



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

A Meeting of the **COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** will be held in David Hicks 1 - Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham RG40 1BN **WEDNESDAY 23 MARCH 2022 AT 7.00 PM**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Susan Parsonage', written in a cursive style.

Susan Parsonage
Chief Executive
Published on 15 March 2022

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. The Committee considers submissions from a range of sources and reaches conclusions based on the weight of evidence – not on party political grounds.

Note: Although non-Committee Members and members of the public are entitled to attend the meeting in person, space is 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 viewed live using the following link:

<https://youtu.be/KnPv5hpW8S8>

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WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Our Vision

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

Enriching Lives

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

Safe, Strong, Communities

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

A Clean and Green Borough

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

Right Homes, Right Places

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

Keeping the Borough Moving

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

Changing the Way We Work for You

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

MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Councillors

Guy Grandison (Chairman)
Anne Chadwick
Clive Jones

Sam Akhtar
Phil Cunnington
Alison Swaddle (Vice-Chairman)

Shirley Boyt
Paul Fishwick

Substitutes

Rachel Burgess
Rebecca Margetts
Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey

Pauline Helliar-Symons
Barrie Patman
Caroline Smith

Norman Jorgensen
Jackie Rance

ITEM NO.	WARD	SUBJECT	PAGE NO.
71.		<p>APOLOGIES To receive any apologies for absence.</p>	
72.		<p>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 January 2022.</p>	5 - 12
73.		<p>DECLARATION OF INTEREST To receive any declarations of interest.</p>	
74.		<p>PUBLIC QUESTION TIME To answer any public questions</p> <p>A period of 30 minutes will be allowed for members of the public to ask questions submitted under notice.</p> <p>The Council welcomes questions from members of the public about the work of this committee.</p> <p>Subject to meeting certain timescales, questions can relate to general issues concerned with the work of the Committee 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</p>	
75.		<p>MEMBER QUESTION TIME To answer any member questions.</p>	
76.	None Specific	<p>LOCAL POLICE SERVICE UPDATE To receive an update on local policing</p>	To Follow

77.	None Specific	LOCAL FIRE SERVICE UPDATE To receive an update on the local fire service	13 - 26
78.	None Specific	FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE To receive an update on flood risk management	27 - 32
79.	None Specific	ENFORCEMENT AND SAFETY SERVICE UPDATE To receive an update on the new enforcement and safety service	33 - 44
80.	None Specific	WORK PROGRAMME - 2022/23 To consider the draft work programme as agreed at the Overview and Management Committee on 17 March 2022	To Follow

Any other items which the Chairman decides are urgent

A Supplementary Agenda will be issued by the Chief Executive if there are any other items to consider under this heading

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 5 JANUARY 2022 FROM 7.00 PM TO 9.32 PM

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Guy Grandison (Chairman), Sam Akhtar, Paul Fishwick, Clive Jones and Alison Swaddle (Vice-Chairman)

Committee Members in Attendance Virtually

Councillors: Shirley Boyt, Anne Chadwick and Phil Cunnington

Executive Members Present

Councillors: John Kaiser and Wayne Smith (Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement)

Officers Present

Callum Wernham (Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist), Stephen Brown (Interim Assistant Director - Place), Neil Carr (Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist), Graham Ebers (Deputy Chief Executive (Director of Resources and Assets)), Roger Paine (Head of Service - Building Control Solutions), Ed Shaylor (Head of Enforcement and Safety) and Jason Varley (Operational Manager - Development Management & Compliance (Senior Specialist))

63. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

Shirley Boyt, Anne Chadwick, and Phil Cunnington attended the meeting virtually, and were therefore marked as in attendance, and they were not able to propose, second, or vote on items

64. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 13 December 2021 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

65. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

66. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

67. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

68. PLANNING ENFORCEMENT AND BUILDING CONTROL UPDATE

The Committee considered a presentation, set out in agenda pages 13 to 20, which outlined how Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) carried out its duties in relation to Planning Enforcement and Building Control.

The presentation outlined that most planning applications were approved, and most unauthorised development was acceptable and could be regularised through retrospective planning applications. The issuing of an enforcement notice should be used as a last resort, and WBC's approach to planning enforcement was in line with Government

guidance and was set out within the Local Planning Enforcement Plan. A total of 35 enforcement notices were issued by WBC in 2020, and these notices were only served once all other negotiations had failed. Most enforcement notices resulted in an appeal and usually a public enquiry, and WBC had a good track record in winning the majority of enforcement appeals. With regards to Building Control, this was a statutory service which was simultaneously in direct competition with the private sector for all projects regardless of their nature and size. Building Control ensured that building standards were met at the design stage and further critical stages of construction, however Building Control was not a clerk of works service. The enforcement of matters related to Building Control was restricted to one year after the completion of works, whilst prosecution could occur up to two years from completion of works. WBC was also responsible to intervene where there was a category one, serious hazard, in residential accommodation under the Housing Act 2004. WBC was unable to assist in a number of areas, including encroachment and trespass issues, party wall dispute, asbestos, or poor quality of workmanship.

Wayne Smith (Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement), Stephen Brown (Interim Assistant Director – Place), Roger Paine (Head of Service - Building Control Solutions), Ed Shaylor (Head of Enforcement and Safety) and Jason Varley (Operational Manager - Development Management & Compliance (Senior Specialist)) attended the meeting to answer Member queries.

During the ensuing discussions, Members raised the following points and queries:

- Was WBC deterred from serving enforcement notices due to the expense and resource involved? Officer response – No, officers always looked for the most cost effective and efficient way of resolving issues, and enforcement notices were only issued once all other forms of negotiations had been exhausted.
- To what extent was WBC's statutory Building Control Service in direct competition with the private sector? Officer response – WBC's Building Control Service was in direct competition with the private sector, and there were over 100 private companies across the UK, offering clients a wide range of choice.
- Was WBC's Building Control involved in the Loddon Field development? Officer response – No, this was dealt with by the national house building council, which most national house building companies chose to use.
- Who should be contacted where a private driveway was obstructed by a vehicle parking on the pavement? Officer response – As the pavement was part of the highway, this would be a police matter.
- How many Planning Enforcement officers were there to deal with in excess of 800 requests for service per year? Officer response – There were five officers in post for this function, however the Planning Department operated a hybrid model whereby planning officers worked across both disciplines to offer resilience.
- Was there any redress for the complainant of a potential enforcement breach should officers respond by stating that a breach had not occurred? Officer response – It was for officers to decide if there had been a breach, however if further information was provided (for example evidence that lots of clients were attending a home office for meetings) then officers would reassess the case.

- Where a case had been determined as not expedient to pursue, did this mean that the development was a breach however it was not cost effective to enforce? Officer response – No, this might occur where officers believed that a development would get planning permission, however the applicant might not want to pay for an agent to proceed the application and officers had to decide whether it was effective to enforce in each specific case.
- Who should Members and the public contact in the case of a category one and two hazard? Officer response – All such requests should go via the environmental health email. Once this service was fully integrated back in-house, this would allow WBC more control. WBC expected private landlords to address issues in the first instance, however where there was a lack of response WBC would intervene in the case of an emergency.
- Were there many cases of illegal HMOs within the Borough? Officer response – There were not as many instances as in neighbouring Boroughs such as Reading and Slough, although there were a number of HMOs on the western edge of the Borough. If landlords were hiding the status of a dwelling as an HMO then officers were keen for the public and Members to report such instances to environmental health. From April 2022 onwards, a list of licensed HMOs would be published on the WBC website to allow residents to check the status of registered HMO dwellings.
- It was noted that landlords had a responsibility to manage a HMO more so than a regular rented dwelling.
- It was noted that at the beginning of an enforcement investigation, officers would write a letter with a 28 day response time. If appropriate, officers would suggest a retrospective planning application is placed, and would offer a reasonable timetable for the application to appoint an agent.
- Where a neighbouring property undertook construction work and caused an issue, for example with rainwater drainage, would this be a Building Control issue? Officer response – In this instance this would be a Building Control issue, however if this was raised after more than two years since works ceased then this would be an environmental health issue.
- Were discretionary licences for HMOs being considered after the service was brought back in-house in April 2022? Officer response – Once the service moved back in-house additional data could be gathered regarding this issue, and Members could be appraised of the findings. The process of creating the discretionary license would be time and resource heavy, however if it solved a problem then it would be explored.
- Would the in-house service be effective from April 2022, and would improvements be seen? Officer response – It was hoped that the service would be at least as good as that offered currently by the Public Protection Partnership (PPP) in April 2022, and over time a variety of improvements would be made. Members, residents and Town and Parish Councils would be consulted regarding what improvements they would like to see. A good manager had been recruited, and several staff were being transferred from the PPP. Response times for a variety of issues would hopefully be improved, and a particular focus would be placed on responding to issues for vulnerable tenants.

- It was noted that whilst housing associations were responsible for dealing with accommodation issues and repairs, in recent times some associations had been experiencing resource issues.
- It was noted that the service from April 2022 would be far more accessible for Members, residents, and Town and Parish Councils.
- It was noted that should a discretionary HMO license be approved, this would apply to all HMOs operating on the day of approval and beyond.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Wayne Smith, Stephen Brown, Roger Paine, Ed Shaylor, and Jason Varley be thanked for attending the meeting;
- 2) The Committee be kept apprised of developments as Environmental Health moved back in-house in April 2022.

69. MTFP - MOVEMENT FROM FINANCIAL LOCKDOWN VERSION 1

The Committee considered a report, set out in agenda pages 21 to 40, which gave an overview of the movements of the revenue and capital budgetary positions since the publication of financial lockdown version 1.

John Kaiser (Executive Member for Finance and Housing) and Graham Ebers (Deputy Chief Executive (Director of Resources and Assets)) attended the meeting to answer Member queries.

It was noted that the only addition in terms of concluding the MTFP was a supplementary bid of £250k to cover the inflationary costs of the re-tendering for the supplier of home to school transport after the previous supplier went out of business. The cheapest tender came in at an additional £60k per term when compared to the previous supplier.

The Local Government Finance Settlement was only a one year settlement, and a great deal of uncertainty remained with regards to several factors including inflation, adult social care funding, construction costs, and the ongoing implications of the pandemic. Given the level of uncertainty, it was commented that a mid-year review to assess the presumptions made within the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) may be pertinent. The Executive Member commented that officers would have the option of providing a paper to the Executive asking for a supplementary budget estimate should services face additional costs in-year.

During the ensuing discussions, Members raised the following points and queries:

- How much additional funding did Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) receive within the Local Government Finance Settlement? Deputy Chief Executive response – WBC had received no revenue support grant, the same business rates as this financial year, a £0.83m reduction in new homes' bonuses, and additional £0.931m social care grant, and an additional £1.7m in other grants such as Covid-19 support funding. Overall, WBC would receive an additional £1.8m in funding, whilst inflationary pressures alone placed £8m of additional costs on the Council.

- How would the additional £6m in revenue expenditure, after additional grants, be covered? Deputy Chief Executive response – A combination of service efficiencies and increasing Council Tax and the Adult Social Care precept would cover much of the costs. After the additional £250k bid for the re-tendering of home to school transport, approximately £2.5m of the revenue budget would be funded through reserves.
- With regards to the predicted approximate £13m capital budget deficit over the next 3 years, what pending might be reduced to address this? Deputy Chief Executive response – This was the cumulative position of 3 years of spending and it could be addressed in a number of ways, such as re-profiling into future years, reducing the ambition or size of the scheme, finding additional income through grants or capital receipts, or as a last resort by increasing borrowing against the Council Tax payer which had not been done for a considerable amount of time. The numbers proposed this year were not dissimilar to the figures presented this time last year.
- Were the figures presented in relation to Adult Social Care still uncertain in view of the Adult Social Care bill? Deputy Chief Executive response – The figures being presented were the best figures to WBC's knowledge at this time, and had been run by the relevant Executive Member and Director. However, this had to be taken in the context of a number of uncertainties including inflationary pressures, Covid-19, and the proposed Adult Social Care reforms.
- What was the strategy with relation to when reserves reached worrying levels? Deputy Chief Executive response – The reserves were predicted to be at around the £8m mark which was a reasonable level, though not ideal. Historically, reserve levels of around £10m were a much more comfortable position, and the concern was that WBC could not keep using reserves year on year as the £8m mark would soon be eroded. Given this, it was commented that a mid-year review of the budgetary position could be presented to the Committee during the 2022/23 municipal year.
- How did WBC compare to neighbouring authorities in terms of Covid-19 expenditure, and had enough inflationary costs been built in to the proposals? Deputy Chief Executive response – WBC had managed to collect the highest percentage of their Council Tax in the country, however income had suffered more than at neighbouring authorities due to how WBC's leisure contract was constructed which had resulted in less Government support. Car parking had held up reasonably well, however outgoing costs were one of the highest compared to neighbouring authorities due to the level of intervention made by WBC which had resulted in a number of supplementary estimates being taken to the Executive.
- What was the additional £400k in 2023/24 in relation for staffing resource for Adult Social Care proposed for? Deputy Chief Executive response – This was proposed to deliver the transformation programme in order to create efficiency savings over time. The £400k was being brought forward from year 3 to year 2 in order to deliver ongoing change and improvement earlier.
- Had WBC heard any additional information with regards to the capital bid, CS 1, for the additional £6m in grant funding? Deputy Chief Executive response – This was in relation to the basic needs grant which had not been formally announced, and once more detail was received this would be assessed alongside all capital grants and the forecast would be adjusted.

- Had the additional forecasted car parking income via the increase of charges been abandoned, or delayed? Deputy Chief Executive response – The proposals showed that there was no proposed increase for 2022/23, and the decision to raise or increase the charges in future would remain, as it always had, in the hands of Members.
- It was noted that the savings proposals relating to income from solar farms and delivery of 1000 houses over 4 years at 5 percent had been merged with the community investment income bid.
- It was noted that the intention to deliver as many social and affordable homes as possible remained, however due to the significant increase in construction costs it may be difficult to realise a return of between 5 and 7 percent. This would be monitored as this could be a short term issue.
- Could more detail be given with relation to the community investment bid? Deputy Chief Executive response – This was previously known as the property investment group, which invested in the community for the benefit of the community whilst making income over and above the cost of inflation. Whilst there would be lesser returns in some areas due to the inability to be able to invest solely commercially anymore, the increasing cost of electricity presented other options for WBC in terms of the agreed and proposed solar farms.
- It was noted that the proposed crematorium was not going ahead, and the proposed credits had been removed from the proposed income stream.
- Could more detail be given with regards to the review of corporate accommodation? Executive Member and Deputy Chief Executive response – As a result of the pandemic a number of operational efficiencies had been realised including a hybrid model of working. As a result, WBC required a smaller operational footprint and work was underway to assess the most effective and efficient use of our accommodation. There had been a big increase in the number of homeless in the Borough, and options could be explored to reformat some of WBC's property to make better use of the space.
- It was suggested that some of the unused WBC accommodation could be offered to small businesses and start-ups at discounted rates.
- How long might WBC feel the effects of the additional revenue expenditure relating to the pandemic? Deputy Chief Executive response – Additional staffing and capacity would be covered by the Community Outbreak Management Framework, with much of these costs due to be reimbursed with the grant ending in March 2022. It was entirely possible that in the absence of further Government funding, supplementary estimates may need to be submitted to continue the undertaking of the pandemic response.
- It was noted that the special items bid related to additional capacity within the transitions team was no longer required as this was now being made a permanent resource.
- It was noted that the special item bid for reintegration of Trading Standards and Environmental Health was being deferred to year 2.

- In the backdrop of increasing construction costs, would there be any reduction in planned builds relating to SCAPE projects? Executive Member and Deputy Chief Executive response – Plans and commitments were being assessed to ascertain what money was precisely needed for each project. As these were such big projects, budgets were usually overestimated and the proposed figures were just a more precise version based on current knowledge.
- Would the re-profiling of funding for some flood alleviation schemes result in delays to essential works? Executive Member and Deputy Chief Executive response – Professional officers had considered that some schemes planned for year 1 would now be more appropriate in year 2. Additional detail could be sought from the Assistant Director for Highways and Transport.
- It was noted that detail regarding the capital bid for feasibility and first stage of new non-highway crossing would be sought from the Assistant Director for Highways and Transport.
- Was it unusual to have re-profiled figures being much smaller than the original predicted spend for large capital bids? Deputy Chief Executive response – This was not that unusual, and this was done to accurately predict how much of the total spend would be used in each year rather than assuming that all of the budgeted spend would occur in year one.
- Were there any additional capital spend challenges in relation to Adult Social Care? Deputy Chief Executive response – The biggest issue of self-provision was shared between Adult Social Care and Children’s Services. Should suitable land or facilities be identified and a business case support development then both services could see additional self-provision in future.
- Could more detail be given in relation to the savings predicted from electric vehicle charge points? Deputy Chief Executive response – This bid was initially placed as expenditure only, however the premise was now to provide charging points in a responsible way to cover WBC’s own costs. Any assumptions made now would likely be even greater in future due to the rising costs of electricity.
- Had the proposed works to the California crossroads been delayed? Executive Member response – The wider SDL had not come forwards as quickly as was anticipated, and to carry out the works as scheduled would cause major disruption to residents.
- Were works planned to the Shinfield eastern relief road? Executive Member response – This would be a big cost which would be assessed as time moved forwards. There needed to be a great deal of confidence over any works, and works outside of general maintenance and checking the road was safe was not required at this time.
- How much income was predicted to be generated from solar farms? Deputy Chief Executive response – In summary, £1m per annum over 25 years was predicted over and above the cost of borrowing. The ‘per year’ income would start lower, and increase as more sites came fully online.
- Were all proposed savings still viable and achievable? Executive Member and Deputy Chief Executive response – The process in place required the relevant Executive

Member and Director to sign off on all major proposals. As the Chief Financial Officer, the Deputy Chief Executive could not put forward a budget that he did not believe was reasonable or achievable. Key performance indicators had been reinforced this year, and officers had the opportunity to submit supplementary estimates should they require additional funding in-year. It was noted that even statutory funding increases would require Executive approval prior to spending.

- The Chairman commented that this process was an invaluable part of the budget setting cycle, despite the time taken involving Executive Members, Committee Members and senior officers, as it enabled a detailed oversight of proposals prior to budget Council.
- The Committee thanked John Kaiser and Graham Ebers for their attendance at all of the budget scrutiny meetings, their answers to queries and questions, and for putting together budget proposals in the context of a very uncertain time.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) John Kaiser and Graham Ebers be thanked for attending the meeting;
- 2) Detailed answers be sought from the Assistant Director for Highways and Transport, and circulated to the Committee;
- 3) A mid-year review of the budgetary position be scheduled for September 2022;
- 4) Officers draft the annual report of the Committee's work in relation to the budget scrutiny process, for submission to budget Council and the Executive, to be agreed in consultation with the Chairman.

70. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered their work programme for the remainder of the municipal year, set out in agenda pages 41 to 42.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Callum Wernham be thanked for attending the meeting;
- 2) The work programme for the remainder of the municipal year be noted.

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL PRESENTATION

Group Manager Dave Crease

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» CURRENT DEMANDS ON RBFRS

- Financial Position
- Target savings update
- Strategic asset investment framework
- IRMP
- Built Environment Programme
- Prevention
- Response
- Protection

» WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL PRESENTATION

Financial Position

(2022/2023 Budget - £38.446 million)



- Between 2010 and March 2016 we saved £4.96million from budget
- Between April 2016 – March 2022 we have delivered a further £2.401 million
- Savings target for 2022/23 is £177,000
- We are moving through a significant programme to refresh our capital assets



» WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL PRESENTATION

2015-19 £2.4Million Target Savings Update

- Restructure of service support functions and move to local Hub delivery model. Target £1.1million savings (Delivered 2017)
- Disestablishment of the Retained Support Unit. Target £425k savings (Delivered 2018)
- Introduction of new remotely managed station model and the FDO review. Target Savings £550k (Delivered £550,00 Nov 2019)
- Closure of Wargrave Station. Target Savings £168k (Delivered £168,000 2020)
- Closure of Pangbourne and Opening of Theale. Target Savings £168k (Delivered £168,000 2021)

» WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL PRESENTATION

Strategic Asset Investment Framework

- First new Tri-Service Community Station opened in Hungerford 2017
- Second Tri-Service Community Station opened Crowthorne Summer 2020
- Third Tri-Service Community Station opened Theale opened Autumn 2021
- 19 new generation Volvo fire appliances have been delivered since 2017 @ £250k each
- New 53 metre Aerial Ladder Platform became fully operational in August 2021 @ £800k
- Capital Investment up to 2025/26 financed within Medium Term Financial Plan



Strategic Investment Framework

STRATEGIC
ASSET
INVESTMENT
FRAMEWORK

2019 – 2034



- Planned Expenditure for 2022/23
- £1.25m investment in refurbishment of 6x Whole-time stations – programme of work to be completed in 2023
- Investment for 9 replacement white fleet (cars/vans) vehicles including 3x Hybrid, 3x Electric vehicles amounting to £246,000
- Investment in ICT of £891,000

» WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL PRESENTATION

2019-23 Corporate Plan and IRMP

- Sets out what the Fire Authority is planning over the next 4 years
- Currently in a planning year for our new CRMP
- Public consultation following our Risk Analysis



» BUILT ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

- Operations; Tactics and Equipment
- Operations: Call Management
- Risk Information
- HRRB Project



» PREVENTION PROPOSALS 2020-23

1. Ensure Equality of Access is at the heart of all Prevention activity
2. Introduce a risk-based programme of follow-up Safe and Well Visits for our most vulnerable residents
3. Enhance the quality and quantity of referrals received through our ARP
4. Within our Road Safety Programme include targeted activity for motorcyclists based on risk
5. Focus our activities in support of children and young people through our road water safety education programmes, Fire Cadets and Fire Safe



» RESPONSE PROPOSALS 2020-23

1. Undertake a review of our specialist water rescue capability to ensure it continues to be aligned to local risk and national best practice
2. In 2022/23, we propose to undertake a review of our incident support capability to ensure it continues to be aligned to local risk and reflects national best practice
3. Introduce 18 new members of operational staff through the Apprenticeship scheme
4. Introduce a multi-agency exercise schedule to enhance operational preparedness and alignment to National Operational Guidance



» PROTECTION PROPOSALS 2020-23

1. Develop our Risk-Based Inspection Programme methodology to look at both risk to property and risk of compliance
2. Continue to respond to changes in legislation and guidance related to building regulations and fire safety and ensure this is reflected in our policies, processes and ways of working
3. Actively promote the use of sprinklers and suppression systems as part of the overall fire safety solution to improve fire safety in both new and existing buildings.



Questions



» Thank you

25

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TITLE	Flood Risk Management Update
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Community Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Panel
WARD	None Specific
STRATEGIC DIRECTOR	Steve Moore, Director Place and Growth
LEAD MEMBER	Wayne Smith, Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement

OUTCOME

To inform Members of the progress made with the Lead Local Flood Authority's (LLFA) duties under the Flood and Water Management Act (FWMA) 2010 during 2021/2022.

RECOMMENDATION

Members are asked to review the report and note the ongoing work in relation to flood risk reduction in the Borough.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

Flood risk management is a key responsibility of Wokingham Borough Council in its role as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) following the introduction of the Flood and Water Management Act (FWMA) in 2010. The LLFA has been gradually progressing with the implementation of its responsibilities (to manage the coordination of surface water and groundwater flood risk to protect residents from flooding) whilst continuing to deliver existing reactive drainage maintenance services. This report provides an update to Members on the progress made during 2021/22. The next 12 months will also see further progress which will be reported back to the committee next year.

Background

During the financial year 2021/22, the Flooding and Drainage team made further progress in fulfilling Wokingham Borough Council's (WBC) statutory obligations as Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) under the Flood and Water Management Act (FWMA) 2010. The primary responsibility as an LLFA is to manage the coordination of surface water and groundwater flood risk in order to protect residents from flooding. As the highways authority, WBC is also responsible for ensuring that the highway drainage system is working effectively, to prevent highway and property flooding following heavy rain. To continue delivering these responsibilities, a number of actions have been taken over the past 12 months including:

1. CCTV condition surveys and repair works to the highways drainage system
2. The delivery of capital drainage schemes

3. Ongoing revenue drainage maintenance works
4. Comments on planning applications in relation to flooding and drainage
5. Smart drainage trials
6. Manhole Inventory
7. Thames Water partnership to reduce surface water flood risk and improve water quality
8. Designation of additional flood defence structures
9. Section 21 Asset Register

1. CCTV drainage surveys and repair works

In certain areas of the borough, the drainage network has been in place for several decades and as a result is prone to pipe collapses, blockages and leaks. This can lead to an increase in surface water flood risk following heavy rain. In order to understand the condition of the network and identify the cause of flooding in these locations, CCTV surveys can be carried out to assess the damage and identify the appropriate repairs required.

Between April 2021 and February 2022, the drainage team has commissioned CCTV surveys and pipe replacement works at the following locations:

Shinfield Road
Basingstoke Road
Davis Street
Barkham Ride
Old Forest Road
Bearwood Road

The repair works resulting from the CCTV works have led to a significant drop in reports of surface water flooding in these locations and consequently has allowed the flood response team to focus efforts elsewhere during heavy rain. Officers are currently reviewing opportunities for borough wide CCTV surveys followed by large-scale pipe replacement and are in the process of developing a capital programme of works to take place over the next 10 years.

2. Delivery of capital drainage schemes

In addition to the programme of CCTV surveys and pipe replacement works carried out this financial year, officers have worked with our contractors to finalise the design for the Barkham Ride capital drainage scheme, which is scheduled for construction from May 2022. This will involve the installation of a new pipe system to reduce surface water flooding on the carriageway.

Officers have also been working with contractors to finalise the design for the Church Lane, Shinfield flood alleviation scheme, funded through Defra Grant in Aid funding. It is anticipated that this scheme will be delivered later in 2022.

3. Ongoing drainage revenue works

WBCs contractor emptied over 40,000 gullies between January 2021 and January 2022 as part of the annual gully cleansing programme. During the cleansing process the contractor records the silt levels within the gullies, which officers have been using to develop a risk-based approach to gully cleansing. WBC now has almost 5 years of silt level monitoring, allowing officers to identify areas prone to silt build up. This information is reviewed annually and used to update the annual gully cleansing programme, ensuring that areas prone to silt build up are targeted more regularly.

In addition, over 1000 drainage issues reported by residents were triaged and actioned in the current financial year. Reports have included issues on the highways network, localised flooding, gully emptying, delivery of sandbags, replacement of small sections of pipe, installation of new drainage, manhole and gully lid replacements.

4. Commenting on planning applications in relation to flooding and drainage

From April 2021 to date, the Flooding and Drainage team provided consultation responses to 673 planning applications. This has helped to ensure that the most appropriate sustainable drainage strategies are being implemented by developers, in turn contributing towards a reduction in surface water flood risk across the borough.

5. Smart drainage trials

Between February and December 2021, the drainage team ran a pilot scheme that uses gully sensors to identify when a gully requires emptying. This allows for a more proactive, risk-based approach to gully maintenance, consequently reducing the number of reactive responses to flooding incidents. Three roads were included in the smart drainage sensor pilot scheme including Gipsy Lane and Wilderness Road, in Earley and Reading Road, Arborfield.

The results of the trial are currently being reviewed and if found successful in these locations, officers will investigate the feasibility of rolling this scheme out more widely across the borough.

6. Manhole Inventory

During the 2021/22 financial year the drainage team commissioned the clearance of 25% of the council's 5000 manholes, in accordance with the requirement of the Highways Maintenance Management Plan, which states that all WBC highways drainage manholes must be inspected at least once every 5 years in order to record condition and identify any required maintenance.

This routine manhole inspection and maintenance ensures that the drainage team can proactively carry out manhole upgrades and repairs, before defects lead to flooding.

7. Thames Water partnership to reduce surface water flood risk

The drainage team continues to work in partnership with Thames Water, to identify areas within the Borough where surface water interacts with the Thames Water surface water sewer, leading to pipe inundation and subsequent flooding. Officers are currently identifying areas of grass verges, roundabouts and other public open space where surface water can be stored to reduce inundation of the Thames Water system.

8. Designation of additional flood defence structures

Over the last 12 months officers have formally designated several features/structures within the borough, including drainage channels, filter strips, culverts and basins, that could have an impact on flood risk if significant changes are made to them. This means that the owner of the feature/structure is unable to make any changes to the feature/structure without the prior consent of the LLFA. Furthermore, the feature/structure will be shown as a designated structure on the local land charges register so that any successive owner is aware of its significance in terms of flood risk reduction.

9. Section 21 Asset Register

Under Section 21 of the FWMA the LLFA has a duty to maintain a register of features or structures within the borough that, in the opinion of the Authority, could affect flood risk. The LLFA must also maintain a record of information regarding the ownership and state of repair of each feature or structure.

The register helps the Council to develop more informed maintenance regimes, prioritising those assets that play a significant role in managing flood risk. It also helps to establish where the borough's drainage and watercourse systems are, allowing for quicker identification of the responsible authority in incidences of flooding.

The information is currently being stored in ArcGIS, allowing staff to view the assets via a GIS mapping system. Part of this information has been made publicly available so that residents are able to report faults with individual assets across the borough.

List of Background Papers	
The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/community-and-safety/emergencies/drainage-and-flooding/	
Contact Boniface Ngu	Service Green and Blue Infrastructure Place & Growth Directorate
Telephone No	Email Boniface.Ngu@wokingham.gov.uk
Date 14 th March 2022	Version No. 2.0

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New Enforcement & Safety Service

Update
March 2022



Recruitment

- Nearly all posts are now filled. Head of Service has been in post since November
- 3 managers have been appointed to start in March – Environmental Health; Licensing; Antisocial Behaviour. One manager vacancy currently advertised (Housing / Pollution)
- 7 appointments from West Berkshire / PPP plus 2 TUPE transfers
- 34 • 6 experienced ASB officers appointed – 4 more ASB officers will join (provided by a contractor NSL) to make a team of 10 from April to September
- 8 Environmental Health Officer and Animal Warden posts (job share) all filled
- Customer Delivery / Licensing Processing Officers appointed



	Number of roles	Not yet filled roles
Head of Service	1	
Service Manager	4	1
Environmental Health Officer (Senior)	2	
Environmental Health Officer	4.6	
Licensing Officer	2	1
Licensing Processing Officer	2	1
Senior ASB Officer	3	
Technical ASB Officer	3	
NSL Contracted ASB Technical Officer	4	TBC in March
Animal Warden	1	
System Administration Officer	1	
Customer Delivery Officer	3	
TOTAL	30.6 FTE	3



Recruitment in process



Services to be provided

- Environmental Health – Food Hygiene; Health and Safety at Work
- Pollution control – Commercial Processes; Construction Sites; Water Supplies
- Private Housing – Rented Sector; Caravan and Mobile Home Parks
- Licensing – alcohol; taxis; animal welfare etc
- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Animal Warden



Services to be purchased from West Berkshire

- Trading Standards
- Food Standards (eg labelling and quality)
- Air Quality
- Farm Animal Welfare and
- Legal Case Management



Mobilisation

The project teams are developing detailed arrangements required for a 1 April (Friday) launch, including:

- service launch communications internally and externally
- customer journey simplification eg phone, email, online reporting
- IT system set-up
- ∞ • Wokingham branded webpages, documents and telephone answering
- vehicles, equipment / consumables to transfer or purchase
- service base at Wescott Annexe for the ASB team (including out of hours)
- new staff induction & essential pre-go-live training planned for March



Phase 2

Post 1 April 2022 and after go-live

- Develop a new problem solving approach to ASB and nuisance issues
- Member-led **policy review** process, for example Noise and Nuisance; HMOs
- Procure **modern computer system** to drive automation & service improvement
- Explore **functional opportunities**, e.g.
 - Community Safety
 - Housing ASB
 - Planning Enforcement
 - Town & Parish Councils



Tasks for the new ASB service - reactive

- Domestic noise nuisance, such as loud music, large scale DIY
- Noise and dust from construction sites
- Unauthorised street trading or charity collections
- Fly tipped or burning of rubbish (either trade or domestic bonfires)
- Littering and litter from vehicles
- Breaches of waste management by commercial premises; waste on private land
- Pests causing a public nuisance
- Abandoned vehicles, bicycles, shopping trolleys, caravans
- Nuisance vehicles, eg car meets, car repairs or sales, unauthorised off road motor bikes
- Fly posting and unauthorised advertising (eg banners and A Boards)
- Premises which should have a licence but are unlicensed, eg HMOs and premises;
- Breaches of conditions attached to licensed premises
- Unauthorised encampments
- Neighbourhood nuisance where there is an impact on the wider community,
- Disturbances in or disrespecting public spaces, excessive barking, drinking, barbecues



Tasks for the new ASB service - proactive

- Regular and hot visible inspections of anti-social behaviour spots, to promote responsible behaviour, such as
 - Waste carriers to ensure proper licensing and disposal methods
 - Commercial premises for waste management
 - Parks and open spaces where ASB is reported
 - Licensed premises associated with disorderly behaviour
- Conduct investigations, surveys and surveillance aimed at detecting non-compliance with legislation.
- Take evidence, prepare reports and attend court, where necessary, in particular in relation to complex cases which may require:
 - Financial penalties or prosecution
 - Premises closure orders
 - Injunctions
 - Tenancy enforcement
 - Criminal Behaviour Orders
 - Public Spaces Protection Orders



Hours

- Weekday 8am to 6pm plus early start if required
- Saturday (10am to 6pm) and Sunday (1pm to 9pm) day times
- Friday and Saturday evenings (6pm to 2am initially)
- Bank holidays (except 25/26 December and 1 January)



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