



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 **MONDAY 5 SEPTEMBER 2022 AT 7.00 PM**



Susan Parsonage
Chief Executive
Published on 25 August 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: Non-Committee Members and members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting or participate in the 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/ztPMr7kWQAw>

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.

Our Vision
<i>A great place to live, learn, work and grow and a great place to do business</i>
Enriching Lives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
Providing Safe and Strong Communities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
Enjoying a Clean and Green Borough
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
Delivering the Right Homes in the Right Places
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
Keeping the Borough Moving
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
Changing the Way We Work for You
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
Be the Best We Can Be
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Councillors

Peter Dennis (Chairman)

David Cornish (Vice-Chairman)

Shirley Boyt

Norman Jorgensen

Laura Blumenthal

Chris Johnson

Pauline Jorgensen

Gregor Murray

Alistair Neal

Substitutes

Chris Bowring

Anne Chadwick

Gary Cowan

Andy Croy

Michael Firmager

Abdul Loyes

Adrian Mather

Beth Rowland

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey

ITEM NO.	WARD	SUBJECT	PAGE NO.
22.		APOLOGIES To receive any apologies for absence.	
23.		MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 July 2022.	5 - 14
24.		DECLARATION OF INTEREST To receive any declarations of interest.	
25.		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 this committee. 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	
26.		MEMBER QUESTION TIME To answer any member questions.	
27.	None Specific	ENFORCEMENT AND SAFETY SERVICE UPDATE To receive an update on the newly implemented Enforcement and Safety Service.	15 - 22

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|------------|---------------|--|----------------|
| 28. | None Specific | PREFERRED REGISTERED PROVIDERS TASK AND FINISH GROUP UPDATE
To consider an update on the initial work of the Preferred Registered Providers Task and Finish Group. | 23 - 28 |
| 29. | None Specific | WORK PROGRAMME
To consider the Committee's work programme. | 29 - 34 |

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 4 JULY 2022 FROM 7.00 PM TO 9.14 PM

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Peter Dennis (Chairman), David Cornish (Vice-Chairman), Shirley Boyt, Laura Blumenthal, Gregor Murray, Alistair Neal, Chris Bowring, Abdul Loyes and Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey

Executive Members Present

Councillors: Paul Fishwick (Executive Member for Active Travel, Transport and Highways) and Ian Shenton (Executive Member for Environment, Sport and Leisure)

Officers Present

Narinder Brar (Community Safety Manager), Neil Carr (Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist), Andy Glencross (Assistant Director - Highways), Martin Heath (Traffic Management, Parking & Road Safety Team Manager) and Callum Wernham (Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist)

Others Present

Adrian Betteridge (Wokingham Active Travel)

12. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors Pauline Jorgensen, Norman Jorgensen, and Chris Johnson.

Councillors Abdul Loyes, Chris Bowring and Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey attended the meeting as substitutes.

13. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 25 May 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

It was queried why the bus strategy was not on the agenda for this meeting, as had been requested. Andy Glencross, Assistant Director for Highways and Transport, stated that the bus service improvement plan and the enhanced partnership were scheduled to come to Overview and Scrutiny in September prior to being signed off by the Executive. It was requested that any changes to the forward plan be specifically raised with the Chair to ensure that the Committee was aware of any changes, especially when items were of great importance to residents. It was agreed that officers would go away and confirm that the September meeting was still the most suitable time for items related to buses to be considered.

Andy Glencross stated that he would ascertain how much revenue support was available for bus services.

It was requested that any papers related to buses be sent to this Committee prior to being considered at Executive Briefing.

It was noted that an urgent Individual Executive Member Decision was scheduled on 13 July to modify the contract term for Wokingham Town bus services.

It was queried why members were not specifically named within the minutes. Callum Wernham, Democratic and Electoral Services specialist, clarified that it had been agreed at the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee to not name members within the minutes of any of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

14. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

15. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

16. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

17. COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

The Committee considered a report, set out in agenda pages 19 to 34, which gave an update on the work of the Community Safety Partnership.

The report outlined the strategic priorities of the partnership, including listening to the needs and concerns of local residents, and intervening early and preventing issues from escalating. The Wokingham Domestic Abuse policy had been adopted, which was in line with the new duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. Despite an overall increase of 10.9 percent of total reported crime, Wokingham Borough still had one of the lowest levels of recorded crime in Thames Valley and the Southeast, whilst 2020-2021 had seen some of the lowest reported levels of crime both locally and nationally due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Narinder Brar, Community Safety Manager, attended the meeting to answer member queries.

During the ensuing discussion, members raised the following points and queries:

- Was funding for the 'Here4You' team still in place? Officer response – The 'Here4You' service was the young people's specific service which sat within the youth offending service. The service had supported around 91 new young people this year alone, and was fully funded and looking to enhance its offering. The service was promoted directly via the youth offending team, at schools, via social media and via referrals from other health related services. Information was also made available to parents.
- Was liaison underway with housing associations to help combat antisocial behaviour within social housing? Officer response – There was a very good and well-established relationship with housing associations, however the main issue was the turnover of staff and understanding who was in charge of each property. The service being delivered had improved, hence the light-touch of this issue within the report.
- Was the increase in hate crime a result of people feeling more confident to report these incidents? Officer response – People were being encouraged to report hate crime via police colleagues and voluntary sector colleagues and third-party recording mechanisms. It was crucially important to get a community feel on these issues, and there was a way to go to get more third-party reporting at buildings including community hubs and the Council offices. In general, there had been a 5-to-6-year

Borough wide trend of increasing hate crime including racial, religious, and disability related crime.

- Were there any measures with regards to the success of the prevent program, or was this confidential? Officer response – This was quite confidential, as the Home Office was very careful with the information that was recorded and circulated in terms of the numbers of people coming into the prevent program. Case updates were provided to the prevent board, which outlined the types of risk being faced and the types of risks being de-escalated. The programme had expanded and influences including right wing terrorism, cyber-crime, and influences through gaming were now being investigated and dealt with.
- What training was being provided with regards to the prevent program? Officer response – There was a clear recognition that the word ‘prevent’ caused mixed feelings, especially within the Muslim communities. There was outreach towards local communities, and officers were always open to hearing how this could be increased and done in a more sensitive way. The programme had come a long way, and the year before last referrals from right wing individuals on a national level outstripped any other type of referral. The program was there to help individuals who may just be upset or confused about a range of different issues, and not just in relation to any specific radicalisation. There was a tiered training plan, which ranged from basic training all the way to specialised training for social workers. More granular information on the training program could be shared with the Committee.
- What was the sense of achievement of the specific aims of the service, what was the baseline of reported rape and domestic abuse which would allow members to see whether the increase was due to more people feeling confident to report these crimes, and what were the long-term trends beyond the pandemic years? Officer response – Future reports would contain longer term trends, whilst it was noted that the pandemic years were unusually low crime rate years. In terms of strategic aims, the service was now in a very good place with strong leadership, and had developed the community safety plan, partnership and a strong team which was different from the place where it had historically operated quite poorly on a strategic and operational footing. Violence against women and girls was a key local and national issue that was being addressed, whilst Wokingham now had a 10-person strong antisocial behaviour team which allowed for work to be carried out on the ground. The Borough’s out-of-hours response for antisocial behaviour was previously quite poor, and it was expected to see an increase in reports as the public gained the confidence that came with a new service. Longer term trends and information would be pulled together when the violence against women and girls action plan was developed, and it needed to be assessed as to whether the number of rape and domestic abuse cases were genuinely low or whether this was due to low confidence of victims. Nationally, rape cases were in a very bad place with an average of 600 days between a report being made and a disposal being undertaken.
- Could local, such as South East England, and national trends be added for future reports in addition to data from the years prior to the pandemic? Officer response – Data would be provided via 1, 3 and 5 year trends in future to give all of the data meaning.
- Could a table or graph be provided in future reports to show how Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) compared to other local authorities and to show how many of these

crimes were being solved? Officer response – Detection rates would be provided in future where this data was available.

- Whilst it was dreadful that anyone suffered from domestic abuse, it was good to see people having more confidence to report these issues and we should be setting ourselves targets to see how we could achieve 100 percent reporting.
- Why was fraud excluded from this list? Officer response – This was dealt with by action fraud, which was a separate entity for dealing with such cases. These were often very complex national and international cases which required specialist officers to investigate each case.
- It was commented that excluding fraud from WBC's Community Safety Partnership would be doing residents a disservice. Officer comment – As a partnership, funding had been made available to Trading Standards colleagues and there was some very close working underway to work through a list of vulnerable people within the Borough. A separate agenda item could be scheduled specifically on this issue, including specific data regarding how many instances of fraud and cyber-crime were occurring and the cost implications.
- What was being done to help LGBT children in homes, who were being abused because of their sexual orientation or identity? Officer response – This would be provided as a written answer.
- How was treatment of victims by the police being measured? Officer response – There were a number of different ways that quality control of police officers was being undertaken and monitored, including body cameras and positive actions that police officers must carry out. If a victim was unhappy with the response given, they could ask for a more senior officer to assess the case and body footage, and a formal complaint route was available if required. The partnership wanted to hear any instances of poor experiences with the police.
- How was the issue of inappropriate behaviour within the workplace being dealt with by the police? Officer response – This would be provided as a written answer.
- Was the partnership putting out advice to residents regarding keyless car thefts, and was this a growing issue? Officer response – As an affluent Borough, car ownership was high and investment in technology was high, which was attractive to criminals. Messaging was going out in conjunction with Thames Valley police in terms of the targeting of keyless car thefts.
- Were family gold thefts a priority for the police, and could anything be done to reassure residents? Officer response – This was a priority, however this was particularly difficult to deal with as it was linked to organised crime activity who had information about exactly which houses had gold and where it might be hidden. Insurance companies tended to replace the gold, and when the family took the gold back to the house the cycle often restarted once again and the victims were often repeat targeted, whilst very little proof was required to sell gold. The best thing people could do would be to store gold at a safe location such as a safety deposit box.
- Which category did bike and e-bike theft sit within? Officer response – This could be recorded in a combination of places dependant on where they were being stolen from.

Bike theft was less of a concern within the Borough recently as a lot of messaging had been distributed to the public over time.

- Could a value be placed on investigating and dealing with issues in terms of officer time and community value, in addition to prosecution rates being provided? Officer response – This would be provided by a written answer.
- A number of questions were provided to the Police in advance of the meeting, which can be found below.
- I have a question about the police's 101 number for non-emergency cases. What value does it add, what are the answer times, what resolutions come out of it? I ask because when asking residents to report issues via 101 there is a tendency to say it does not work. And thus, it is not used leading to other issues. To quote one case I tried to contact one Saturday evening and essentially just gave up. Police response - 999 calls to police are for emergencies where life is at risk, or a crime is in progress. 101 calls to police are to report crimes and incidents to Police where life is not at immediate risk, but a police response is required. Examples are far too numerous to detail but include a crime that has already occurred where a suspect is no longer on scene, a missing person where there is no immediate risk to life, a concern or fear for someone's welfare, an ongoing antisocial behaviour issue that requires police intervention. Our force target is to answer 101 calls within 3 minutes. In the year 21-22, 66% of 101 calls were answered within the 3-minute target and there is significant work going on to improve this. When a 101 call is answered, the call taker will go through a series of questions to determine the level of threat, harm, opportunity and risk and to determine how the call will be directed according. This will largely depend on the type of crime or incident that is being reported. For example, someone reporting a domestic violence offence will be prioritised over someone reporting that their neighbours parking is annoying them, but both are reported through 101. The nature of the call and often the crime type will of course dictate not only the response grading that should be applied but the best department to deal with the crime or the incident being reported (E.g., Uniformed response units, CID, specialist domestic abuse teams, local PCSO from dedicated neighbourhood team, traffic officers, safeguarding teams etc.). I have never known 101 not work. At times of high call volume there may be delays in getting an answer. Members of the public can visit the force website and submit an online report if they do not wish to hold on 101. Crimes, Incidents, road traffic collisions (non-injury), updates to ongoing incidents amongst many other things can be reported via the online tool. The online submissions are dealt with in a timely manner and can reach the correct department just as quickly as a 101 call can do.
- How will the police deal with e-scooters once the legislation changes to allow them? Police response - At present E- Scooters that are not part of a local government initiative are dealt with through road traffic legislation. E-scooters that are causing Anti-social behaviour can also be dealt with through Section 59 of the Police reform Act 2002. This provides Police the power to seize any vehicle being driven in an Anti-social manner. Our Neighbourhood Team recently ran two E-Scooter police operations to target areas where there were high usage of E-Scooters causing significant ASB. Even when legislation changes, police will still use Section 59 to target improper use.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Narinder Brar be thanked for attending the meeting;

- 2) More granular information with respect to prevent training be provided to the Committee;
- 3) Future reports contain longer term trends, and detection rates where available;
- 4) A separate agenda item be scheduled specifically on the issue of fraud, including specific data regarding how many instances of fraud and cyber-crime were occurring and the cost implications;
- 5) A written answer be provided as to what was being done to help LGBT children in homes, who were being abused because of their sexual orientation or identity;
- 6) A written answer be provided as to how the issue of inappropriate behaviour within the workplace was being dealt with by the police;
- 7) A written answer be provided as to whether a value be placed on investigating and dealing with issues in terms of officer time and community value, in addition to prosecution rates being provided;
- 8) The Committee receive a further update during the next municipal year.

18. CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT UPDATE

The Committee considered a report, set out in agenda pages 35 to 50, which gave an update on civil parking enforcement (CPE) within the Borough.

The report set out that the operation of CPE, as administered by the Council's contractor NSL, had met the objectives set out for the scheme adopted by Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) specifically by improving the flow of traffic by challenging drivers' previous parking behaviours. The introduction of the service had been cost neutral as intended, with income from parking fees and penalty charge notices continuing to cover service costs. The service had grown from 4 CPE officers in 2017 to 8 CPE officers in 2020 and now 12 CPE officers in 2022. Additional CPE officers had enabled the service to respond more regularly to parking concerns raised by residents and members.

Paul Fishwick (Executive Member for Active Travel, Transport and Highways), Martin Heath (Traffic Management, Parking and Road Safety Team Manager), and Andy Glencross (Assistant Director for Highways and Transport) attended the meeting to answer member queries.

During the ensuing discussion, members raised the following points and queries:

- Were there any specific TROs in place across the Borough in terms of pavement or verge parking? Executive Member response – If there were double yellow lines on the adjacent carriageway, then enforcement could be taken on the verge or footway. If there was obstruction of the footway itself, then this was a police matter.
- How often was the strategy for the location of patrols reviewed by WBC? Executive Member and Assistant Director response – This was reviewed constantly to target the areas where enforcement was needed the most. Every school was targeted every month with many receiving visits every week, and if a particular issue was raised by

residents or members then this was passed to the contractor to tackle until the compliance rate was increased substantially.

- Why were there no figures or targets in relation to the KPIs for the contractor? Assistant Director response – These were operational KPIs in relation to the contractor.
- Had a policy decision been made with regards to moving traffic enforcement? Executive Member response – This was being actively looked at whilst a business case was being evaluated, with the deadline for submission to the DFT (if desired) in January 2023.
- Why were enforcement penalty notices more expensive in Reading compared to Reading? Executive Member and Assistant Director response – This figure was set by the regulator on a national scale, and WBC's were already at the higher level.
- Was the CCTV trial at schools going to be rolled out to other schools, and would Beechwood be included in this? Executive Member response – There were 3 cameras available for use, and the trial would go live in September 2022 at two particular schools. The trial would be undertaken to ensure that this was working, and the cameras could be moved to other schools to address specific issues. A growth bid could be placed in future if the scheme was successful and deemed necessary for expansion. Beechwood was within the top 6 schools in terms of priority of dealing with existing issues and concerns.
- With regards to the contract renewal of 2 plus 2 years, would it be sensible to take such renewals to Overview and Scrutiny in future prior to renewal? Executive Member and officer response – Whilst the renewal was in line with the constitutional requirements, this would be a good idea in future to ensure that contracts were working well and were still the best solution for our residents.
- Were there plans to renew and replace old off-street car parking signs, especially considering the new 24 hour charging period (noting that this did not mean that it costed users money to park at all times)? Assistant Director response – There were some very old signs within the Borough, and these were being reviewed to ensure that they were in line with the most up to date TROs.
- It was requested that Crockhamwell Road car park be assessed for a change away from no return in 24 hours, to be more user friendly.
- What was the basis behind Wokingham Town having 6 to 10 times more penalty notices per month than the other towns? Assistant Director response – This was likely due to having more car parks in Wokingham compared to Woodley and Earley, and potentially a higher propensity for violations within Wokingham town centre.
- Was there data in relation to the usage of electric vehicle charging points and requests from residents for charging points outside of their homes? Assistant Director response – This would be provided as a written answer.
- How were responses to residents in terms of requests for TROs measured? Assistant Director response – TROs were undertaken via a Borough wide amendment which was more efficient in terms of administration however it took around 6 months. A

customer relations management system was being developed which would allow acknowledgements to be sent to residents and members.

- Was enforcement at schools heavily weighted towards town centre schools? For example, Floreat Montague school has seen various issues over time with little evidence of enforcement officers? Assistant Director response – Floreat could not be enforced prior to adoption of the road. It was not the job of the enforcement officers to talk to parents, as it was their job to issue tickets if the rules were being broken. Parking on zigzags were an immediate offence, whilst parents were allowed to unload on double yellow lines which meant it was difficult for enforcement officers to catch parents on double yellow lines long enough to issue a ticket, especially at drop off time. Every school was targeted and patrolled, and if there were specific concerns then members could contact officers to who would pass this on to the contractors to allow them to focus on a specific school for a period of time.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Paul Fishwick, Martin Heath and Andy Glencross be thanked for attending the meeting;
- 2) A written answer be provided in relation to the usage of electric vehicle charging points and requests from residents for charging points outside of their homes;
- 3) An annual update be provided to the Committee during the next municipal year.

19. LOCAL CYCLING & WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

The Committee considered a timetable, set out in agenda pages 51 to 52, which set out the timescales for the development of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).

Paul Fishwick (Executive Member for Active Travel, Transport and Highways), and Andy Glencross (Assistant Director for Highways and Transport) attended the meeting to answer member queries.

During the ensuing discussion, members raised the following points and queries:

- It was noted that it would be helpful for the Committee to receive a further update in November 2022.
- Could dates and metrics be included within the project plan with regards to actual delivery of infrastructure, and could some projects such as safe railway crossings which would be required regardless of the final shape of the plan be noted within the plan with dates for delivery. Executive Member response – This was a very high priority, and active travel England required an LCWIP, with a report to be produced in October 2022. The Borough had been awarded funding for the Woodley to Reading route, which would be consulted on in July after the previous proposal gathered significant objections. This year would see the start of a compliant LTN 1/20 between Woodley and Reading.
- Adrian Betteridge, Wokingham Active Travel, provided a number of comments to the Committee. Community views had been listened to and taken on board, both in terms of help with local knowledge of routes and how this was to be positioned with the local

public. It was crucially important to sell this to the public as they might otherwise only see the large costs, road vehicle space being given up to cyclists, and temporary disruption. The major benefits of the LCWIP included tackling climate change, air quality, health and wellbeing and congestion. If these priorities were not focussed on, people would likely only focus on the disruptions caused and not the benefits. The target of five-times the number of cyclists in the Borough by 2030, as set out in the climate emergency action plan, would not be met unless the LCWIP was progressed from a funding and delivery point of view.

- When will the proposed consultation and wording be shared with the Woodley Borough and Town councillors? Executive Member response – This would be shared very shortly, hopefully by the coming weekend.
- Had any further investigations been made with regards to the proposed removal of a number of car parking spaces within Woodley, which were used by low income and elderly residents? Executive Member response – A plan would be finalised and communicated prior to this coming weekend.
- Would a more detailed plan and report be presented to the Committee in November? Executive Member response – The original first draft plan was sent out for consultation last year, and responses were being evaluated to inform on a second stage of consultation later this month. More detail would be provided at future meetings.
- Was the consultation regarding a cycle route from Loddon Park to Twyford station part of the LCWIP? Executive Member and Officer response – This was a levelling up fund bid which was also included within the LCWIP, which had the support of Theresa May MP whilst a petition was being arranged by residents to support this proposal. This was a long-term aspiration of the Council to have a cross valley route to link Woodley to Twyford station.
- Would it be ensured that schools were engaged and consulted with? Executive Member response – It would be ensured that schools were thoroughly consulted with.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Paul Fishwick, Andy Glencross and Adrian Betteridge be thanked for attending the meeting;
- 2) An update be taken to the Committee in November 2022;
- 3) It be ensured that schools were thoroughly consulted on the emerging LCWIP.

20. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered their work programme, set out in agenda pages 53 to 56.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Callum Wernham and Neil Carr be thanked for attending the meeting;
- 2) The Committee work programme be noted;

- 3) An update be sought from officers with regards to bus services, specifically detailing options for funding routes and services as DFT funding was coming to an end;
- 4) An update on tackling fraud within the Borough be considered during September 2022;
- 5) An additional meeting be organised in November 2022 to consider the LCWIP Update and the Arts and Culture Strategy Update;
- 6) It was noted that a budget scrutiny training session was being organised;
- 7) It was noted that Committee members were invited to attend pre-meeting sessions 30-minutes prior to the beginning of each meeting.

TITLE	Enforcement & Safety Service Progress Report
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 5 September 2022
WARD	None specific;
LEAD OFFICER	Director, Place and Growth - Steve Moore

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

In bringing the Enforcement and Safety services back in house the intention was that the Council would have the ability to offer residents a localised service that meets their needs and expectations. Furthermore, the new service offered by the Anti-Social Behaviour Team is able to rapidly and efficiently respond to incidents by being available during times of increased demand.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee notes the report and provides feedback to Officers to consider for the further development of the service.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The Council left the Public Protection Partnership, a joint service hosted by West Berkshire Council, on 1 April 2022, from which date Environmental Health and Licensing functions would be provided in-house, with Trading Standards, Air Quality monitoring and Legal Casework provided by the PPP as commissioned services. A new Anti-Social Behaviour service started on the same date. Enforcement & Safety is the umbrella name for these services.

The report describes progress to date with some examples of casework which has been undertaken since 1 April. The disaggregation from the Public Protection Partnership was completed as planned and the newly formed Enforcement and Safety Service is performing successfully. The service has also received a large amount of praise from members of the public suggesting that residents are satisfied with the service being provided. The statistics presented in this report will provide baseline figures for future years, allowing the service to measure its performance moving forward.

Background

At Executive on 31 March 2022 it was resolved to note the progress made in relation to the repatriation of Environmental Health and Licensing from the Public Protection Partnership ('PPP') to the Council, the setting up of an Anti-Social Behaviour Team within the newly created Enforcement and Safety Service and that the Council will continue to contract services for Trading Standards, Air Quality Monitoring and Legal Casework from the PPP (until 08 January 2027 with an the initial term of the contract shall be at least 2 years). This report provides an update on progress and caseload of the newly created service to date.

The Enforcement & Safety Service delivers a mix of statutory and local priority services across the disciplines of Environmental Health, Environmental Protection, Private Sector Housing, Licensing and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB). Trading Standards and Air Quality monitoring is also provided via an external contract with the PPP. The team priorities include:

- a) Efficient, effective and consistent resolution of ASB and Environmental Regulation case work
- b) Show a visible presence in ASB hotspots and places where ASB has been reported to reassure the public
- c) Complete food establishment inspections by due date and verify and improve food hygiene standards
- d) Investigate workplace health and safety accidents and complaints
- e) Improve standards in the private rented sector and verify private water supplies
- f) Reduce environmental impact of developments and commercial processes
- g) Arrange public health funerals in appropriate cases
- h) Deliver an efficient and effective licensing service and Safety Advisory Groups for large events
- i) Work with Public Protection Partnership on Air Quality monitoring and report on the Annual Status Report and Air Quality Action Plan; the PPP will also investigate unfair trading and breaches of business and animal welfare regulation

Progress update

The information provided below demonstrates the volume of cases being reported to the newly created services. The figures for 2022/23 will be used as a baseline for future years in order to assess overall performance. Officers will also carry out benchmarking exercises to understand how the service is performing in comparison to other similar services provided across the country.

Licensing

384 Licence applications have been received (to the end of July) and **372** issued (including some which applied before 1/4/22) as follows:

	April-July 2022	April-July 2022
Type of Licences	No. applications received	No. applications issued
Driver or Vehicle	81	91
Animal	10	11
Small Society Lottery and Charity Collections	17	17
Street Trading	14	14
Temporary Event Notice	159	162
Personal or Premises (eg Alcohol Sales)	86	70
Skin Treatments	17	7
TOTAL	384	372

In addition to processing the above applications, the Licensing Team has organised Safety Advisory Groups (SAGs) for a number of large events in the borough including Rewind and Jubilee weekend – SAGs are held every month to consider the running of large events in the borough.

Licensing issued a counter notice to a Temporary Event Notice for the Gig House pub which requested an extension to their opening hours over the Jubilee weekend. This followed objections relating to noise and rowdy behaviour. The licence holder cancelled the event before a counter notice was received demonstrating a collaborative approach to preventing crime and disorder.

Wokingham Pubwatch has been arranged as in-person meetings. Officers and licensees are now looking to introduce street pastors in Wokingham and a Best Bar None scheme.

Environmental Health (Commercial)

There are 3 full-time environmental health officers carrying out proactive and reactive interventions and since the inception of the new service officers have carried out all food safety inspections due and responded to all reactive complaints and service requests. There is also a full-time manager who can carry out interventions. Below is a list of works completed by the environmental health team since the inception of the team.

Food premises inspections	116
New food premises registrations	65
Food related service requests	94
Reporting of workplace injuries and accident report follow up	21
Workplace health and safety related service requests	10

There are roughly **1,150** food businesses in the borough currently, depending upon new openings and closures. Two notices have been served on food premises for having no food safety management system or adequate training for staff.

There are **1,470** workplaces (which include the 1,150 food businesses) where the council is the enforcing authority for health and safety enforcement rather than the Health and Safety Executive. Current government policy is that proactive inspections of workplaces are not carried out unless there is intelligence of possible non-compliance such as accident reports, complaints from employees and the public or observations during a food hygiene visit.

Environmental Health (Private Sector Housing)

There are 3.6 full time equivalent environmental health officers carrying out housing and pollution work, plus a service manager.

Since April, we have received **62** new cases for Private Housing complaints about housing disrepair in the private rented sector or on mobile home sites, including 29 enquiries about houses in multiple occupation and 2 complaints about landlord behaviour. Details of some of these complaints are below:

- A privately rented property in Winnersh had no Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR), mould due to lack of ventilation, no working smoke detection and other items of disrepair. The subsequent EICR identified the installation to be ‘unsatisfactory’ and urgent remedial works were carried out by the landlord’s contractor to ensure the electrics were ‘satisfactory’. All other hazards were rectified within four months through voluntary compliance following officer involvement
- A privately rented property in Earley had a 30-year-old back boiler heating and hot water system with no Gas Safety Certificate, no Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) and other elements of disrepair including unsafe flooring. Voluntary compliance has been achieved in terms of provision of a ‘satisfactory’ EICR. The lack of Gas Safety Certificate was referred to the HSE as the enforcing agency which subsequently resulted in a current Gas Safety Certificate.

Environmental Protection

We have received **353** new referrals to Environmental Protection including **270** Planning (and other) Consultations and **23** requests for information and advice; **13** private water supply sample requests; **18** pollution from industrial or other processes; **29** environmental nuisance.

Two public health funerals have been arranged. One person died in a care home and one died at home with no family or friend who could arrange a funeral.

Anti-Social Behaviour

There are 10 ASB officer posts, plus an Animal Warden and a service manager. The service currently has 8 officers in post. A 7 day per week service has been provided since 1st April, with all shifts covered. The standard working hours are 8am to 7pm weekdays,

Saturday and Sunday afternoons / early evening and Friday and Saturday evenings up to 2am.

The number of cases the ASB team has received and has dealt with from April to July is:

- **85** cases of ASB (ie behaviour issues)
- **117** Noise Nuisance cases (**45** music/parties/TV/radio; **13** vehicles; **19** machinery; **11** dogs/animals; **6** DIY; **4** alarms/bells/tannoy); **19** other
- **47** cases of Environmental issues (**27** bonfire or smoke; **8** dust, spray, odour; **2** asbestos; **4** graffiti; **6** buildings or drains in filthy or dangerous condition)
- **39** Waste accumulation
- **109** Fly tipping investigations (not including non-investigated clearances)
- **7** Unauthorised encampments
- **40** Abandoned Vehicles and 5 parking issues
- **127** Animal Warden referrals (**16** stray dogs; **18** out of hours strays; **10** fouling; **22** welfare and advice; **26** dangerous dogs; **35** noise / smell)
- **35** Pest Nuisance cases

The total cases dealt with during this period were **611**, plus a number of general enquiries where advice was given.

Some examples of ASB cases dealt with are as follows:

- Complaint about fixing cars next to neighbour's garage (loud music, shouting and swearing) having a detrimental effect on the neighbours. Officers visited and spoke to mechanic's parents who said they would deal with it. Nuisance continued, however, so a Community Protection Warning was served. The offender has partially complied with the warning, so the next step is a formal Notice which has legal sanctions
- Hand car wash installed electric blow driers which were very noisy for residents across the road – a noise abatement notice was served and the noise has stopped – no issues since service of the notice
- Builder's bonfire - visit made to offending property, spoke with builder who confirmed that he had been burning waste. Bonfire now out & skip being used to contain waste.
- The ASB team visited the area around the Gig House and Elms Field over the Jubilee weekend and found that people were behaving and generally just enjoying the entertainment.
- Officers attended a "have your say" meeting on the 15th May at Bigshotte Park on the at the request of TVP, they listened to residents' concerns about noise nuisance: loud music, shouting, moped revving, bonfires, drinking, and potential drug use. WBC will follow up concerns with PCSOs and Police. Visits scheduled for after school and evenings

- Lytham Road, Woodley 4th May – fly tipper witnessed in Lytham Road, details sent to ASB officer to investigate. Statement taken and van owner traced. Fixed Penalty of £400 issued on 7th June
- Russell Way Winnersh - complaints about rat infestation. ASB officer visited 7th June and spoke to the residents at 6 properties about ways that households can make their properties less desirable to rats and what actions to take if they believe they have rats such as sensible methods for feeding birds, remove water sources from gardens and block up holes to stop passage and harbourage. Landowner has agreed to clear overgrown vegetation from surrounding land
- Cantley Park Destination Play Area - Numerous complaints were received about anti-social behaviour and damage to equipment in the park which resulted in some joint work by the ASB team, Sports and Leisure and the Cleaner and Greener Team. The ASB team undertook patrols and also arranged the installation of CCTV and signage to try and identify the perpetrators. The extra visits, signage and CCTV seem to be having the desired effect as we have not had any further reports.

Trading Standards cases

Trading Standards is provided under contract by West Berkshire Council's Public Protection Partnership. Some examples of cases are listed below:

- OS, of Erith, Kent, was convicted at Reading Magistrates' Court on 10 May 2022 after being found guilty of 3 consumer protection offences and was ordered to pay a total of £9,200.61. Consumers had used the internet to find and book a locksmith. Despite telephoning one company, a locksmith from another company turned up. One consumer was quoted £65 to £100 but once the work was done she was given an invoice for £418.80.
- KW, from Bracknell, pleaded guilty at Reading Crown Court to five counts contrary to the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008. Gardening work which had been paid for was not completed, and the actual work undertaken was not to a professional standard. Mr W was sentenced to 15 months imprisonment to be suspended for 12 months, he was ordered to take part in the Thinking Skills Programme and to pay compensation in the sum of £7,200.
- HB was fined a total of £4,074 for misleading commercial practice under the Unfair Trading Regulations. He had taken deposits for fencing work which was not completed.

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

The service requires a budget of £1,658,000 per annum

Cross-Council Implications

The service has established good working relationships with many council services such as (but not limited to) planning enforcement, highways, housing, adult social care. Facilities Management have been closely involved in accommodation provision for the ASB team so that they can operate 7 days per week.

Public Sector Equality Duty

An equalities assessment is not required in relation to this report as there is no change proposed to services delivered.

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 identifiable impact on the Council's carbon neutral objective.

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2

N/A

List of Background Papers

[Arrangements for the New Enforcement and Safety Service Report to Executive on Thursday, 31 March 2022](#)

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TITLE	Preferred Registered Providers Task and Finish Group Update
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 5 September 2022
WARD	None Specific;
LEAD OFFICER	Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

Effective delivery of top-quality affordable housing from both Wokingham Borough Council's (WBC's) own provision and from Registered Providers provides numerous benefits to our customers, including physical health and mental health benefits. Scrutiny of this service area provides the opportunity for a range of key stakeholders to be invited for discussions, and for positive recommendations to be submitted to the Executive prior to the renewal of the upcoming Preferred Registered Providers contract.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee consider the initial work of the Preferred Registered Providers Task and Finish Group and provide comment.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The report comprises of a brief extract of the work undertaken to date by the Task and Finish Group, alongside their agreed Terms of Reference (Appendix A). A further verbal update can be provided on the evening by the Chair and other members of the Task and Finish Group.

Background

The Task and Finish Group was established at the meeting of the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 25 May 2022. The Task and Finish Group met on 1 August 2022 to agree their Terms of Reference (Appendix A) including a list of potential witnesses to be invited to present evidence. At their subsequent meeting held on 15 August 2022, the Task and Finish Group received a presentation on the latest sector trends and best practice from Housemark, and had a subsequent discussion with WBC's senior housing officers with regards to WBC's current approach to monitoring registered housing providers and timescales for the implementation of the new contract for preferred registered providers.

Analysis of Issues

The primary focus of the Task and Finish Group is to promote, through a series of recommendations, a parity of top-quality service regardless of whether customers were housed directly with WBC or with a registered housing provider. The Task and Finish Group have identified a differing level of service between WBC and registered housing providers, with customers experiencing delays, lack of communications, and a generally lower level of service being offered via some registered housing providers.

The Task and Finish Group are keen to ensure that WBC's own social housing offer is also improved via the recommendations made at the end of the Group's research. Whilst WBC's social housing offer is believed to be superior in some aspects when compared to some of the social housing offered by registered housing providers, it is incumbent on WBC to seek to continually improve our own offer whilst striving to be an example of best practice.

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

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

None

Cross-Council Implications

Effective provision of top-quality social housing provides a number of benefits to customers who may access a variety of Council services.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Due regard has been given to the Council's Public Sector Equality Duties.

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 identifiable impacts on the Borough's Carbon Neutral objectives.

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2

N/A

List of Background Papers

None

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WBC Overview and Scrutiny

Preferred Registered Providers Task and Finish Group

Terms of Reference

1. To look at the service provided by each of the Council's preferred registered providers (PRPs) and to compare performance with WBC's housing service, WBC housing companies and industry best practice.
2. To recommend minimum service levels which tenants will expect of PRPs and WBC housing.
3. To consider the Council's current approach to appointing and monitoring Preferred Registered Providers.
4. To consider the legal framework underpinning this process.
5. To consider the views of local stakeholders.
6. To consider the views of Housing Associations and WBC's own social housing stakeholders.
7. To consider examples of best practice.
8. To consider how tenant satisfaction, housing provider performance and other KPIs are measured by PRPs, WBC and other social housing providers.
9. To consider how appointment of Preferred Registered Providers could be improved to create a single excellent level of service, regardless of whether a resident uses a housing association or WBC provision.
10. To produce a final report to the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee and, subsequently, the Executive with recommendations for improvement.

Witnesses

- WBC Members and Officers;
- Residents, stakeholders and community groups;
- Experts/representatives from other local authorities;
- A variety of Housing Associations and Preferred Registered Providers;
- Any other witnesses approved by the Task and Finish Group.

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COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DATE OF MEETING	ITEM	PURPOSE OF REPORT	REASON FOR CONSIDERATION	CONTACT OFFICER
EXTRAORDINARY 19 September 2022	Local Plan Update	To receive a progress report on the Local Plan Update	Committee request	Ian Bellinger
	Fraud Prevention	To consider how WBC is working with partners to prevent and tackle fraud	Committee request	Narinder Brar
	Work Programme	To consider the work programme for the Committee for 2022-23	Standing Item	Democratic Services

DATE OF MEETING	ITEM	PURPOSE OF REPORT	REASON FOR CONSIDERATION	CONTACT OFFICER
3 Oct 2022	MTFP	To receive a strategic overview of the draft MTFP	Work programme	Graham Ebers
	Homelessness Update	To receive an update on tackling homelessness within the Borough	Committee request	Rhian Hayes
	Work Programme	To consider the work programme for the Committee for 2022-23	Standing Item	Democratic Services

DATE OF MEETING	ITEM	PURPOSE OF REPORT	REASON FOR CONSIDERATION	CONTACT OFFICER
EXTRAORDINARY 26 Oct 2022	MTFP	To receive proposed capital and revenue bids within the MTFP	Work programme	Graham Ebers
	Work Programme	To consider the work programme for the Committee for 2022-23	Standing Item	Democratic Services

DATE OF MEETING	ITEM	PURPOSE OF REPORT	REASON FOR CONSIDERATION	CONTACT OFFICER
3 Nov 2022	MTFP	To receive proposed capital and revenue bids within the MTFP	Work programme	Graham Ebers
	Domestic Abuse Update	To receive an update on KPIs relating to the Domestic Abuse service and to receive an updated breakdown of instances of domestic abuse from within the Borough	Committee request	Narinder Brar
	Bus Service Update	To receive an update on bus services within the Borough	Committee Request	Rebecca Brooks
	Work Programme	To consider the work programme for the Committee for 2022-23	Standing Item	Democratic Services

DATE OF MEETING	ITEM	PURPOSE OF REPORT	REASON FOR CONSIDERATION	CONTACT OFFICER
EXTRAORDINARY 29 Nov 2022	MTFP	To receive a strategic overview of the draft MTFP	Work programme	Graham Ebers
	Arts & Culture Strategy Update	To receive an update on the Arts & Culture Strategy, including how every effort is being made to include as many groups and communities as possible	Work programme	Rhian Hayes
	LCWIP Update	To receive an update on the development of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.	Committee Request	Chris Easton
	Work Programme	To consider the work programme for the Committee for 2022-23	Standing Item	Democratic Services

DATE OF MEETING	ITEM	PURPOSE OF REPORT	REASON FOR CONSIDERATION	CONTACT OFFICER
19 Dec 2022	MTFP	To receive a strategic overview of the draft MTFP	Work programme	Graham Ebers
	Work Programme	To consider the work programme for the Committee for 2022-23	Standing Item	Democratic Services

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Task & Finish Group - To investigate the differences between Council managed social housing provision and preferred housing association managed homes. Members are concerned that there is a two-tier system, with good services offered by WBC managed homes compared to that offered by housing associations.

Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

1.	Scrutinising the development of the Council's Budget for 2023/24
2.	Reviewing the work of the Community Safety Partnership, the effectiveness of local policing and fire and rescue services
3.	Exercising the Council's flood risk management responsibilities by monitoring flood risk activities and partnership working with Towns and Parishes
4.	Reviewing the Assets Review Programme
5.	Scrutinising the Voluntary Sector Commissioning Strategy
6.	Scrutinising burial capacity across the Borough and the Council's plans to ensure adequate future capacity
7.	Scrutinising the Council's Localities service and measures to develop closer working relationships with Town and Parish Councils and the voluntary sector
8.	Scrutinising service and policy developments relating to the Council's public facing services and its in-house support services
9.	Reviewing highways and transport issues including highways contracts, customer service, car parking, Bus Strategy and cycling infrastructure
10.	Scrutinising the Council's Arts and Culture Strategy
11.	Scrutinising the implementation of the in-house enforcement and safety service
12.	Scrutinising the Council's Housing Services to ensure that the needs of local residents and communities are being met
13.	Scrutinising the operation and performance of the Council-owned companies and shared service arrangements
14.	Scrutinising the footpath network, including plans to make them more accessible
15.	Appointing Task and Finish Groups as appropriate

Other Items for consideration

Borough Wide Parking Management Strategy

Further Meeting Dates & Provisional Items

9 Jan 2023: MTFP

6 Mar 2023: Police & Fire Services update, Flood Risk Management Update