an ideal vehicle for this</p>		
<p>Please provide any additional information that fellow Members might find useful</p> <p>ARC has just been awarded lottery funding to recruit and train a Youth Information Worker for at least the next 2 years</p>		

Councillor: Phil Cunnington

Dated: 4 March 2022

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM

MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2021-2022

Name of Organisation	Woodley TCMI	
Name of Member	Jenny Cheng	
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Committee Member	
Number of meetings called to attend		
Number of Meetings attended		
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate		
<p>Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year. Several events had to be cancelled because of Covid, but the TCMI still put a Halloween event and Christmas Market.</p>		
<p>What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role?</p>		
<p>Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply?</p>		
<p>Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?</p>		Yes/xxx
<p>Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative</p>		
<p>Please provide any additional information that fellow Members might find useful</p>		

Councillor: Jenny Cheng

Dated: 14.03.22

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM

MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2021-2022

Name of Organisation	Woodley Town Centre Management Initiative
Name of Member	Bill Soane
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Observer
Number of meetings called to attend	2
Number of Meetings attended	Nil
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate	Clash with WBC meeting
Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?	Yes

Councillor: Bill Soane

Dated: 7 March 2022

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