

Please note that amendments were made to these Minutes at the meeting held on 7 July 2021.

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
HELD ON 16 JUNE 2021 FROM 7.00 PM TO 10.09 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Pauline Helliard-Symons (Chairman), 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

Other Councillors Present

Councillors: John Halsall and Gregor Murray

Officers Present

Neil Carr, Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist
Rhian Hayes, Interim Assistant Director Housing and Place
Will Roper, Customer Insight Analyst and Performance Manager
Diana Tovar, Climate Emergency Manager

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 23 March 2021 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

5. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

6. QUARTER 4 2020/21 PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Committee considered a report, set out at Agenda pages 11 to 52, which gave details of Council performance during Quarter 4 of 2020/21 (January to March 2021).

Will Roper, Customer Insight Analyst and Performance Manager, attended the meeting to present the report and answer Member questions.

The report stated that each quarter of 2020/21 had been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite the significant impacts of Covid-19 and the Council's focus on response and recovery, performance at the end of Quarter 4 remained positive across the majority of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). 80% of KPIs reported achieved the target (Green) or were near target (Amber). Only six KPIs were reported Red at the end of the quarter.

In order to focus the report on key issues a summary page was included for each department setting out the top three wins over the quarter, the top three opportunities and the key challenges.

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The report stated that, over the 2020/21 Municipal Year:

- 37 KPIs had improved performance;
- 8 KPIs had maintained performance;
- 11 KPIs performed worse at the end of the year;
- 5 KPIs had no direction of travel (not available);
- 3 KPIs were awaiting data (pending).

Appended to the report was a detailed breakdown of the KPIs for each department, including service narrative and direction of travel.

During the ensuing discussion, Members raised the following points:

CIC 16 – Stage 1 complaints per 100k population - provides data on Stage 1 complaints. Can Members see data on Stage 2 and Ombudsman complaints?

CIC 8 – number of fly tipping incidents – fly tipping has increased substantially in recent years – the target does not indicate a route to previous levels. Can the target plot a path back to fly tipping levels from three years ago? Should this be a Green RAG status?

CIC9 – Number of resident subscribers to Wokingham Borough Connect – needs a SMART target.

CIC10 – WBC social media impressions engagement and followers – needs a SMART target.

CS2 - % of child protection visits completed within 10 days – 10 day target is non-statutory – does this KPI focus on speed, impact or quality?

CS5 – % of former care leavers (up to age 21) in Education, Employment or Training - should the KPI refer to care leavers up to the age of 25? What is the basis for this KPI?

PG15 – Proportion of adults who do any walking or cycling, for any purpose, at least once per week - what is the relevance of this data? Are we reporting on people who walk for leisure rather than people who walk instead of travelling by car? This is a national indicator – can we provide data for the Borough?

PG16 – enabling sustainable travel: length of greenways and cycleways delivered - again this records leisure travel. Can we find a measure that records modal shift from car journeys to cycling?

PG22 – Carbon Footprint of Wokingham Borough. Could we see the carbon reduction target broken down annually over the next nine years to enable clarity on progress up to 2030?

PG25 – Carbon offsetting for Wokingham Borough – this refers to offsetting. This should be sequestration.

PG26 – Air Quality – the data should reflect the average of all the air monitors rather than a single monitor.

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PG3 – PG4 – how are these targets set? Are they SMART Targets?

PG3 – Local Plan Update - bearing in mind the lack of progress on the Local Plan Update, should this be Green?

PG8 – Planning applications are higher. Can we see a breakdown of different types, e.g. new houses v house extensions?

RA5a – % of successful homeless preventions - what is the impact of the Government ban on evictions?

Emerging Planning Reform which is unclear as to how it will affect the Council's ability to retain control of local development post 2024 – the Queen's Speech gave some indication on the shape of the planning reforms.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Will Roper be thanked for attending the meeting to answer Member questions on the Performance Management report for Q4 2020/21;
- 2) further responses be circulated on the specific KPI issues raised by Members;
- 3) a further report be submitted on proposals to make the performance reports more effective and timely, including an explanation on the process for setting targets and Red/Amber/Green (RAG) thresholds.

7. CLIMATE EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN - HIGHLIGHT REPORT

The Committee considered a report, set out at Agenda pages 11 to 52, which gave details of progress relating to the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) for the period January to March 2021.

Gregor Murray, Executive Member for Resident Services, Communications and Emissions attended the meeting to answer Member questions. Rhian Hayes, Interim Assistant Director Housing and Place and Diana Tovar, Climate Emergency Manager also attended the meeting.

Gregor Murray addressed the Committee and gave details of progress against key targets in the CEAP, as follows:

- Over £1.5m in additional funding, e.g. Active Travel, Defra, Salix (Energy Efficiency), Woodland Trust (tree planting).
- Commencement of work on two Park and Ride sites.
- EV Charging Strategy Survey informing work on a new strategy.
- Defra funding from Air Quality Action Fund (WBC officer).
- Joined air quality project run by Reading University.
- Planning application submitted for solar farm in Barkham.
- Established the Climate Emergency Fund (first meeting to be held shortly).
- Eco funding had led to improvements at 428 homes (cavity wall/loft insulation).
- Retrofitted schools across the Borough, e.g. added solar PV to Addington school.
- Full retrofit for home in Riseley as a pilot.
- Work started on new Waste Strategy.

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- Climate Emergency drop in session for Town and Parish Councils.
- Climate conversations with local businesses.

In the ensuing discussion Members raised the following points.

Park and Ride Projects – were the Park and Ride projects leading to the redistribution of existing traffic rather than traffic reduction?

If vehicles used the new Park and Ride in Norreys, what would be the impact on car parking in the town centre? Would there be a town centre parking review as a result?

Gregor Murray stated that Highways questions would be submitted to the WBC Highways team for a detailed response. In relation to behaviour change the Council needed to understand the reasons for local journeys across the Borough and develop alternative solutions. Park and Ride was one of these options.

There was a lot of engagement going on with local communities and schools. How were businesses being engaged? Gregor gave details of the Climate Conversations with local businesses. It was clear that many businesses were working on sustainability initiatives. WBC could play a role in supporting these initiatives, thereby helping businesses to reduce their carbon footprint. The aim was to speak to all businesses in the Borough during 2021/22.

The Council had delivered a significant increase in recycling over the past year. What work was taking place to deliver further improvements? Gregor commented that more work was needed to reach the 70% recycling target. It was also important to focus on reducing the amount of waste generated through a focus on reduce, reuse, recycle. Re3 would be a key partner in this process.

When would work start on the Winnersh Triangle Park and Ride? The impact of the pandemic over the past year (reduced traffic) should have provided a good opportunity to progress the park and ride. Gregor confirmed that this point would be referred to the Highways team for a response.

The report provided a lot of information on specific initiatives. However, it did not provide details of the carbon reduction arising. Nor did it set out the magnitude of carbon reduction from each initiative, so it was difficult to assess overall progress against the 2030 target. As an example, the stalling of the Green Bank project resulted in a significant gap in the CEAP. Gregor commented that the Government data used to measure progress was published two years in arrears. Big projects in the CEAP also took time to come on line and start to deliver carbon savings. Gregor would meet with officers to consider specific comments on the CEAP including any double-counting issues. The annual update on the CEAP would be submitted to Council in July. This would include greater detail on specific targets and the level of carbon reduction arising.

AS reported in the Climate Emergency Task and Finish Group's reports, there was a significant gap between the CEAP and the Net Zero target. Furthermore, the assumptions in the CEAP on the impact of national policy meant that 24% of the Borough's emissions did not have any mitigation assigned to them. What measures were being assigned to these emissions? Gregor stated that further details would be included when projects began to deliver carbon reductions. Gregor confirmed that there was a significant gap in the CEAP, but this reflected its status as a living document. The situation would continue

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to change as the CEAP rolled forwards to 2030. Changes in national policy would bring significant carbon reductions which benefitted the Borough.

What was the latest position relating to local deliberative processes? Gregor commented that research had been carried out into a wide range of potential processes from climate assemblies to focus groups and online forums. A report would be submitted to the Executive with a business case for adopting a specific process. Gregor was happy to bring the report to the Management Committee before it went to the Executive. This was consistent with a recommendation from the Climate Emergency Task and Finish Group.

The impact of the Barkham solar farm would be to save 1% of the Borough's carbon footprint, so was it worth building? Gregor commented that the solar farm was a useful project as it would deliver green energy for the Borough and would demonstrate the Council's commitment to tackle the Climate Emergency.

As discussed earlier, the KPIs relating to Climate Emergency needed to provide more clarity on the current position of individual projects. Gregor confirmed that he would be happy to talk to Members about any of the KPIs relating to Climate Emergency.

In relation to the new green recycling sacks, the sacks could not cope with large cardboard boxes. This resulted in more cardboard being taken to supermarket recycling sites – with additional car journeys. What was being done to ensure that large cardboard pieces could be collected at the kerbside? Gregor commented that the Council would collect large items, including large cardboard boxes by appointment.

Motion 420 to Council (September 2019) related to a strategy to deliver lower transport emissions. This included emission of carbon, carbon monoxide, particulates and nitrogen oxides. The CEAP update referred to a Low Carbon Transport Strategy. Was this consistent with the original Council Motion? Gregor commented that the Motion agreed by Council had led to the development of this strategy, which would be submitted to the Council shortly.

Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA) Fund – what progress was there in relation to a partnership bid with local bus operators and other stakeholders?

Increasing the uptake of cycling from local businesses by promoting the Love to Ride programme – was this comparing data from 2020 or 2019? Can metric measurement be used in future? Are these new cyclists or existing cyclists? What proportion of journeys relate to the switch from cars to cycling?

Completion of the Cross-Berkshire Cycle Route – the A329 cycle route is a poor scheme and is not complete. It is not suitable for inexperienced cyclists.

London Road Corridor – adaptive traffic management corridor. What carbon savings were identified in the March 2021 report? What is the forecast future saving as increasing network capacity has increased?

Speed management programme – why was the RAG Green when Phase 2 had not been finished and the A/B Road report had not been published? Gregor stated that the Highways queries would be submitted to the Highways team for comment.

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Local deliberative processes – would the evaluation of deliberative processes be submitted to the Management Committee in line with the Task and Finish Group recommendation? Gregor confirmed that this would happen.

What progress was there in putting solar PV on all WBC buildings? Gregor stated that WBC had committed to putting solar PV on schools and work was under way to assess the suitability of rooftops, which had to be strong enough to support the equipment. Safety was the number one priority. Officers could confirm progress relating to specific schools.

What facilities were situated at 12 Rectory Road and 75 London Road? Gregor confirmed that 12 Rectory Road hosted a community contact support centre. 75 London Road was a social housing project.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Gregor Murray, Rhian Hayes and Diana Tovar be thanked for attending the meeting to answer Member questions;
- 2) further responses be circulated to the specific issues raised by Members;
- 3) progress on the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan be noted;
- 4) a further progress report be submitted to the Committee at its meeting in October 2021.

8. CLIMATE EMERGENCY TASK AND FINISH GROUP REPORT 2021

The Committee considered the 2021 report of the Climate Emergency Task and Finish Group, as set out at Agenda pages 125 to 166.

The Task and Finish Group had focussed on transport, homes, renewable energy and behaviour change. The Group's proposed 2021 recommendations to the Council's Executive were:

Transport

- i) Ensure that the transport hierarchy set out in the Group's report is embedded into all highways and development planning and decisions. This includes ensuring that the Local Transport Plan (LTP4) and all subsequent iterations of the LTP are consistent with the CEAP and reflect the proposed transport hierarchy. Different highways teams must work collaboratively on this basis.
- ii) Review the road building proposals and measures for tackling congestion in the Medium Term Financial Plan (2021-24) to ensure that they are consistent with the CEAP and the transport hierarchy set out in the report and do not generate induced demand.
- iii) Undertake a Borough-wide Journey Needs Assessment, including consultation with key stakeholders, and use it to assess the viability of "green" transport options. In addition to walking, cycling and public transport, options should include electric bikes and scooters, autonomous guided pods (similar to the Heathrow Pod system), electric taxis and electric "last mile" delivery fulfilment.

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- iv) Review and adjust the CEAP targets to reflect the Government's announcement that the sale of new petrol/diesel cars and vans will end in 2030. Alongside this, develop a communication campaign and series of events to normalise the use of electric vehicles (EVs), linking with the strategy to provide the necessary EV charging infrastructure (this will include working with vendors).
- v) Ensure that the Bus Service Improvement Plan reflects the Group's recommended transport hierarchy, identifies barriers to increased bus usage (including affordability) and addresses the following issues:
 - Improving access to bus services through additional/enhanced routes;
 - Increasing public awareness through improved advertising, enhanced bus shelters with digital displays and greater connectivity with train services;
 - Pilot schemes for subsidised fares on specific routes to generate data on impact, cost and customer satisfaction.
- vi) Review the approved plans for the South Wokingham Distributor Road and ensure that this and future road schemes (including schemes currently in the design phase) provide safe cycle routes, segregated from both road traffic and pedestrians, in line with the recommendations in LTN1/20.
- vii) Use planning powers and funding opportunities to encourage the maximum roll-out of home, workplace, community-based (e.g. supermarkets) and on-street EV charging points across the Borough.
- viii) Explore the potential for introducing clean air zones at Twyford crossroads and Wokingham town centre in order to improve air quality and reduce carbon emissions.

Homes

- i) Following the scrapping of the Government's Green Home Grant scheme and the Council's Green Bank scheme, urgently consider any new measures to address the additional carbon and funding gap that this creates for the CEAP.
- ii) Introduce a Supplementary Planning Document linked to the current Local Plan to ensure that, whilst we wait for the new Local Plan Update to be completed, any new homes are built as close to carbon neutral as possible.
- iii) Engage proactively and work together with housing developers, planning to build in the Borough, to clarify the Council's position on Climate Emergency and explain the planning and building control requirements arising out of the CEAP.
- iv) Develop a Retrofit Strategy for the Borough. Consider a pilot Energiesprong (or similar) retrofit scheme in order to assess deliverability, generate performance data and customer satisfaction feedback.
- v) Recognise the barriers to "greener" homes and tackle the skills gap by developing a skilled workforce in liaison with colleges/universities and other partners. This will include use of the WBC housing companies to "pump-prime" training opportunities and skills development for local workers and businesses.

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- vi) Use the Council's housing companies to showcase the highest standards of energy efficiency in any future developments. These standards may surpass standards set in the new Local Plan.

Renewable Energy

- i) Confirm that net WBC income generated from solar farms and other renewable energy schemes will be reinvested in the Borough via the CEAP.
- ii) Recognise the importance of decentralised power generation (on individual properties) and dual use sites (such as car parks) and work with partners to develop a strategy which enables the uptake of renewable energy opportunities across the Borough for all domestic and private properties.
- iii) Work with partners to deliver a Borough-wide campaign to improve energy efficiency knowledge and behaviour in every household and business.
- iv) Confirm that renewable initiatives will fully consider the impact on biodiversity.

Behaviour Change

- i) Adopt behaviour change science as a golden thread throughout the whole CEAP, rather than a stand-alone action, to ensure that for every action, consideration is given as to how we will help enable people to adapt.
- ii) Recognise that lack of familiarity with new technology is a significant barrier to take-up and tackle this through short-term displays in empty shops (or pop-up facilities) in town centres and community locations. The displays to include workshops and demonstrations. Recruit, develop and support community champions to engage with local communities.
- iii) Submit the findings of the evaluation of potential deliberative processes to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee for evaluation and scrutiny prior to implementation. Publish updates and incorporate findings from the chosen deliberative process into the annual CEAP update.

Other Priorities

- i) Provide regular training for Members, staff and partners to enable them to support the targets in the CEAP. Ensure integration between departments and that Climate Emergency awareness is embedded into every service and key decision.
- ii) As part of the annual service/budget planning process, carry out reviews to ensure that policy, spending and functions align with the CEAP, identify any contradictions, then implement mitigation plans.
- iii) Develop project and financial appraisal systems that include CO2 emissions and climate impacts.
- iv) Review the following CEAP projections and targets:

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- the projected future reduction in CO2 from national initiatives (currently based on carrying forward historic rates of CO2 reduction) to reflect projections from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS);
- the CO2 savings associated with CEAP target 17 (20% of all homes to be retrofitted by 2030) as the funding for this work is uncertain;
- the relationship between CEAP targets 2, 3 and 4 – reduction in private car and van use (targets 3 and 4) will require far more than the proposed doubling of public transport use (target 2).

The Committee considered the recommendations and agreed the following changes:

Transport – recommendation vi) be amended to read:

“Review plans for future road schemes (including schemes currently in the design phase) to ensure the provision of safe cycle routes in line with the recommendations in LTN1/20”.

Note: Sarah Kerr requested that her opposition to this amendment be recorded in the Minutes.

The Task and Finish Group report state that the “initial” Climate Emergency Action Plan was published in January 2020.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) the Climate Emergency Task and Finish Group report, as amended, be submitted to the Council’s Executive for consideration;
- 2) the evaluation report on deliberative processes be submitted to the July 2021 meeting of the Management Committee, prior to consideration by the Executive;
- 3) the Committee monitor the implementation of the Task and Finish Group’s recommendations during 2021/22.

9. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2021-22

The Committee considered a report, set out at Agenda pages 167 to 171, which set out the items for inclusion in the Committee’s work programme for 2021/22, as agreed at the meeting on 23 March 2021.

Members considered the list of items and made an initial allocation to the forthcoming meetings in 2021/22, as follows:

7 July 2021:

- Discussions with the Council Leader and Chief Executive on Council priorities for 2021/22;
- Evaluation of potential Climate Emergency Deliberative Processes;
- Quarterly Performance Management reports – options for improvement;
- WBC Waste Strategy;
- Establishment of the Tree and Biodiversity Protection Task and Finish Group (report by November 2021).

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20 September 2021:

- WBC Response to the Covid-19 pandemic – Recovery Plan, Green Recovery and co-produced Anti-Poverty Strategy;
- Q1 2021/22 Performance Management report;
- WBC Website improvement plan and improvement plans for service delivery channels and customer service.

18 October 2021:

- Climate Emergency Action Plan Update;
- Local Plan Update and Five Year Land Supply;
- Delivery of Affordable Housing across the Borough.

17 November 2021:

- Unauthorised Traveller Encampments and delivery of transit sites;
- Emerging WBC Tree Strategy;
- WBC Continuous Improvement Programme;
- Q2 2021/22 Performance Management Report.

11 January 2022:

- WBC compliance with the Equality Act – WBC Equality Plan;
- Consultation on O&S Work Programmes for 2022/23.

23 February 2022:

- Air Quality management (joint item with HOSC);
- Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

17 March 2022:

- Confirmation of O&S Work Programmes for 2022/23;
- Progress against actions agreed in Council Motions;
- Approval of the annual O&S reports to Council;
- O&S Member training programme for 2022/23.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) the initial allocation of items to the Committee's 2021/22 meetings be approved;
- 2) further items be added to the work programme, as necessary, during the 2021/22 Municipal Year.

10. CONSIDERATION OF THE CURRENT EXECUTIVE AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION FORWARD PROGRAMMES

The Committee considered a copy of the Executive Forward Programme and Individual Executive Member Decision Forward Programme, as set out on Agenda pages 173 to 180.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) the Executive and Individual Executive Member Decision Forward Programmes be noted;
- 2) clarification be sought on the emerging WBC Procurement Strategy.

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11. ACTION TRACKER REPORT

The Committee considered the Action Tracker report, set out at Agenda pages 181 to 182.

RESOLVED: That the Action Tracker report be noted.