



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 23 JANUARY 2023 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 13 January 2023

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/Yb2j4RCMFZo>

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 (Chair)
Norman Jorgensen
Pauline Jorgensen

David Cornish (Vice-Chair)
Laura Blumenthal
Gregor Murray

Shirley Boyt
Chris Johnson
Alistair Neal

Substitutes

Chris Bowring
Andy Croy
Adrian Mather

Anne Chadwick
Michael Firmager
Beth Rowland

Gary Cowan
Abdul Loyes
Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey

ITEM NO.	WARD	SUBJECT	PAGE NO.
68.		<p>APOLOGIES To receive any apologies for absence.</p>	
69.		<p>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS To confirm the Minutes of the extraordinary meetings held on 17 October, 26 October and 29 November, and the Minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2022.</p>	5 - 46
70.		<p>DECLARATION OF INTEREST To receive any declarations of interest.</p>	
71.		<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>	
72.		<p>MEMBER QUESTION TIME To answer any member questions.</p>	
73.	None Specific	<p>COMBATING DRUGS PARTNERSHIP To consider an update on the work carried out to date in relation to the Combatting Drugs Partnership.</p>	47 - 50

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|------------|---------------|--|----------------|
| 74. | None Specific | <p>MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN (MTFP) - UPDATE TO BIDS</p> <p>To receive any changes to bids previously presented to the Committee, in addition to updates on actions from previous MTFP meetings.</p> | 51 - 84 |
| 75. | None Specific | <p>LCWIP TASK AND FINISH GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE</p> <p>To agree the draft Terms of Reference for the Local Cycling, Walking and Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) Task and Finish Group.</p> | 85 - 86 |
| 76. | None Specific | <p>WORK PROGRAMME</p> <p>To consider the Committee's work programme for the remainder of the municipal year.</p> | 87 - 90 |

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 AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 17 OCTOBER 2022 FROM 7.00 PM TO 10.26 PM

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Peter Dennis (Chair), David Cornish (Vice-Chair), Shirley Boyt, Norman Jorgensen, Pauline Jorgensen and Alistair Neal, Anne Chadwick (Substitute) and Adrian Mather (Substitute)

Executive Members Present

Councillors: Rachel Bishop-Firth (Executive Member for Equalities Inclusion and Fighting Poverty), Stephen Conway (Executive Member for Housing), Lindsay Ferris (Executive Member for Planning and Local Plan) and Ian Shenton (Executive Member for Environment, Sport and Leisure)

Officers Present

Ian Bellinger (Service Manager for Growth and Delivery), Narinder Brar (Community Safety Manager), Neil Carr (Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist), Mark Gwynne (Strategic Lead - Chief Executive's Office), Emily Higson (Head of Insight, Strategy and Inclusion), Sean Murphy (Public Protection Partnership Manager) and Callum Wernham (Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist)

Others Present

Jake Morrison (Chief Executive – Citizens Advice Wokingham), and Emma Cantrell (Chief Executive – First Days)

37. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted from Councillors Laura Blumenthal and Chris Johnson.

Councillors Anne Chadwick and Adrian Mather attended the meeting as substitutes.

Councillor Gregor Murray attended the meeting via Microsoft Teams, meaning that he could participate in discussions but not vote.

38. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

39. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

40. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

41. COST OF LIVING CRISIS RESPONSE

The Committee considered a report, set out in agenda pages 5 to 22, which outlined Wokingham Borough Council's initial and ongoing response alongside the Hardship Alliance to address the cost-of-living crisis.

Stephen Conway, Executive Member for Housing, and Rachel Bishop Firth, Executive Member for Equalities, Inclusion and Fighting Poverty, provided a brief overview of the partnership working being undertaken to help tackle this crisis. This was a very difficult

time for a lot of residents in the Borough, and a considerable amount of hard work was being undertaken to help support individuals and families. Practical advice and help were being provided in relation to issues such as food, keeping warm and managing impacts on mental health. The support being provided in conjunction with the Hardship Alliance was critical, and there was a real desire to strengthen and improve this type of collaborative working where possible.

Jake Morrison, Chief Executive – Citizens Advice Wokingham, provided the Committee with a background to the increased service demand being seen within the Borough. The same number of individuals had been referred for help in the first two-months of 2019 than had been referred this morning. There had been a forty-percent increase in the number of individuals being referred for benefit issues, and a twenty-percent increase in the number of individuals being referred with debt issues. Whilst it was good that people felt confident to reach out for help, demand had increased markedly with a thirty-five percent increase in calls received in October. The typical service request had also shifted, as previously people were contacting the service when bailiffs were at their door, whilst it was now more common for people to be contacting the service regarding not having access to essentials such as food, clothes or energy. More and more individuals were now considering or carrying out self-harm, whilst staff on phones regularly spoke to suicidal individuals. A survey had been sent regarding the cost-of-living crisis, with 680 responses received to date. Seventy-five percent of respondents had yet to reach out to services for support, whilst nineteen percent had borrowed money from either a friend, bank, payday loan company or a loan shark to pay for essentials.

Emma Cantrell, Chief Executive – First Days, provided the Committee with a background to the increased service demand being seen within the Borough. The issues being dealt with now were ordinarily seen in more deprived areas in places such as London. Demand management was introduced a few years ago to allow staff to work more closely with fewer families, however staff now dealt with far more cases than ever before.

Stephen Conway (Executive Member for Housing), Rachel Bishop Firth (Executive Member for Equalities Inclusion and Fighting Poverty), Mark Gwynne (Strategic Lead – Chief Executive's Office), Emily Higson (Head of Insight Strategy and Inclusion), Jake Morrison (Chief Executive – Citizens Advice Wokingham), and Emma Cantrell (Chief Executive – First Days) attended the meeting to answer member queries.

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

- What level of additional work was being undertaken by Council officers to provide additional support? Executive Member and officer response – An Assistant Director was named for a specific response area, and they came together each fortnight to discuss response progress. Response areas were aligned with officers' core responsibilities, and this was very much an area where additional work and effort was required to see results. This was both a corporate and political priority, and whilst Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) did not have vast amounts of funding to put into this area, we had other resources which could be utilised;
- It was requested that officers continue to explore any opportunities from Central Government as to additional grants or funding available in this area;

- It was noted that whilst Wokingham was seen as an affluent area, for many people it would only take a small change in their financial circumstances for them to be in a crisis situation;
- It was noted that individuals were cutting back on anything that was considered as non-essential, including gym memberships and heating in some cases. This could have adverse consequences on individual's health;
- It was noted that poverty had been in Wokingham for a long time, it was just more hidden and now impacted a wider range of people;
- How was the targeted approach being managed? Executive Member and officer response – Public Health and other services were on hand to identify people most in need, whilst modelling was underway with adult social care data. There were a lot of people in the Borough who had a high income and lived comfortable lives, and this could make it harder for those on the lowest incomes, as it made prices higher including housing and food costs. People on low incomes could feel unsure about where or who they could turn to for help, and in areas of higher deprivation there was often better community signposting. Lobbying of Central Government was taking place on a cross-party level about this issue. There was concern that funding which was currently being utilised by WBC to continue free school meals in school holidays could be cut, and additional lobbying needed to take place to make the case for this funding to continue;
- It was noted that some individuals required for their debt to get worse before help and intervention could be provided. The way which individuals were treated by all Council Services and the Hardship Alliance should be a single excellent level of service, with departments talking to each other and referring issues to the most relevant contact for a speedy response;
- What could be done on a local level to assist people with rising utility bills? Hardship Alliance response – Citizens Advice were calling for a winter ban of energy companies forcing people onto prepayment meters. It was requested that WBC consider writing a letter in support of this sentiment;
- How was the dashboard (operated by Citizens Advice Wokingham) being constructed? Hardship Alliance response – There was a public cost of living dashboard which could be circulated to members for information. Data was submitted weekly to WBC in an anonymised format;
- This area had not been a typical set of issues that Town and Parish Councils were asked to offer support for. How were Town and Parish Councils now being involved? Hardship Alliance response – Town and Parish Councils had been reached out to, as in many cases they were landlords of buildings that could be used for community gatherings or acting as a 'warm bank'. There was a plethora of fantastic and engaged clerks who were very open to providing support where they could;
- It was noted that prepayment meters usually attracted a higher unit cost, and as many of them were not compatible with smart meters this meant that residents could not see what was drawing the most power (and therefore cost) in their homes;

- Were there plans to get practical advice and signposting into the Borough News? Executive Member response – Officers were looking to get advice into printed format in addition to social media output, whilst residents associations were also being informed about signposting and support on offer;
- It was noted that the component organisations of the Hardship Alliance undertook a considerable amount of specialist work, and they have come together to work towards a common purpose. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the Wokingham Borough Community response had no stigma towards it, and this was the direction that the Hardship Alliance wanted to aim towards;
- Had options been explored to place ‘QR’ codes on stickers to be placed on lampposts, as had been done during the pandemic. This would reduce the stigma that some people might feel, and increase the places that people could access information and help. Executive Member response – This point would be noted and explored by officers;
- It was noted that reference to crowdfunding was about enabling local people who were able to and who wanted to donate to a number of the great charities operating in the borough;
- It was commented that some elderly people were ringing the emergency services, citing an accident, just to enable them to speak to someone as they were feeling lonely and isolated;
- Were large companies operating in the Borough being contacted to explore any donation matching schemes open to their employees (many large business matched staff donations up to a certain amount)? Executive Member and Hardship Alliance response – This was being actively explored, as were any corporate responsibility funds operated by these companies. It was noted that there would also be employees and pensioners in the Borough working for large organisations who were not based in the Borough;
- Payday loans offered a terrible interest rate, as such, were community loans being explored? Hardship Alliance response – Credit Unions were an excellent resource for offering loans for certain expenditure. Community First in Norreys had spoken for some time about setting up a form of community loans service;
- It was noted that a cross-party letter or motion would be written to the Chief Executives of electricity companies, raising concern about how defaulting customers were being treated, included being placed on prepayment meters. It was added that Citizens Advice Wokingham could feed into this process via the provision of a policy statement;
- It was noted that teachers could often be the first point of contact within schools, and were therefore well placed to signpost families to the support on officer. Officers noted that schools were being actively engaged with as part of the community response to this issue;
- Could Town and Parish Councils legally use a portion of their precept to deliver services for select parts of the community, for example provision of warm banks? Executive Member and hardship Alliance response – A framework could be provided to Town and Parish Councils as to how they might wish to get involved in this

response. The best approach to something like a warm bank was making it a universally accessible session. Rather than promoting it as a place to stay warm, it could be promoted as a chance for local people to get together and have a cup of tea, play some board games, and talk about issues in the community. Best practice and guidance about warm banks was being produced and could be sent to Town and parish Councils. In terms of the use of funds or grants to deliver these services, it was suggested that Town and Parish Councils reach out to each other as some authorities had similar existing programmes. It was noted that Citizens Advice could share localised ward data with individual Town and Parish Councils on request.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Stephen Conway, Rachel Bishop Firth, Mark Gwynne, Emily Higson, Jake Morrison, and Emma Cantrell be thanked for attending the meeting;
- 2) Officers continue to proactively explore any additional funding or grant opportunities from Central Government;
- 3) A cross-party motion or letter be written, with inclusion of a policy statement from Citizens Advice, raising concern about how defaulting customers were being treated, included being placed on prepayment meters;
- 4) The Citizens Advice cost of living dashboard be circulated to the Committee;
- 5) Officers explore placing cost of living support information on lamp posts;
- 6) Town and Parish Councils be sent upcoming guidance and best practice regarding warm spaces;
- 7) Town and Parish Councils be informed that they could request localised ward data from Citizens Advice Wokingham.

42. FRAUD AND UNFAIR TRADING UPDATE

The Committee considered a presentation, set out in agenda pages 22 to 30, which provided an update on fraud and unfair trading practices within the Borough and measures to tackle such offences.

The presentation noted that this was an underreported area of crime, and forty percent of victims were aged between the 70 and 84.

Ian Shenton (Executive Member for Environment, Sport and Leisure), Sean Murphy (Public Protection Manager) and Narinder Brar (Community Safety Manager) attended the meeting to answer member queries.

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

- What could Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) do to help communicate information on fraudulent practices and reporting methods, and what could WBC do to help small businesses on a proactive basis who think they may have been the victims of fraud? Officer response – It was crucial that this entire area was dealt with understanding and awareness. WBC worked with other support organisations to help communicate key messages, whilst there was a key focus on preventative action. For businesses,

intellectual property was key as without it there may not be a core business and room for innovation;

- It was noted that there was a tendency for people to become repeat victims, which effected their mental health and went beyond the offence itself;
- Could data be provided with regards to the types of fraud being committed, how many cases were being resolved, whether KPIs were being achieved, and feedback from victims who had been supported? Officer response – There was no doubt that things were changing in this area, and specialised staff were required to deal with many cases including computer forensic consultants. A further session could be delivered for members to explore the trends behind the figures;
- With regards to Action Fraud, it was noted that they dealt with the reporting of instances of fraud. There was a huge amount of fraud and only a limited resource available to deal with it. The Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley had recognised fraud as a high priority crime which was interlinked within the complicated web of organised crime. Stating this as a specific priority would hopefully allow further inroads to be made in combatting fraud locally;
- Who could be contacted to help solve fraud locally? Officer response – If it was within the Borough and trading related, trading standards could be contacted. Other issues should be reported to the police;
- Was social media being used to inform residents of potential scams in their area, and did scammers take notice of 'no cold calling zones'? Officer response – Information regarding the use of social media to inform residents could be shared with the Committee. With regards to 'no cold calling zones', there was a legal point that traders were required to leave a person's property when asked to do so. Provision of notices outlining this meant that traders were already served with this notice prior to knocking on doors;
- How were elderly residents proactively contacted to make them more aware of potential scams? Officer response – There was additional funding being placed into proactive messaging, including community visits. This also included providing support directly to victims, which in some cases had resulted in victims having lost funds returned;
- Were care homes visited and engaged with to give tenants knowledge about scams and fraudulent practices? Officer response – Yes, community support officers were always happy to talk to any groups including care homes.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Ian Shenton, Sean Murphy and Narinder Brar be thanked for attending the meeting;
- 2) An additional session be considered to explore the trends behind the figures provided by officers and partner organisations;
- 3) Information regarding the use of social media to inform residents of fraudulent activities be shared with the Committee;

- 4) It be noted that local trading standards could be used to report trading related fraudulent concerns within the Borough.

43. LOCAL PLAN UPDATE - PROGRESS UPDATE AND NEXT STEPS

The Committee considered a report, set out in agenda pages 31 to 40, which set out a progress report on the development of the Local Plan Update (LPU).

Lindsay Ferris (Executive Member for Planning and the Local Plan) Stephen Conway (Executive Member for Housing) and Ian Bellinger (Service Manager for Growth and Delivery) attended the meeting to answer member queries.

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

- What timeline was being worked towards and was it possible to speed it up, and if the Government changed the housing number requirement after publication of the LPU could the LPU be updated? Executive Member and officer response – The team had not been asked to adhere to a strict schedule of key milestones as of yet as it was still to be decided which direction Wokingham Borough Council would prefer to go. The two options available were to progress to a regulation 19 order, meaning that WBC would predominantly progress with the previously consulted plan, or go out for a further regulation 18 order, which would present a number of different options via consultation. The direction of progress would be discussed by the cross-party working group, whilst officers would produce a technical recommendation and if members wished to move in a different direction, then a regulation 18 consultation would be required. Progress had already been slow due to the necessity of two regulation 18 consultations. The Local Plan was required to be reviewed every 5 years, however it could be reviewed more frequently as and when required;
- Was there a requirement to provide an additional twenty-percent of housing in case under delivery, and was it possible to omit this as WBC had a history of over delivery? Officer response – The twenty-percent figure was for Local Authorities with a history of under delivery. WBC had a five-percent figure applied to allow for market changes;
- What were the implications of not meeting the December 2023 deadline for a completed LPU? Officer response – There was generally no intervention by Government so long as progress was evidenced to be made. The December 2023 deadline would already be a push to achieve, and the risk of intervention was a matter of debate;
- It was noted that WBC could not currently demonstrate a five-year housing land supply. The argument proposed by WBC that over delivery of housing in prior years should be taken into account should temper the balance of the lack of five-year housing land supply with inspectors, however this issue would persist from now until a new Local Plan was adopted. It was expected that WBC would lose more appeals due to the tilted balance process;
- Was it possible to plan infrastructure such as telephone masts at the outline stage of development, were there powers to enforce community spaces and building to be delivered at new developments, and was the Borough Design Guide planned to be updated alongside the LPU? Executive Member and officer response – Policies could be updated to stress that infrastructure was required to be installed early in the development process, however planning officers could not stop people or companies

coming back with a planning application for things such as telephone masts after development was completed. If community buildings were specified as part of the planning application, then they would have to be delivered as part of the development else an amendment to the application would be required to be submitted. Delays to construction of such buildings often occurred due to issues with phasing. The Borough Design Guide was also being updated, and members and the public were encouraged to come forward with any suggestions;

- What percentage of social housing was being sought at new developments? Executive Member response – The aspiration was to deliver fifty percent of all new housing as social housing, however this may not necessarily be achievable as it was a balancing act to get a number of different things from developers such as infrastructure and other payments;
- It was noted that developers had an option on almost every potential piece of development land in the Borough. Developers could also choose the pace of development, by delivering a large development quickly (as had been happening on Wokingham) or slowing it right down;
- Was it possible to plan to deliver a new secondary school as part of the LPU? Officer response – The only land suitable to deliver a secondary school was at Hall Farm;
- Was there anything that could be done to speed up the timeline of development of the LPU? Executive Member and officer response – The team were undertaking a considerable amount of detailed technical work, in conjunction with working alongside the cross-party working group. This work was crucial to deliver a sound and acceptable LPU;
- It was noted that due to the Borough's proximity to London, this would continue to push house prices up. There was a critical need to deliver truly affordable housing within the Borough;
- When would it be possible for officers to deliver a technical recommendation to members? Officer response – Initial discussions would take place prior to Christmas 2022, whilst technical testing of the evidence base would take place next year, and an informal recommendation hoped to be delivered in around the pre-election period next year;
- It was requested that main roads were not positioned between housing and schools at new developments;
- It was requested that an update be considered by the Committee in May or June 2023;
- Were there plans to engage with residents and developers? Executive Member response – This would be considered, however the LPU needed to get to a point where a strong case could be demonstrated for a particular site or sites;
- Was there a communications plan to engage early and often with residents who were voicing concerns over potential development sites? Executive Member response – It was important to recognise that there was a very specific process to be undertaken here. If a developer sensed that a decision was being made on anything other than

sound planning grounds they would then raise this at a public inspection. All interested parties were invite to the public inspection to make their case.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Stephen Conway, Lindsay Ferris and Ian Bellinger be thanked for attending the meeting;
- 2) An additional update be considered by the Committee in May or June of 2023.

44. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered their work programme, set out in agenda pages 41 to 46.

The Committee noted that time management of upcoming meetings was crucial, to give proper consideration to items scheduled prior to the Medium Term Financial Plan, and the Medium Term Financial Plan itself.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Callum Wernham be thanked for attending the meeting;
- 2) The Committee's work programme be noted.

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**MINUTES OF AN EXTRARODINARY MEETING OF THE
COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON 26 OCTOBER 2022 FROM 7.00 PM TO 10.26 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Peter Dennis (Chair), David Cornish (Vice-Chair), Laura Blumenthal, Shirley Boyt, Norman Jorgensen, Pauline Jorgensen, Alistair Neal, Adrian Mather (Substitute) and Michael Firmager (Substitute)

Executive Member Present

Councillors: Clive Jones (Leader of the Council), Imogen Shepherd-DuBey (Executive Member for Finance), Stephen Conway (Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Housing), Lindsay Ferris (Executive Member for Planning and Local Plan), Paul Fishwick (Executive Member for Active Travel, Transport and Highways), Sarah Kerr (Executive Member for Climate Emergency and Resident Services), and Ian Shenton (Executive Member for Environment, Sport and Leisure)

Officers Present

Richard Bisset (Lead Specialist - Place Clienting), Neil Carr (Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist), Graham Ebers (Deputy Chief Executive (Director of Resources and Assets)), Andy Glencross (Service Manager - Green and Blue Infrastructure), Rhian Hayes (Assistant Director Economic Development and Growth), Francesca Hobson (Assistant Director – Environment & Safety), Zulfiqar Mulak (Interim Assistant Director Neighbourhoods and Communities), Trevor Saunders (Interim Assistant Director - Planning) and Callum Wernham (Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist)

45. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted from Chris Johnson and Gregor Murray.

Councillors Adrian Mather and Michael Firmager attended the meeting as substitutes.

46. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

47. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

48. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

**49. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2023-26 - PLACE AND GROWTH
DIRECTORATE**

The Committee considered the proposed revenue and capital bids for the Place and Growth Directorate, set out in agenda pages 5 to 74.

Clive Jones (Leader of the Council), Imogen Shepherd-DuBey (Executive Member for Finance), Stephen Conway (Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Housing), Lindsay Ferris (Executive Member for Planning and Local Plan), Paul Fishwick (Executive Member for Active Travel, Transport and Highways), Sarah Kerr (Executive Member for Climate Emergency and Resident Services), Ian Shenton (Executive Member for Environment, Sport and Leisure), Richard Bisset (Lead Specialist – Place Clienting), Graham Ebers (Deputy Chief Executive (Director of Resources and Assets), Andy Glencross (Service

Manager – Green and Blue Infrastructure) Rhian Hayes (Assistant Director Economic Development and Growth), Francesca Hobson (Assistant Director – Environment and Safety), Zulfiqar Mulak (Interim Assistant Director Neighbourhood and Communities), and Trevor Saunders (Interim Assistant Director – Planning) attended the meeting to answer member queries.

The Executive Member for Finance stated that there was currently a £4m revenue shortfall for the 2023/24 financial year, inclusive of potential savings already identified, whilst there was a £14m gap in the capital programme. Whilst high priority capital spends would stay in the budget, the Committee were being asked what other revenue or capital schemes might be prioritised whilst inviting members to put forward any savings suggestions. The revenue reserves had been used during the last financial year, whilst inflation was running very high and Council Tax would only be permitted to be increased by 1.99%.

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

- When would the Committee receive a breakdown of the cost of agency workers, contractors, interims and fixed term contracts (that translates into people, outside of IR35)? Officer response – A similar request had also been made by the Personnel Board, and to avoid duplication of work these figures would be provided to both sets of members as soon as possible;
- Was the additional adult social care council tax precept included in assumptions? Officer response – An increase of 1% (in addition to the 1.99% base council tax increase) had been assumed as officers were not certain what would be permitted at this stage;
- Was there an assumption that the £14m gap in the capital programme would be bridged? Officer response – This was the working assumption through a variety of channels including leveraging additional income and reprofiling schemes. There was no assumption that Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) would be borrowing to fund the capital programme;
- It was noted that there was a level of uncertainty around the level of new homes bonus that WBC would receive, and as such a reduction of this income had been factored in over a period of time to try and reduce WBC's dependency on this;
- In relation to bid PG R29, additional consultancy budget for the Local Plan, it was noted that this was a drawdown pot to assist in future years;
- In relation to bid PG R30, development management staffing costs, it was noted that this bid covered retention of existing staff to carry out business as usual planning enforcement work. It was hoped that expenditure could be reduced if statutory planning fees were increased;
- In relation to bid PG R27, domestic abuse – commissioned services, how many staff would this deliver and would it bring caseloads down to the recommended level of 30 per member of staff? Executive Member and officer response – This would enable the service to have 2 additional members of staff and would go some way towards bringing cases down to 30 per member of staff, though it was accepted that this level would not be achieved immediately. It was noted that grant funding was being sought wherever possible, whilst this bid was being considered to be moved from a growth bid to a

special item. The £75k figure was given by the provider as the cost needed to bring in these staff;

- In relation to bid PG R34, deliberative process for climate emergency, it was noted that the total budget for the activity should read approximately £270k, and officers would consider why the figure was stated as £180k in the paperwork;
- In relation to bid PG R1, proposal to move to alternate weekly or three weekly waste collections, it was noted that the £700k figure was a high-level assumption, as work had been undertaken with an external consultant to look at other Local Authorities who had undergone similar changes. Introduction of wheelie bins would also see cost reductions, and the £700k figure was largely as a result of containerisation. The wheelie bins would be purchased with capital on an invest to save programme, with payback expected within 5 years. It was requested that this issue be considered alongside the waste strategy at the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee;
- In relation to bid PG R2, increase garden waste service annual fees by £10, had there been any reduction in service use since the £5 increase introduced last year? Officer response – The numbers of people utilising this service had remained steady. It was noted that the proposed introductory charge of £40 had been removed. Officers were working with IT to identify if the service could be paid for in instalments via direct debit;
- In relation to bid PG R2, increase garden waste service annual fees by £10, was this a cost recovery only scheme? Officer response – Officers would ascertain whether this was the case, however it was not believed to be just a cost recovery service. Income generated through this service would be used to fund other aspects of the waste service;
- In relation to bid PG R4, reduce grass cutting by increasing conservation areas, was there a role for community groups to adopt and maintain areas, and what were external consultants being used for? Executive Member and officer response – There was definitely a role for people to nominate conservation areas, whilst consultants were looking into the contract to see if any savings could be realised;
- In relation to bid PG R5, event income from open spaces, was this comparative to private charges? Officer response – This was modelled off of experiences at Dinton Pastures and California Country Park. Officers would consider liaison with Wokingham Town Council who already had experience of a commercial based model;
- In relation to bid PG R6, smart drainage sensors Borough wide rollout, it was commented that this was a very good idea and it would be good to see it expanded;
- In relation to bid PG R8, reduction in drainage maintenance to every other year, was the saving of £25k greater than the potential risk of additional flooding? Executive Member response - £4m in savings needed to be identified, and officers had been asked to put forward options. Proposals such as this would be considered further before implementation;
- In relation to bid PG R9, school keep clear markings – roll out of parking enforcement scheme, was there a contradiction between wanting to change behaviours and receiving a consistent level of income? Executive Member and officer response – Once behaviours had changed at particular schools, the service would move to

different schools. The likelihood was that people would realise the service had moved on and may offend again, and when the service returned it would catch repeat offenders. The whole purpose of this item was to improve road safety outside schools;

- In relation to bid PG R10, additional charges for residents second parking permits, what was the current charge? Executive Member response – The current charge was £35, and the proposed figure of £900 was not fixed at this stage;
- It was noted that bids PG R11 linked to PG R25 and PG R31;
- In relation to bid PG R12, stretch target for off street proposed increase in charges, would this include parking meters? Executive Member response – This was part of a wider look at all off street car parking. It was noted that point four of PG R12 should be covered in PG R13;
- In relation to bid PG R13, introduction of on street parking controls, it was suggested that officers speak with Reading Borough Council who implemented a similar scheme and have not seen expected cost recovery;
- In relation to bid PG R15, reduce reliance on consultants for transport planning expertise, was the £61k for a full-time grade 10 member of staff the full cost of employment? Executive Member response – Yes, this was the total cost of employment;
- In relation to bid PG R16, highways operational savings, were £400k savings in 2023/24 realistic and what was the £210k of expenditure to be used for? Executive Member response – This was at an early stage and the £400k figure was a best estimate. A response would be provided with regards to the expenditure figure;
- In relation to bid PG R17, charging leisure users at Carnival car park, could this be looked at other leisure centres including Loddon Valley and Bulmershe? Executive Member and officer response – Whilst this was a possibility, the difference was that Carnival Hub was part of the town centre and its associated car parks. This needed to be done carefully as WBC received a substantial management fee from Places Leisure, and whilst savings could be made from reducing car parking subsidy WBC could then receive a smaller management fee if business dropped as a result;
- In relation to bid PG R18, introduction of moving traffic offence enforcement, was this allowed as the service was a cost recovery model, how did the capital costs stack up, and what were the expected timescales? Executive Member and officer response – Additional income would be used to deliver other transport services, whilst there was a possibility that the service could be delivered by a contractor which would mean no capital costs for WBC. This was very much at a ‘work in progress’ stage, with officers assessing options and timescales;
- In relation to bid PG R19, night-time dimming for street lights, was there scope to turn traffic lights off in certain areas at certain times of the night, and was it possible to decrease the on-time of street lights which were already partially dimmed to get savings sooner? Executive Member response – In terms of traffic lights, road safety was a priority and any such work would require detailed liaison with the police. There was potential to bring some smaller savings forward, however this process was overall at an early stage;

- In relation to bid PG R20, efficiencies from merging the highways services, was this about merging teams with other Local Authorities or within our own service? Executive Member response – This bid was about looking at efficiency savings within our own highways service;
- In relation to bid PG R21, reduce the community engagement team by 2 posts, what would WBC lose from these 2 posts? Executive Member response – A small amount of general community engagement would be lost, however one of these posts was currently vacant and the other had a fixed-term contract ending in December 2022;
- A number of income generations suggestions were put forwards, including increased advertising in the Borough News, advertising within Council Tax receipts, increased advertising on billboards, extension of waste collection to commercial companies, having a business mindset about income generation, and considering ‘no win no fee’ opportunities where if money or income was recovered WBC would be entitled to a percentage, however WBC would not be liable to any charge if the venture failed;
- In relation to bid PG R23, sustainment of 7-day week antisocial behaviour service at 2022/23 levels, was it necessary to staff 7 days per week as some morning hours on weekdays could be ‘quiet’ for the service, and was it possible to clawback and money from the police? Executive Member and officer response – This growth bid was related to a special item from last year to retain the same staffing levels. The service had been really successful so far with a 7-day per week operation. It was very unlikely that the police would be willing to pay any money to WBC for running this service, however officers could explore any opportunities;
- In was noted that bid PG R24 was no longer required;
- In relation to bid PG R26, local bus service inflation, was there any option to use S106 money or ask Town and Parish Councils for contributions, and what would happen if passenger numbers increased later on? Executive Member response – S106 was limited, and this needed to be put in the budget as there was not sufficient monies related to S106 as these were tied to other projects. Officers could go away and explore in Town and Parish Councils could contribute towards this, whilst WBC’s financial support for these services would decrease if passenger numbers increased;
- In relation to bid PG R32, replacement of routewise system, could the cost of this be incorporated into the cost of school transport charges? Executive Member response – This suggestion could be taken away and explored;
- In relation to bid PG C2, Toutley highways depot modernisation, it was commented that this figure was also challenged for the last 2 years as a high spend and may warrant further consideration this year;
- In relation to bid PG C3, California Crossroads, how much flexibility was there as to other projects that this S106 money could be spent on. Executive Member response – The project firstly needed to be built out, and any savings go back into the overall Arborfield SDL ‘pot’;
- In relation to bid PG C4, Bulldog Garage – Temporary Accommodation, had other vacant sites been considered, what were the timescales for the project? Executive

Member response – Sites were being sought and appraised at all times, whilst the land was owned by WBC and modular units could be constructed quite quickly. It was noted that the money to build out the scheme would come from developer contributions and the Homes England grant, whilst the savings would be made on the emergency accommodation budget contained within the HRA which was ringfenced;

- In relation to bid PG C8, active travel and bus priority, was the grant time limited? Executive Member response – If it was Active Travel England’s funding they would give a time limit for the money to be spent;
- In relation to bid PG C9, Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP), was this partly a levelling up bid, had the European Cycling Federation Grant been considered, and was secure town centre parking included in this bid. Executive Member response – A levelling up bid had been placed for a route from Charvil to Twyford Station, which was hoped to be successful. Any additional grant funding opportunities would be explored, whilst secure cycle storage was a part of the LCWIP;
- In relation to bid PG C10, Greenways, could any cost savings be realised via linking the cycleways and greenways teams? Executive Member and officer response – Both teams work closely together, however the key was ensuring that the routes chosen for both projects fitted together and did not duplicate.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Clive Jones, Imogen Shepherd-DuBey, Stephen Conway, Lindsay Ferris, Paul Fishwick, Sarah Kerr, Ian Shenton, Richard Bisset, Graham Ebers, Andy Glencross, Rhian Hayes, Francesca Hobson, Zulfiqar Mulak, and Trevor Saunders be thanked for attending the meeting;
- 2) Income generation and savings suggestions be passed on to the Finance team for consideration;
- 3) A breakdown of the cost of agency workers, contractors, interims and fixed term contracts (that translates into people, outside of IR35) be provided to the Committee;
- 4) Officers consider why the figure was stated as £180k in the paperwork for PG R34 rather than £270k;
- 5) Further consideration be given to the proposal to move to two or three weekly waste collections and the use of wheelie bins, including cost-benefit analysis, at a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee when the Waste Strategy/Waste Strategy consultation was to be considered;
- 6) Officers continue to work with IT to identify if the green waste collection service could be paid for in instalments via direct debit;
- 7) Officers would ascertain whether green/garden waste collection could only be a cost recovery service;
- 8) Officers provide detail as to the detail behind the expenditure requirement for PG R16;

- 9) Officers explore whether Town and Parish Councils could contribute towards inflationary pressures on local bus services;
- 10) Officers explore whether the replacement of the routewise system could be incorporated into home to school transport costs and charged accordingly;
- 11) The Executive Member and officers consider if the total spend for the Toutley depot modernisation was necessary and required;
- 12) Additional grant funding for highways schemes be explored by officers.

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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON 3 NOVEMBER 2022 FROM 7.00 PM TO 10.32 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Peter Dennis (Chair), David Cornish (Vice-Chair), Shirley Boyt, Norman Jorgensen, Laura Blumenthal, Chris Johnson, Pauline Jorgensen and Alistair Neal, and Chris Bowring (Substitute)

Executive Members Present

Councillors: Clive Jones (Leader of the Council), Imogen Shepherd-DuBey (Executive Member for Finance), Rachel Bishop-Firth (Executive Member for Equalities, Inclusion and Fighting Poverty), Sarah Kerr (Executive Member for Climate Emergency and Resident Services), Ian Shenton (Executive Member for Environment, Sport and Leisure)

Officers Present

Callum Wernham (Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist), Narinder Brar (Community Safety Manager), Neil Carr (Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist), Glynn Davies (Head of IT), Graham Ebers (Deputy Chief Executive (Director of Resources and Assets)), Karen Evans (Domestic Abuse Coordinator) and Francesca Hobson (Assistant Director – Environment & Safety)

Others Present

Katie Lloyd (Service Manager at Cranstoun), Andrea West (Chief Executive of Berkshire Women's Aid, and Vickie Robertson (Founder of Kaleidoscopic UK)

50. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted from Councillor Gregor Murray.

Councillor Chris Bowring attended the meeting as a substitute.

51. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 3 October 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to the following minor amendments:

Agenda Page 7 – Did the ~~hostel~~ **hotel** for asylum seekers in Earley...

Agenda Page 10 – It was noted that WBC spent a considerable amount of money on external consultants, some of which carried out very specialist work. ~~It was noted that it would be useful to see how much money each department was spending on external consultants.~~ **It was requested that the Committee receive a breakdown of the cost of agency workers, contractors, interims and fixed term contracts (that translates into people, outside of IR35).**

52. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

53. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

54. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

55. WOKINGHAM DOMESTIC ABUSE UPDATE

The Committee considered a report, set out in agenda pages 13 to 42, which gave an update on the support offered to victims of domestic abuse in addition to measures in place to tackle instances of domestic abuse.

The report outlined that the Wokingham Domestic Abuse Strategy 2021-24 was underpinned by two action plans, one delivered via the domestic abuse partnership focussed on delivering Wokingham Borough Council's (WBC's) duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, and the other which covered wider domestic abuse support which was delivered by the Domestic Abuse Networking group. A number of key achievements had been realised, including appointment of a domestic abuse housing specialist and establishment of a Thames Valley wide group to explore options linked to safe accommodation. A referral programme was in place for the men and masculinities programme, with 7 male referrals to the programme to date.

The Committee welcomed Katie Lloyd (Service Manager at Cranstoun), Andrea West (Chief Executive of Berkshire Women's Aid, and Vickie Robertson (Founder of Kaleidoscopic UK) to provide additional context and to answer member queries.

Sarah Kerr (Executive Member for Resident Services and Climate Emergency), Narinder Brar (Community Safety Manager), Francesca Hobson (Assistant Director Environment and Safety), and Karen Evans (Domestic Abuse Coordinator) attended the meeting to answer member queries.

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

- There was a proposal to provide an additional £75k of funding to allow additional staff to deal with case work. Whilst this would bring case work per member of staff to approximately 35, this was still above the safe and recommended level of 30 cases per member of staff. Was additional funding being investigated to address this concern? Officer response – The safe lives best practice level stood at 30 cases per member of staff, and a growth bid was in place to get numbers in the Borough down. Other resources were being put in place to help relieve pressure, and should levels increase even with the additional funding then a further growth bid could be explored. It should be noted that the 30 cases per member of staff figure included a 20% margin either way (27 – 33 cases). Grant funding could also be explored where available, whilst it should be noted that the national economic picture meant that all growth bids at WBC needed to be very carefully considered;
- In relation to the anti-abuse charter, what progress had been made to embed this across WBC? Officer response – This hung on the premise of a reduction of violence across the Borough. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) would be included as part of the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWAG) plan;
- Members congratulated Kaleidoscopic UK for highlighting and delivering upon the impacts of domestic abuse on children;
- A recent television programme had highlighted exempt accommodation, whereby gangs would provide a 'refuge' for nefarious reasons. Officers had given assurances that there were no such properties in the Borough, however, what was being done to ensure that Borough residents being placed elsewhere were being placed in suitable

accommodation? Officer and service representative response – There was a collective responsibility to ensure that service users were placed in safe accommodation. WBC ensured that our own local provision was suitable and safe, whilst officers worked with Local Authorities and various organisations across the Thames Valley. Whilst this did not guarantee that every individual was placed in suitable accommodation, officers always worked to the best of their ability to provide suitable accommodation. There was a national refuge database which was overseen by Women's Aid, whilst key worker would be assigned to individuals with complex issues including drug use and mental health;

- Thames Valley received between 4000-5000 calls about Domestic Abuse each year. What number of these calls were being referred to the police? Officer response – Monthly and quarterly figures were provided to the police, whilst a breakdown of referral sources was provided by Cranstoun. High risk cases, via MARAC, were referred to the police as were some medium risk cases. Overall, referrals were up approximately 7% from last year;
- There was a positive move to encourage people to come forward and report domestic abuse. Were there resources available to cope with any potential steep increase in demand? Executive Member and officer response – Many people did not realise that they were in a domestic abuse situation, as that situation was normal for them. There was a lot of work around education as to what was acceptable and what was not. A growth bid was in place based on the pressures currently faced by the service which was right and proper. If demand increased, additional grants could be explored, and an additional business case could be presented to the Executive asking for additional funding. It was key that perpetrator referrals increased to challenge and change behaviours;
- How was any increase in reporting (due to increased confidence and messaging) being separated from an actual increase in service demand? Executive Member and service representative response – This was a particularly difficult area to separate data. On average, it took a victim of domestic abuse 7 attempts to leave an abusive relationship before they were able to leave for good. Information relating to repeat referrals was collected and monitored, whilst it should be noted that victims were at their highest risk when leaving an abusive relationship as that was when the perpetrator was losing their power;
- What resourcing was in place to provide safe accommodation? Officer and service representative response – Whilst work with survivors was at an individual level, when a survivor was leaving an abusive relationship this was not dealt with in isolation. A holistic network of was in place to ensure joined-up support for survivors in these situations. There was not a domestic abuse housing specialist in place which added an additional level of security and specialism for survivors. For example, this could enable more survivors to stay at their own home if it was safe and so long as the perpetrator was not living at the address. There was a community based support network in place to help keep victims safe;
- What was being done in schools to educate on acceptable behaviour from an early age? Executive Member, officer and service representative response – VAWAG would form part of the prevention plan to tackle deep rooted misogyny. The Educate to Eradicate Programme was in place, however the issue was getting schools to actively engage as domestic abuse was still seen as a 'taboo' topic. Regular meetings were in

place with the Executive Member for Children's Services, whilst schools had a statutory responsibility to promote healthy relationships. The police were informing any domestic abuse incidents involving children to schools to make them aware. Statistics of prevention programmes in schools could be provided to the Committee via Kaleidoscopic;

- If another Local Authority required addition resourcing from Cranstoun, would this effect the resourcing available to Wokingham? Service representative response – The contract with Cranstoun specified that staff were in place specifically to deal with cases in the Wokingham Borough;
- What alerts were in place if staffing became under pressure? Officer response – A service manager was in place to manage the operation service requirements at Cranstoun, whilst officers had a very good relationship with Cranstoun and if there were concerns a frank conversation would be anticipated;
- A number of questions were put to officers in advance of the meeting. Responses to these questions can be found below.
- How long does a case typically take to? Officer response - This is very difficult to answer as each individual client will require different levels of support and for varying time periods. For some, this could just be one phone call or chat with an outreach worker whereby the client gathers the information they need and then may not need any additional support for some time, with others needing weeks or months or years of support, especially if there are ongoing court cases. The commissioned service primarily focused on cases where the abuse was current, developing safety plans, putting in place the emotional and practical support they need, so (although this would need to be double-checked) probably around 3 or 4 months, but the emotional impact on a victim-survivor and child is likely to last for many years and so some will need ongoing emotional support – at which point, they are likely to be referred to Kaleidoscopic whose support offer is open ended;
- What were the success criteria for the service? Officer response – Ultimately, that the person is not murdered or seriously harmed. Within this, for each client, success will mean different things – feeling more confident; being able to secure occupancy of their home; feeling more in control of their finances; having an injunction in place; being supported to report the abuse to the police etc;
- What happens if only the statutory requirements are delivered, and what staffing is required for that? Officer response - The statutory duty only covers a couple of percent of those who need to access support in Wokingham so only delivering on the statutory requirements would mean that the vast majority of those affected by domestic abuse in Wokingham would not receive any specialist support or be safeguarded. This then has an impact on wider services – increase A&E / GP attendances; anti-social behaviour; criminal damage; serious crime etc;
- Ideally, what would be the required level of staffing, and what is the delta between that and what was in place now? Officer response – This answer would be provided at a later date;
- With regards to home modifications for safe houses - how much did that cost? Officer response - These depend on the property but probably average around £50 - £200 per

property. In a lot of cases, it will be lower value items needed, e.g. door chain, lock change, fireproof letter box. Others will need a video doorbell and for some more extensive measures (e.g. changes to internal doors, fencing etc) which could cost a few hundred pound. Instillation of measures is part of a wider Adult Services contract. The scheme is managed by the Community Engagement Team and support for the victim-survivors and their children in these properties is via the central Government new duty's money;

- With regards to the perpetrator service, do you get referrals from enforcement agencies as you mentioned victims are passed on? Officer response - The majority of referrals are from Children's Services or self-referrals although we are working with the police to try and increase the referrals for those who are on the police radar but the case isn't progressing to court. The probation service had their own perpetrator programme which the courts mandate people to attend;
- With regards to response times to issues, what was the service level agreement and how often is it missed or reached? Officer response – A fuller response would be provided, but it was understood that Cranstoun were meeting it's KPI to respond to referrals within one working day;
- What danger was there to the Council for a failure case? Officer response - All domestic murders and DA linked suicides require a full multi agency review which are published and would lead to poor headlines, loss of confidence in our response, cost of undertaking the review as well as the tragic loss of life itself and the impact on the family and wider community. The Home Office estimates the cost to the criminal justice system, health service, social care and housing to be just over £1M for each domestic abuse murder- this doesn't include the wider costs such as loss of income, impact on family, etc. In addition to Domestic Homicide Reviews, the council also has Serious Case Reviews, where near misses and failures are highlighted. Poor headlines are a major issue due to the impact this has on future victim-survivors confidence in help seeking.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Katie Lloyd, Andrea West, Vickie Robertson, Sarah Kerr, Narinder Brar, Francesca Hobson and Karen Evans be thanked for attending the meeting;
- 2) Officers continue to carefully monitor the need for any additional growth bid to manage staff case load;
- 3) Statistics of prevention programmes in schools be provided to the Committee via Kaleidoscopic;
- 4) Information regarding ideal staffing levels and KPIs and response times be circulated to the Committee.

56. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN & GIRLS AND WHITE RIBBON ACCREDITATION

The Committee considered a report, set out in agenda pages 43 to 54, which provided an update on progress made in achieving White Ribbon Accreditation and actions taken to stop Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWAG).

The report provided an overview of the local VAWAG strategy 2023-26, including the timeline for development, implementation and consultation plan.

The Committee welcomed Katie Lloyd (Service Manager at Cranstoun), Andrea West (Chief Executive of Berkshire Women's Aid, and Vickie Robertson (Founder of Kaleidoscopic UK) to provide additional context and to answer member queries.

Sarah Kerr (Executive Member for Resident Services and Climate Emergency), Narinder Brar (Community Safety Manager), Francesca Hobson (Assistant Director Environment and Safety), and Karen Evans (Domestic Abuse Coordinator) attended the meeting to answer member queries.

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

- It was noted that this topic was of national and local importance, and focussed on prevention and social and cultural changes;
- What measures of success had other Local Authorities used with White Ribbon Accreditation? Executive Member response – Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) would be assessing what other Local Authorities were doing as part of the development of our VAWAG plan, to understand what success looked like and how it would be measured. A set of KPIs would be developed, whilst Surrey County Council had gone through the accreditation process and their successes could be shared with the Committee;
- Were WBC's proposals ambitious enough – what percentage reduction of reports were we expecting? Executive Member response – Smart measurements would be put in place, however at this early-stage specifics could not be given;
- Strategic themes were being shared with the community safety partnership in a few weeks time, what were these themes? Officer response – Themes around prevention education and awareness, safe spaces and places were in development alongside other strategic priorities including the justice system to enable better outcomes for victims;
- It was noted that White Ribbon was an element of the VAWAG plan, which would look at issues on a much wider scale;
- It was noted that 25 November was White Ribbon day, and lots of activities were planned to help show how important an issue this was;
- It was noted that there would be vigils for the victims that did not survive, and communications would be sent out when details were more finalised;
- It was noted that the Executive Member for Climate Emergency and Resident Services would work with the communications team to get information about these events to schools;
- It was agreed that an update on the plan would be taken to the March 2023 meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Katie Lloyd, Andrea West, Vickie Robertson, Sarah Kerr, Narinder Brar, Francesca Hobson and Karen Evans be thanked for attending the meeting;
- 2) The Executive Member for Climate Emergency and Resident Services would work with the communications team to get information about White Ribbon events to schools;
- 3) Successes and learning points from Surrey County Council, who had gone through the White Ribbon Accreditation process, be circulated to the Committee;
- 4) A further update be considered by the Committee in March 2023.

57. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2023-26 - CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE AND RESOURCES AND ASSETS

The Committee considered a report, set out in agenda pages 55 to 136, which set out the proposed revenue and capital bids for the Chief Executive's Office and the Resources and Assets Directorate.

Clive Jones (Leader of the Council), Imogen Shepherd-DuBey (Executive Member for Finance), Rachel Bishop-Firth (Executive Member for Equalities, Inclusion and Fighting Poverty), Sarah Kerr (Executive Member for Climate Emergency and Resident Services), Ian Shenton (Executive Member for Environment, Sport and Leisure), Graham Ebers (Deputy Chief Executive (Director of Resources and Assets)), and Glynn Davies (Head of IT) attended the meeting to answer member queries.

The Executive Member for Finance commented that Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) was facing significant financial pressure due to inflation, and emphasised that every saving and income generation opportunity was important.

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

- In relation to business rates, had any downturn in the economy been factored into assumptions? Officer response – Business rates was a complex area, where the actual debit had increased (more new businesses had entered the area over time) and the multiple had also increased, whilst collection remained quite reasonable at approximately 99%. The main concern in this area was about a re-evaluation, which would almost certainly not come into play in 2023/24 due to the level of work required by the Government, however any re-evaluation would likely not be favourable for authorities such as WBC who had historically grown;
- In relation to 3G pitch bid, where was the £45k saving going to be generated? Executive Member and officer response – This was based on mimicking the performance at other 3G pitches in the area, whilst being in line with the business case presented to the Executive. This was a modest surplus after the cost of running the site and capital financing costs. The whole scheme was under review as cost assumptions had changed significantly;
- In relation to bid RA R3, car parking fees – Cantley Park, it was guaranteed last year that no car parking fees would be introduced at Laurel Park. Were the same guarantees given to Cantley Park? Executive Member response – More active discussion needed to be had regarding this proposal before it could go ahead;

- In relation to bid RA R3, car parking fees – Cantley Park, there was a lot of alternative options for people to park for free. Did the projected savings factor in people choosing to park for free elsewhere and people choosing to walk or cycle to Cantley Park, and was there an option to place all country park car parks under one set of management with one set of policies? Executive Member response – This proposal needed very careful consideration to ascertain if savings were realistic and to measure any impacts on use of the site and its facilities. The possibility of one set of management for the country park car parks was already under consideration in its early stages;
- In relation to bid RA R12, sport and leisure income generation (unachievable income generation), why was there a growth bid and had options been explored closer to the Wokingham Town Centre, for example at Elms Field? Executive Member response – There would originally have been a savings bid associated with this income, however, as the event was not very successful this savings line now had to be taken out of the MTFP. There were no firm plans to look at hosting the event elsewhere, however this could be explored in future;
- It was noted that Wokingham Theatre needed to be included within the impact statement for the proposed changes to the Cantley car park;
- In relation to bid RA R12, sport and leisure income generation (unachievable income generation), it was suggested that officers speak to Winnersh Parish Council about an outdoor gym, which they had experience with;
- In relation to bid RA R19, one off growth to support leisure income recovery, what was the background to this bid? Officer response – This bid was to support the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic in terms of lost revenue as a result of lower uptake of subscriptions and activities. The figure of £70k could potentially be too low to plug the gap. Places Leisure were doing well in some areas, however the Council's overall offering went a lot wider than private gyms including classes and support for the vulnerable and elderly;
- In relation to bid CE R4, removal of telephone lines when Teams telephony went live, was the cost of Teams telephony included in the saving? Officer response – Yes, the proposed saving was the net position after switching to Teams telephony;
- In relation to bid CE C1, Microsoft E5, was there a proposed increase in the number of licences? Officer response – Microsoft E5 was an expensive service, and the contract was reviewed every 4 years. Based on the regulations, this contract could be capitalised;
- In relation to bid CE R2, effective use of Council owned community spaces, was the £150k saving achievable? Executive Member response – This was at an early stage where officers were exploring if partner organisations could operate out of WBC sites. A community strategy was being developed which would prove informative;
- In relation to bid CE R1, reduced provision of mobile phones, could this potentially reduce staff morale and had the business continuity aspect of solely relying on Microsoft teams been considered? Executive Member and officer response – This saving represented 50% of currently deployed phones. Certain teams required phones whilst others did not, whilst Teams telephony would allow the implementation of 'bring your own device'. Staff were becoming very aware of the need to make savings

wherever possible. Almost all staff were issued a phone during the pandemic and many no longer required them, whilst business continuity aspects and security implications needed additional work;

- In relation to bid CE R3, removal of two apprenticeship posts, were WBC still dedicated to keeping apprentices across the organisation? Executive member response – Absolutely, this was fundamental for the organisation and removal of these two posts were most certainly not part of the ‘norm’;
- Had open-source software solutions been evaluated as a saving opportunity? Officer response – This had not been looked at in terms of collaborative tools, as WBC was bound by procurement regulations and staff may struggle with open-source software productivity wise;
- In relation to bid CE R6, new WBC website, was work being done to maximise the revenue generation from advertisement? Officer response – WBC used to advertise on the current website however this was removed as the income was relatively small. This could be re-evaluated in line with current rates for advertisement;
- When would the next contract for mobile phones be renewed? Officer response – This would begin next year, and a year-by-year scaling back would be in operation;
- Would laptop refresh rates for staff be scaled back? Executive Member and officer response – The current refresh rate was between 3 and 4 years, and options were being explored to move this to 4 to 5 years. Some laptops needed critical upgrades which could not be delayed, whilst technology needed to be of a certain standard to allow access to the public service network;
- Had chrome books been considered for staff laptops, as they were generally cheaper? Officer response – Many officers needed to work in a Microsoft Windows environment. The average cost of a laptop was £750, with some staff requiring more powerful hardware and some requiring less powerful hardware. WBC typically bought laptops at the wholesale price plus 3%. Officers were exploring options for ‘Windows as a service’, and WBC did need to continue to move away from legacy applications. It was requested that officers explore market opportunities, including the use of virtual machines to facilitate Microsoft Windows use;
- Did WBC receive revenue for recycling old hardware, and could hardware be donated to local schools? Officer response – A contract was in place which provided a relatively small amount of money for recycling hardware. WBC would like to send used hardware to schools but due to licencing requirements this could prove difficult and even expensive for schools. It was noted that Microsoft offered special rates for students, and officers were requested to explore whether this could help old equipment being donated to schools;
- Was it possible to get more solar farms online at a faster rate? Executive Member response – Future sites would be smaller than the Barkham site, and they would be taken forwards as quickly as was feasible;
- In relation to bid CE R7, budget required to deliver sustainable organisational change, could the cumulative movement (a reduction in year 2) be explained? Officer response

– There was an associated growth bid in year 2 which would ‘top-up’ the ongoing funding;

- In relation to bid RA R11, salary funding pressure from cost of abortive feasibility works, could some further explanation be given? Officer response – Capital projects were explored on an annual basis, and where problems occurred and the project did not progress there was an associated revenue cost. These costs could not be capitalised, and it was prudent to put an estimated annual cost via a growth bid into the revenue budget;
- With regards to the proposed reduction of the Borough News, had this saving included postage costs and had the impacts on vulnerable residents be considered? Executive Member response – There were reservations about this proposal which were being reviewed. The idea to move to one edition would allow them to be posted alongside annual Council Tax receipts;
- In relation to bid CE R7, budget required to deliver sustainable organisational change, was this revenue cost of delivering the savings? Officer response – The funding included support for teams working on the user experience, user interface, organisational change, graduate scheme, and business analysts. This was considered a key corporate issue to deliver savings across the organisation, and this spend would facilitate these savings;
- In relation to bid RA R1, income generation from solar farms, what did the £500k saving in year 3 represent? Officer response – This was the result of a part year effect of the introduction of a 2nd site in year 2, after the costs of running the site and the costs of capital financing;
- In relation to bid RA R17, investment and estates property pressures from depressed markets, were options being explored to see how WBC could work with businesses to make them as successful as they could be? Executive Member response – This was a very difficult area where the original forecasts were no longer achievable due to the changing retail environment and individuals’ incomes being squeezed. WBC would continue to work with businesses to try and get them to enter the Borough on good terms;
- It was noted that large proposed spends such as CE R7, budget required to deliver sustainable organisational change, should have additional detail provided as they were very significant spends. Officers agreed to provide additional detail to the Committee with regards to this specific bid, and agreed to provide additional detail with regards to large proposed spends in future;
- In relation to bid RA C1, community investment, it was noted that Councils could no longer borrow (through the public works loans board) to invest in property for purely commercial purposes, due to a change in legislation. Investments now needed to provide a community benefit, and a return on investment was secondary to this. There was £93.5m left for investment, and this would only be spent if the purchase covered all borrowing costs and demonstrably provided a community benefit, for example the purchase of a care home;
- Had leasing vacant units on a short-term basis for ‘pop-up’ shops been considered? Executive Member response – This had been suggested to officers to explore;

- With regards to a recent news article concerning the possible redevelopment of shops in the Wokingham Town Centre which would involve existing businesses having to vacate, were early proactive conversations taking place with these businesses to discuss potential spaces that they might be able to relocate to? Executive Member response – Whilst there was no active planning application relating to this proposal, officers and members could proactively engage to explore any potential options;
- Were there opportunities to use Town and Parish Councils to send out the Borough News? Executive Member response – This could be explored, however it was uncertain if this could be feasible;
- In relation to bid CE R8, equality and tackling poverty community engagement, did this cover staffing or coordination? Executive Member response – This would pay for two staff to provide support to the equalities and tackling poverty agenda, including writing the strategy;
- It was noted that reducing the number of issues of the Borough News could impact how often critical information was seen by vulnerable residents;
- With regards to the bid for an inclusion officer, was this funding for one post and was this agenda being pushed at the moment? Executive Member and officer response – This would fund one post until 2025 and would help to drive this agenda forwards;
- With regards to the proposed bid for the HR operating model, what were the existing HR department doing and why did they require this extra support? Executive Member and officer response – There was a very high turnover within HR, and they needed someone to come in and re-organise the team and get them to a good place. The 21st century re-organisation had reduced HR staff number to a minimum based on staff across the organisation 'self-serving', which proved to be too ambitious. The appointment of the Assistant Director HR had been a significant addition to the team, however the team also needed additional support from outside of the organisation on a short term basis;
- In relation to bid RA R13, increased demand through Council Tax relief scheme due to cost of living pressures, was this a change in policy? Executive Member and officer response – This was the same scheme with a reflection of the increasing demand on the scheme from residents as a result of inflationary pressures and Council Tax increases;
- In relation to bid RA R14, insurance premiums, had self-insurance options been explored? Officer response – WBC did have quite a sizeable excess which helped keep premiums down, but it did require a sizeable insurance fund to cover the excess. Officers would come back on the specifics of self-insuring of small items;
- It was noted that WBC had previously done very well out of the joint legal services item, which had now ceased;
- In relation to bid RA R6, increased income from collection improvements, was the proposed savings target ambitious given the general financial climate? Officer

response – Current collection rates were current higher than previous years. This bid was about managing our accounts in a responsible manner;

- In relation to the proposal to move to paperless democratic meetings, how might this be implemented? Officer response – There were a number of ways this could be achieved, for example by asking members to request paper copies for particular meetings rather than printing unwanted copies, and reducing colour printing where this was not strictly necessary. It was recognised that many members found paper agendas extremely useful some meetings, such as Planning and Budget Scrutiny. This proposal was not suggesting the complete cessation of paper copy agendas, but instead working with members to understand their specific needs and reducing unnecessary or unwanted printing;
- In relation to bid RA R8, revenue and benefits automation, did this savings proposal result in the reduction of staffing? Officer response – Yes, however any affected staff could be re-deployed to other vacant posts within the organisation;
- In relation to bid RA R9, increased court costs for Council Tax and Business Rates, would this impact vulnerable people who could not pay? Executive Member response – This proposal would target individuals who refused to engage with WBC over a period of time, despite a number of chasers. Officers always worked sensitively with vulnerable residents to provide help, support and guidance, and this proposal was in no way aimed at these individuals;
- In relation to RA R4, benefit realisation from commercial activities, what potential ideas were being explored? Executive Member and officer response – A consultant had carried out a review as part of an ongoing work programme. Staff were in place to explore income generation and cost reduction opportunities;
- In relation to RA R5, contracts and commissioning reviews, could this be explained further? Officer response – CIPFA had undertaken a review which had led to an enhanced governance structure, and this bid would allow consultants to come in to upskill the Council's negotiations team;
- How were we interacting with commercial entities to make the best use of the Council's assets? Executive Member response – All of WBC's assets were being reviewed, and if aspects of the organisation could be made more commercial for the benefit of the community then ideas could be progressed;
- At a recent meeting of Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee it was noted that the cost of childcare and the cost of running childcare facilities was increasing. Could options be explored to lease under-utilised WBC assets and space to childcare providers? Executive Member response – This option could certainly be explored;
- At this point of the meeting, the Committee resolved to extend the meeting by a maximum of 30 minutes;
- Had options been explored to extend the offer of WBC's contact centre to other services such as the Police or Fire services? Executive Member response - This option could certainly be explored.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Clive Jones, Imogen Shepherd-DuBey, Rachel Bishop-Firth, Sarah Kerr, Ian Shenton, Graham Ebers, and Glynn Davies be thanked for attending the meeting;
- 2) Further consideration be given to bid RA R3, car parking fees – Cantley Park;
- 3) Officers speak to Winnersh Parish Council about outdoor gyms, which they had experience managing;
- 4) Officers consider exploration of other venues, for example Elms Field, for hosting future Christmas markets;
- 5) Officers re-evaluate the use of advertisement on the new WBC website to help maximise revenue;
- 6) Officers explore market opportunities for staff laptops such as the use of chrome books, including the use of virtual machines to facilitate Microsoft Windows use;
- 7) Officers explore whether student discounted Microsoft Windows license could facilitate old WBC hardware being donated to schools;
- 8) Further consideration be given to the proposal to reduce the number of editions of the Borough News, including an impact assessment on vulnerable residents;
- 9) Additional detail be provided with regards to bid CE R7, budget required to deliver sustainable organisational change, including how success would be measured;
- 10) Additional detail be provided for future bids which represented a significant spend;
- 11) Options be explored to see if it could be possible for Town and Parish Council's to distribute the Borough News, or something similar;
- 12) Officers come back on the specifics of self-insuring of small items;
- 13) Officers explore options to lease under-utilised WBC assets and space to childcare providers;
- 14) Officers explore options to extend the offer of WBC's contact centre to other services such as the Police or Fire services.

58. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered their work programme, set out in agenda pages 137 to 140.

The Committee agreed to move their January meeting to 23 January 2023 to allow officers additional time to understand the implications of the Local Government Finance Settlement (due on or around Christmas Eve).

RESOLVED That:

- 1) The Callum Wernham be thanked for attending the meeting;

- 2) The Committee's January meeting be moved to 23 January 2023 to allow officers additional time to understand the implications of the Local Government Finance Settlement (due on or around Christmas Eve).

**MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE
COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON 29 NOVEMBER 2022 FROM 7.00 PM TO 10.16 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Peter Dennis (Chair), David Cornish (Vice-Chair), Laura Blumenthal, Chris Johnson, Gregor Murray and Alistair Neal

Executive Members Present

Councillors: Prue Bray (Executive Member for Childrens Services), Paul Fishwick (Executive Member for Active Travel, Highways and Transport), David Hare (Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Services) and Imogen Shepherd-DuBey (Executive Member for Finance)

Officers Present

Rebecca Brooks (Community Transport Manager), Neil Carr (Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist), Robert Curtis (Transport Planning Team Manager), Graham Ebers (Deputy Chief Executive (Director of Resources and Assets)), Matt Pope (Director of Adult's Services), Helen Watson (Director of Children's Services) and Callum Wernham (Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist)

59. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted from Councillors Pauline Jorgensen and Norman Jorgensen.

Councillors Michael Firmager and Chris Bowring attended the meeting as substitutes.

Councillor Shirley Boyt attended the meeting virtually, meaning she could participate in the debate but not cast any votes.

60. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

61. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

62. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

63. BUS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Committee considered a report, set out in agenda pages 5 to 90, which set out the draft bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) for the Borough.

The report outlined the key objectives of the plan, including to grow passenger numbers to pre-pandemic levels, improvement of bus journey times, and making fares affordable and simpler. A delivery action plan was provided, which gave practical examples of how key objectives might be achieved.

Paul Fishwick (Executive Member for Active Travel, Highways and Transport), Chris Easton (Assistant Director – Highways), and Rebecca Brooks (Community Transport Manager) attended the meeting to answer member queries.

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

- Was there a particular timeline for Government funding to be received? Officer response – Very vague timelines were given by Government, with no promise of additional funding. Some Local Authorities had not been able to spend all of their money from the initial rounds of funding, however this did not guarantee any additional funding for Wokingham Borough Council (WBC). The final documented was expected to be presented at the end of January 2023, whilst there was no timeline for an expected announcement from Government;
- In view of increasing fuel costs and other costs, how were fares proposed to be kept competitive? Executive Member response – Reading Buses purchased their fuel at one point in time for the remainder of the year. Overall, local fares were competitive compared to the rest of England and therefore WBC was in a relatively good position;
- It was commented that there was a considerable amount of data for members to consider in a relatively short amount of time, which should be a learning point for the future;
- How were current non-users being attracted to use bus services, and was research being undertaken to understand why people were not taking buses? Executive Member response – Marketing was key, and services were being actively advertised. There was a possible 'flat fare' from January to March 2023 which could attract new users onto services. The point of additional longer term research could be taken away and broached with Reading Buses;
- In relation to agenda page 16, were the MRT and third Reading bridge aspirations of WBC? Executive Member response – The third Reading bridge was included within the strategic improvement plan for the southeast, however it was still to be determined what would be delivered. The MRT was not thought to be going ahead, however Reading Borough Council were proposing a bus lane from the Reading boundary of the M4 to cemetery junction;
- A lot of people found crossing busy roads to reach bus stops tricky and off-putting. Could this be factored into surveys? Executive Member and officer response – The survey in the report was undertaken by a third party and was standardised for all authorities. A separate consultation or focus group would be required if this issue was to be further understood. Accessibility was considered, and some issues may be historic which could be reported to the highways team to be looked at separately;
- Who was responsible for bus shelters in the Borough, some of which provided useful historic timetables, however paper timetables were often damaged or missing. Executive Member response – Some shelters were operated by WBC, others by Town and Parish Councils, and some by advertising companies. Bus companies were responsible for putting timetables in shelters, and specific issues and concerns could be raised with the highways team to be passed on to the operating companies;
- Were there set timeframes for Local Authorities to apply for Government funding and to receive a response? Executive Member and officer response – There were no timetables available, and this impacted all Local Authorities. Some Local Authorities from the previous funding round had yet to receive their allocated funding, whilst timetables had been set and missed several times by Government. Reading Borough

Council had met several times with the Department for Transport, including undertaking site visits, and had still yet to receive their funding;

- It was noted that concessionary travel had recovered the least from the pandemic, which could partly be due to a fear of returning to buses or people in this group just generally travelling less. Fare paying passengers were key, as they helped fund services;
- Was this strategy for profit or cost neutral? Executive Member response – Ideally all services would run commercially successfully as this would require no subsidy from WBC. It was noted that WBC currently subsidised a number of services operating in the Borough;
- It was noted that a commitment to greener buses was proposed, whilst Reading Buses already operated a very green service. One hundred percent of buses were targeted to be electric by 2040. The majority of buses operating in the Borough were either Reading Buses or Thames Valley Buses, both owned by Reading Borough Council;
- With bus usage currently at 81 percent of pre-pandemic levels, was this expected to change given that more people were now working from home? Executive Member response – It was likely that this was the new baseline level. It was a priority to encourage users for leisure, retail and commuting purposes to use the services;
- Was it proposed to work with business parks to run services to them with suitable contributions? Executive Member and office response – Officers had engaged in conversations with Winnersh Triangle, Thames Valley Business Park and the Royal Berkshire Foundation. Officers were open to work with businesses and were looking to partner up with larger businesses operating from within the Borough;
- It was noted that My Journey specifically promoted bus services at new developments;
- Was secure bicycle storage planned in town centres, near to bus stops? Executive Member response – This was linked to the LCWIP, and it could well be that these services were provided for at certain bus stops;
- Were bus vouchers or cycle equipment vouchers being explored for residents of new developments? Officer response – This was part of the My Journey personalised travel plan, which worked with new developments;
- Had connectivity issues been considered, for example travelling from Woodley to Shinfield without having to go via Reading? Executive Member response – It was very difficult to connect everywhere up to tie into where people worked. The main focus was on key travel corridors, and to build on aspirational targets;
- Had ‘hopper’ services been considered? Executive Member and officer response – The issue with these types of services were that they were high frequency but used smaller vehicles, with less customers, resulting in increased costs. In addition, these services could take passengers away from existing services, whilst requiring additional drivers to operate the services.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Paul Fishwick, Chris Easton and Rebecca Brooks be thanked for attending the meeting;
- 2) Officers consider how large documents with considerable amounts of data might best be presented to members to make the most efficient use of the Committee's time;
- 3) Officers consider discussions with Reading Buses on understanding why people chose not to use buses, which was possibly worthy of a longer-term investigation.

64. LOCAL CYCLING AND WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN (LCWIP)

The Committee considered a report, set out in agenda pages 91 to 114, which set out the draft Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).

The report outlined that the development of a LCWIP would best place Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) to secure any government funding that became available through a series of bid ready projects prepared for submission in addition to ensuring that necessary funding can be secured via developers and other funding sources.

Paul Fishwick (Executive Member for Active Travel, Highways and Transport), Chris Easton (Assistant Director – Highways), and Robert Curtis (Transport Planning Team Manager) attended the meeting to answer member queries.

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

- It was noted that the consultants commissioned to support the consultation stated that this was a good level of response for an initial consultation, whilst detailed consultation would be undertaken for each scheme as and when they came forwards;
- There was a concern that the complexity of the consultation and its associated documents had led to additional negative comments for schemes that were otherwise in demand by the community. How would this be improved in future consultations? Executive Member and officer response – A real effort was made to inform residents that these were high level ideas and further consultation on the specifics would be forthcoming. This would be a live document which would be updated on a regular basis;
- Had allowances been made for people with mobility issues who would require vehicular transport? Executive Member response – There would always be people who needed to travel by private vehicle, and transferring other journeys to modes of travel such as walking and cycling would free up the road for those who needed to use it;
- With regards to the proposal to remove the roundabouts on nightingale Road, when would the public know a final decision? Executive Member response – These were purely high-level ideas, and the consultation included a free text box which allowed respondents to identify particular issues and concerns. If, after assessment by officers, comments indicated a particular issue for example the removal of the roundabouts, this could be considered in greater detail. The final document would be produced and adopted in February 2023, which would enable bidding to Active Travel England to commence. Detailing of particular priority routes could then be commenced, followed by lesser priority schemes. Routes which were prioritised would have design work undertaken, and those designs would go out for consultation;

- How might schemes which arose outside of the LCWIP be considered? Executive Member response – If a scheme arose which had not been included currently, this could be considered as part of the ongoing review of the live LCWIP document;
- Were the proposals ambitious enough, and should more potential schemes have been included within the consultation? Executive Member response – An assessment tool would outline the schemes of most benefit to the community;
- With regards to the scheme in Earley, it was noted that all of the schemes within Earley had been included in this category. Specific comments for individual schemes could now be analysed and assessed;
- How much money from bids was expected to cover the costs of these schemes? Executive member response – The goal was to secure one hundred percent of funding via bids, with supporting money from developer contributions alongside some capital funding. Funding from Active Travel England needed to be the primary funding source, whilst other Local Authorities had secured nearly one hundred percent of their funding from bids with small top-ups from developer contributions;
- Were ideas including mapping out local points of interest and walking and cycling times being considered? Executive Member response – Cycle routes were calculated in minutes at a speed of 9MPH, with walking routes calculated at 3MPH. A strategic approach was required to facilitate distribution of such information across the Borough;
- How were the next tranche of works being prioritised? Executive Member response – Specific categories were set out on agenda page 108, whilst agenda page 107 gave a snapshot of prioritised schemes;
- What were the best ways to identify unfinished rights of way and get them actioned? Executive member response – Concerns with unfinished rights of way could be raised directly with the highways team to ascertain who was responsible and to ensure that they were being linked to the correct locations;
- Were future provisions being made for E-Scooters should they become legal within the Borough? Executive Member response – Officers would need to take direction from Government on this issue. Data from the University of Bristol had found that for every 2 bicycle journeys undertaken 1 E-Scooter journey was also undertaken. This was a very popular mode of transport especially amongst younger people, whilst active travel routes with segregated cycle ways would be ideal rather than use of the pavement;
- Did the LCWIP include cycle routes to school which would promote safe cycling to schools? Executive Member response – Safe routes to school was part of the route prioritisation process, whilst some schemes within the LCWIP included routes to schools;
- It was commented that secure bike lockers in key locations would be appreciated;
- The Committee resolved to establish a Task and Finish Group, to meet in late January and early February of 2023, to consider the final draft of the LCWIP.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Paul Fishwick, Chris Easton, and Robert Curtis be thanked for attending the meeting;
- 2) The Executive Member and officers consider comments raised by the Committee when developing the final draft of the LCWIP;
- 3) A Task and Finish Group be established, to meet in late January and early February of 2023, to consider the final draft of the LCWIP.

65. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN - CHILDREN'S AND ADULT'S SERVICES BIDS

The Committee considered a report, set out in agenda pages 115 to 142 and supplementary agenda pages 3 to 52, which set out the proposed revenue and capital bids for the Adult's Services and Children's Services Directorates.

Imogen Shepherd-DuBey (Executive Member for Finance), David Hare (Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Services), Prue Bray (Executive Member for Children's Services), Graham Ebers (Deputy Chief Executive (Director of Resources and Assets), Matt Pope (Director of Adult's Services, and Helen Watson (Interim Director of Children's Services) attended the meeting to answer member queries.

The Executive Member for Finance stated that there was a predicted revenue shortfall of £4m for the next financial year, and a predicted shortfall of £14m in the capital budget.

The Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Services stated that there was uncertainty as to whether the service could deliver on proposed bids at predicted spending levels taking into account inflationary pressures, however every effort was being made to help address Wokingham Borough Council's (WBC's) overall financial situation. Forty percent of WBC's revenue budget was spent on adult social care, whilst a two percent increase in adult social care led to an approximate one percent increase in council tax. Growth within the service was continuing, however every effort was being made to keep this under three percent, which was half of the Local Government Association's inflationary pressure guide. It was excellent that we could pay the living wage to staff as this would reduce loss of staff to other sectors and industries including supermarkets, however this too placed additional financial pressures on the service. Additional pressures had been realised since the pandemic, and people who were not eligible for support were being signposted to appropriate organisations. Some bids would require to be revisited as a result of the recently announced Autumn Budget.

The Executive Member for Children's Services stated that there were two halves to the overall service, education and children's social care. There was unprecedented demand for special educational needs (SEN) related services, whilst issues including the war in Ukraine and new arrivals from Hong Kong were placing pressures on school places, which had contributed to 500 in year admissions. Budgeting for Children's Services had not already been realistic, with regular overspends for example in home to school transport (HTST). There had been an increasing number of applications for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), which had previously trended at low levels within the borough. There were not enough SEN places within the Borough, which contributed to increased costs in provision of HTST. There were a rising number of complex cases being presented in addition to rising levels of unaccompanied asylum seekers, which was set at 0.7% of the Borough's child population, which for Wokingham was 28 children. Some school years had no available places within the Borough, and there were 327 more children than there were

places for next year. Whilst some children would move out of the Borough or attend independent schools, this was usually expected to be around 120 children. The service was struggling to find drivers to transport children to school, whilst agencies were now trying to sell teams of social workers which was very expensive. Absolutely every effort was being made to avoid a reduction in early intervention and early help services. There were two bids relating to SEND sufficiency, however it was uncertain if either would be achieved. Addington School were scheduled to run Farley Hill School as an early years settlement. There had been 115 children in care during the last financial year, whereas there were now 145. Unaccompanied asylum seekers had risen from 12 to 37, whilst agency rates had risen from 14.7 percent to 23 percent, including educational psychologists.

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

- Was the £2.3B national investment to schools' capital or revenue money, and would this be paid out by WBC? Officer response – This was believed to be revenue support though this had not been specified, and if so it would sit in the DSG and be passed on directly to schools;
- Were WBC in a better or worse position as a result of the Autumn Statement? Officer response – Early estimates suggested that the position was about neutral, with the ability to increase Council Tax and increases Adult Social Care Grant being positives and increased living wages being a financial negative for WBC. At this stage, it was difficult to ascertain how much of these pressures would be passed on to WBC;
- In relation to bid ASC 1, Demand Management, would this be primarily investing to save or additional use of the voluntary sector? Officer response – This would be a combination of the two methods. It was key to know the growing needs of the Borough and to invest in the voluntary sector to help pick up some of the work. This would lead to less growth via provision of earlier support to enable people to be independent for longer at a lesser total cost;
- In relation to bid ASC R2, Learning Disability Review, what was the reason for Wokingham being such an outlier in this area? Officer response – There was no one clear answer to this issue, and a number of interrelated factors were likely to contribute towards this;
- This year's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) detailed a total budget of approximately £43.76m, whilst bid ASC R1 stated a total budget of approximately £44.9m. Where had the £1.2m come from, how was it spent, and how confident was the service of achieving the proposed £1.2m saving for next year? Officer response - £1m had been saved during this financial year, and if these savings had not been made then £1m would have to be added to the total budget. Any savings identified would be placed against growth bids to reduce the overall growth, in an attempt to 'flatten' the demand curve. There were still some concerns regarding the recent Autumn Statement, which could impact on the service sticking to the agreed budget. The budget setting process for next year had been unprecedented in terms of budget movement;
- Had the number of agency staff within Adult Social Care reduced over the past 4 years? Executive Member and officer response – The service had managed quite well against a national backdrop of a shortage of social workers and occupational

therapists. This was partly a national workforce issue and partly an issue of 'stop-gap' funding which meant that workers could only be recruited temporarily as the funding associated with them was on a temporary basis. There were many more jobs than there were qualified workers, and filling posts often came down to rates of pay. Wokingham was doing quite well in terms of use of agency staff and retention rates compared to some of our neighbouring authorities. In addition, a relocation offer was also available in addition to car parking, however the bottom line was that the service could not afford to offer ever increasing rates of pay;

- Could some of the efficiency savings being proposed have been implemented earlier? Officer response – Efficiency saving had already been implemented, and the savings being proposed were the savings against new people using the service;
- Could more detail be provided in relation to bid ASC R7, Optalis Review? Executive Member and officer response – This was about carrying out backroom tasks efficiently and effectively. Optalis had introduced a system of making sure that workers were in the right place at the right time via an electronic registering system, which would lead to future savings;
- In relation to bid ASC C3, Mosaic Modernisation, why were implementation costs being proposed when the system had been in use for 7 years? Officer response – This was about ensuring that our systems were up to date, utilising the latest addons to ensure compliance. The implementation costs were the project costs to facilitate installation of these addons. There were only a limited amount of systems available to ensure statutory compliance, none of which were perfect, and it was therefore a necessity to purchase addons to keep up to date. Part of the implementation would be to prepare for future charging reforms, whilst the providers were very aware of attempts by Local Authorities to group together to seek reduced costs which could lead to increased charges;
- It was noted that most Covid-19 restrictions had been removed from care homes in the Borough, and the focus was now on good infection control procedures for which there was some funding available;
- In relation to bid CS R7, Placements – LAC Charging Policy, would this be a standard charge? Executive Member and officer response – The £50k saving was a notional figure, and it was hoped that this could be avoided. Any charge would be on a case-by-case basis, whilst pressures across the service were necessitating any possible back office efficiencies;
- Members had received comments from a number of headteachers regarding increases in behavioural difficulties since the Covid-19 pandemic. How was any support for these increases being reflected in the budget? Executive Member and officer response – Schools were trying to prevent escalation, with additional support offered from SENCOs. Colleagues in health were key partners, and work was underway to look at how additional therapies could be offered to deal with some big challenges post-pandemic;
- In relation to the corporate transformation programme, it was noted that proposed savings included the policy process, travel training, route optimisation, and contract tenders and suppliers. The policy was tightened last year, which had made a

difference but there was still a significant overspend. If there were enough SEND places in the Borough then the overall cost of transport would be significantly reduced;

- How would the repeating trend of increasing overspend in the home to school transport budget be reversed? Executive Member response – Where eligible, some parents were offered direct payments in place of taxi provision, whilst travel training was key in reducing spending requirements. Travel training was sometimes resisted by parents who felt that their child needed protecting and therefore needed to be picked up, but it was important to encourage children to be as independent as possible. Route optimisation was also underway, whilst being careful that changes to routes did not upset other children. Options could be explored to sell spare seats on commissioned services, whilst looking at ticket costs compared to neighbouring Local Authorities;
- Were WBC responsible for unaccompanied asylum seekers who left care to go to University? Officer response – This was an interesting point, and a written answer would be provided;
- Was the service confident that new SEND schools would be fully utilised, as many pupils may already be settled at other schools. Executive Member and officer response – The new SEND school in Winnersh has had no issue in being fully allocated. Some parents would prefer their child not having to travel as far to school, whilst others may be attracted by a new build school. Any placement had to be bespoke for each child, and the absence of a long journey may balance off the need to settle in at a new school for some children. Conversations would be undertaken with individual families regarding potential placements at new schools;
- Was there potential of staff reductions to address budget concerns? Executive Member response – The issue of the budget had not been ‘bottomed out’, and there was no desire to reduce staff numbers, especially as it was not in the best interest of the service. Vacancies were being held where possible, whilst the impacts of other factors were yet to be fully understood. Many vacancies on the WBC website were related to schools which did not come out of the WBC budget, whilst other posts were service critical;
- How were we ensuring that budgets spent in collaboration with trusts were fair and equitable? Executive Member response – School’s Forum had scrutinised these budgets very closely, whilst the primary and secondary federation were also involved in the budget setting process. Work with trusts had to be done on a partnership basis.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Imogen Shepherd-DuBey, David Hare, Prue Bray, Graham Ebers Matt Pope, and Helen Watson be thanked for attending the meeting;
- 2) A written answer be provided as to whether WBC was responsible for unaccompanied asylum seekers who left care to go to University;
- 3) Changes to bids, know as lockdown 2, be presented to the Committee at a future meeting.

66. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered their work programme, set out in agenda pages 143 to 146.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Callum Wernham be thanked for attending the meeting;
- 2) Officers consider if the Violence Against Women and Girl's strategy would be ready for the March 2023 meeting of the Committee;
- 3) A Task and Finish Group be set up to consider the final draft of the LCWIP, with an extraordinary meeting of the Committee to be organised in February 2023 to confirm any recommendations of the Task and Finish Group ahead of submission to the Executive.

TITLE	Combatting Drugs Partnership
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 23 January 2023
WARD	None-Specific;
LEAD OFFICER	Director, Adult Social Care - Matt Pope

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

'The Combatting Drugs Partnership (CPD) is a Berkshire West partnership formed in response to the Governments new drug strategy 'From Harm to Hope'. The aim of the CDP is to set the direction and actions plan required by local and system partners to deliver against the framework. This supports Wokingham's Community Safety Partnership (CSP) priorities around reducing crime and substance use.

The CDP is overseen by Wokingham's CSP and has been running for six months. This report outlines the progress of the CDP and how this aligns with the local drug and alcohol strategy and priorities.

The Combatting Drugs Partnership (CDP) are six months into this arrangement, this report outlines the progress and outcomes achieved to date.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee notes the content of the report and the work achieved to date, reviews next steps and offers comment.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The report provides a summary of the formation of the CDP and it's progress to date to helping to deliver Wokingham's requirements as outline in the new Harm to Hope strategy.

Public Health initiated the new Substance Misuse Strategy as the current Strategy expires in 2024. In light of the direction given by National Government it was agreed the Wokingham strategy would be paused whilst the required needs assessment and subsequent action plan were developed as this would lead the work required across Berkshire West and locally.

The action plan developed and agreed within the CDP is now at the implementation stage and will need to be progressed with key partners including TVP, Probation, Health etc. etc. At the last CDP meeting on the 11th January 2023, it was agreed that CSPs were best placed to take the implementation of local delivery forward, due to well established frameworks for partnership delivery already in place. Local arrangements for the delivery and governance are to be finalised due course.

Background

Combatting Drugs Partnership 2022

In 2021, a two-part independent review of drugs was undertaken by Dame Carol Black. [Part One](#) identified the scale of the national drugs problems, with an illicit drugs market with an annual value of £10 billion, and 3 million users accessing a supply chain that is increasingly violent and exploitative. The societal cost of illicit drug use is of £19.3 billion per year, 86% attributable to health and crime related costs. [Part two](#) reviewed the current situation with prevention, treatment, and recovery, which the report concluded were not fit for purpose, and the need for significant investment to resolve the many issues highlighted.

[Harm to Hope, a 10 year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives](#) was launched in December 2021, taking the recommendations from the Dame Carol Black review into a strategic plan supported by grant funding, and system wide responsibilities. The plan has three key areas of focus:

1. Break the drugs supply chain

Combatting “county lines” and organised crime groups

2. Deliver a world – class treatment and recovery system

Investing in drug treatment and recovery, driving standards and consistency

3. Achieve a shift in the demand for recreational drugs

Deter adults from using recreational drugs, prevent young people from starting drugs

On 15th June 2022, the [Drug strategy guidance for local delivery partners](#) was published, outlining responsibilities over the next 6 months for local areas to establish the structures and work programmes needed in their areas to start to deliver on the 10 year plan. Areas are required to have a new statutory **Combatting Drugs Partnership** to successfully address the harms caused by illicit drugs.

The Office of the Police Crime Commissioner across the OPCC footprint met to consider the expectations. Discussions also took place to consider other footprints with possible geographic areas to establish the Combatting Drugs Partnership. Discussions were held with senior officers and the Chairs of the Community Safety Partnership to propose that the new partnership operate at a Berkshire West level across the three local authorities. The SRO is the Director of Public Health who already has accountability to the three organisations, and the Chair was nominated from the Community Safety Partnerships. Membership of the partnership is across the system.

The information and strategic direction on drugs and alcohol is variable across Berkshire West currently. The mandate to deliver against the criteria presented by Dame Carol Black is, as well as establishing a partnership, that a comprehensive needs assessment was undertaken, and an action plan was in place by December 2022. This has been written as a Berkshire West action plan with individual requirements for the three local authorities. This will be presented for sign off at the next CDP meeting in January 2023. The action plan will be ready for consideration in April 2023.

The Public Health grant is used to ensure provision of services to support people to recover from misuse of drug and alcohol. Additional government grant funding has

been provided to these services, to support delivery of the strategic ambitions set out in the 10-year plan. The individual money awarded to Wokingham for this work outside of the Public Health grant is £83,007 per annum for 3 years.

There will be a requirement of other members on the Combatting Drugs Partnership to undertake additional work programmes and commission/ deliver additional services. It is anticipated funding for this will flow directly from central government to the relevant organisation/s.

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	N/A	N/A
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	0	N/A	N/A
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	0	N/A	N/A

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

N/A

Public Sector Equality Duty

An equalities assessment was undertaken in February 2021.

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 will be no impact as a result of this decision on the Council's carbon neutral objective.

List of Background Papers

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-drugs-phase-one-report/review-of-drugs-summary>
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-drugs-phase-two-report/review-of-drugs-part-two-prevention-treatment-and-recovery>
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1079147/From_harm_to_hope_PDF.pdf
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/drugs-strategy-guidance-for-local-delivery-partners>

Contact Natasha Jones

Service Public Health

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TITLE	Medium Term Financial Plan 2023-26 Revenue & Capital Budget
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 23 rd January 2023
WARD	None Specific;
LEAD OFFICER	Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

To deliver on the priorities within the Council's Corporate Plan whilst maintaining a financially viable Council.

RECOMMENDATION

To recognise the imperative for responsible financial management in the current unprecedented financial circumstances.

To consider the report, challenge proposals and identify further ideas to address the financial shortfall.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

This report presents to CCOSC the summary of the latest revenue and capital position which incorporates the outcome of the Local Government Finance Settlement and revisions that have been made to bids following previous presentations in 2022.

The report provides responses to a number of questions raised in the previous CCOSC meetings.

Background

The Council annually undertakes its budget setting process for all its financial activities including General Fund Revenue Account (funded primarily by Council Tax), Housing Revenue Accounts (funded by tenants), Schools (funded by Government) and Capital (funded by various capital resources).

On the 06 October 2022, the committee were briefed on the strategic context, summary of the latest revenue and capital position, risks, and the timetable for future committee meetings for the budget setting period 2023/2024. During October and November, the committee were presented with all of revenue and capital bids for every service.

The committee are now presented with (Appendix A): -

1. Responses to a number of specific questions and requests for further information made at the previous CCOSC sessions (including further information on temporary staff (Appendix B))
2. Summary of the latest revenue position incorporating the outcome of the Local Government Finance Settlement including revisions to bids that have been made following the full presentation to CCOSC during October and November 2022.
3. Summary of the latest capital position including revisions to bids that have been made following the full presentation to CCOSC during October and November 2022.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council continues to face severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of reductions to public sector funding and growing pressures in our statutory services. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions of approximately £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	See other financial implications	Y	Both
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	See other financial implications	Y	Both
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	See other financial implications	Y	Both

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

There are no financial implications associated with the scrutiny process, however, the full MTFP, when submitted to Council in February 2023, will have to represent a balanced budget, and the 2023/24 capital programme will be fully funded.

Cross-Council Implications

This is in respect of budgets across all Council services.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Equality Impact Assessments have not been undertaken at this stage, however initial consideration has been included in the capital bids where appropriate. A full equalities appraisal will be required before specific proposals are agreed and implemented.

List of Background Papers

MTFP 2022-25

Contact Graham Ebers	Service Resources & Assets
Telephone No Tel: 0118 974 6557	Email graham.ebers@wokingham.gov.uk

Appendix A

MTFP 2023-26

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

23rd January 2023

Revenue and Capital Budget

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WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Agenda

- Actions from previous Overview & Scrutiny meeting
- Local Government Finance Settlement 2023/24
- Revenue Budget Update
- Capital Budget Update

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WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Previous O&S Questions – Place and Growth

	Comments/Reply
Combine management of Countryside Services and Leisure;	An initial review is underway to consider how leisure and cultural services might be best organised. This will consider the opportunity
Explore 'no win no fee' options – get companies to carry out work/recovery with no charge to WBC, but a % of the income comes back to WBC if successful	Discussions with members to be undertaken to further understand which services this is felt to be an opportunity
Explore any clawback of funding from the police re our in-house enforcement & safety service;	This has been looked at, but there are no avenues that currently allow for clawbacks from the police. We are continuing to build relationships with them however to understand how we can benefit from a stronger operational partnership
Explore Town and Parish Council's help to pay for bus services (using CIL money) bid ref PG R26	We are currently working to strengthen our partnerships with Town and Parishes to ensure a more proactive and aligned approach to securing the best outcomes for local communities. As part of that work and as the relationships are built we will be approaching how costs might be shared or re-distributed (including use of various grants). More lobbying of DfT for support as a further approach is being considered.
Bid PG R32, explore including this into the cost of home to school transport & charge accordingly;	Bid PG R32 is the Replacement of the Routewise System (CTU) and is a £60k special items for 23/24. Officers are currently considering (with ICT colleagues) the future approach for a more aligned system between services. Procurement are also assisting taking this forward.
Bid PG C2, explore the cost/benefit of the Toutley scheme;	Various options for works on the Depot have been considered and it has been confirmed that the work is required.
Bid PG C9, explore any funding from schemes such as the European Cycling federation fund	Any funding available for such schemes are considered as part of the business as usual service



Previous O&S Questions – RALT & CEO

Question	Comments/Reply
Officers consider exploration of other venues, for example Elms Field, for hosting future Christmas markets.	This will be picked up by the Communities & Partnerships Organisational Foundation Programme: providing partners the opportunity to inform a decision around a future venue for the Christmas Market, consider how this aligns with the Town Council's desires, town centre offer and town centre management activity. It is important that we listen to the views of partners to make an informed decision on the best location, based on a range of factors.
Officers re-evaluate the use of advertisement on the new WBC website to help maximise revenue.	The pop-up ads were removed from the website relatively recently as there were issues around accessibility and usability. The nature of the ads gave an impression of untrustworthiness and spam. Customer feedback via Govmetric and user testing was poor - there was an indication that customers called customer services rather than use the website as a result of the impact the ads had.
Officers explore market opportunities for staff laptops such as the use of chrome books, including the use of virtual machines to facilitate Microsoft Windows use.	<p>We are fully committed to ensuring our staff have devices that are cost effective and suitable to work styles. All devices selected are evaluated to understand their Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.</p> <p>The nature of our application estate means that we must use Windows devices to ensure they work. However, as more transitions from desktop client to web based we will ensure this is considered as part of the device selection process.</p> <p>We also need to ensure devices selected conform with security standards outline by Central Government in their code of connection. In the financial year 2023/24 we will be piloting the use of Windows as a service (Windows365).</p>
Officers explore whether student discounted Microsoft Windows license could facilitate old WBC hardware being donated to schools.	<p>Our licencing with Microsoft prohibits us from donating devices with the Windows Operating System or 365 suite on them.</p> <p>Question has been posed back to Microsoft around student licencing. We have a responsibility to ensure that devices are ethically recycled and disposed safeguarding the Councils data. Typical devices have no residual value when they reach the end of their usable life. However, when there is value we received this money make from our recycling partner.</p>
That more detail be provided in respect of temporary workers	Further detail is provided in Appendix B



Previous O&S Questions – RALT & CEO

Question	Comments/Reply
Further consideration be given to the proposal to reduce the number of editions of the Borough News, including an impact assessment on vulnerable residents;	Initial impact assessment has been completed on the proposal for reduction and distribution of Borough News, building in better use of data, so that it can inform any changes: being clear on the impact for residents and how this may be mitigated through changes proposed. This is now progressing to consultation which will inform a full impact assessment being completed in the coming weeks.
Additional detail be provided with regards to bid CE R7, budget required to deliver sustainable organisational change, including how success would be measured	This bid covers two key functions; Business Change which manages transformation programmes across all Directorates, as well as leading the Organisational Foundation Programme for cross cutting change initiatives. The 2 nd function is Digital Improvement which is leading the replacement of the Council's CRM system and website. These functions/programmes have been brought to O&S during 2022 and a further detailed paper has been drafted to outline the benefits and outcomes associated with an Organisational Change function which is on the Overview and Scrutiny forward plan.
57 Options be explored to see if it could be possible for Town and Parish Council's to distribute the Borough News, or a similar product;	To be included in the impact assessment for the consideration of the number of editions of Borough News above.
Officers explore options to lease under-utilised WBC assets and space to childcare providers;	We will explore this potential opportunity further as part of the Asset Opportunities Organisational Foundations Programme, led by Sarah Morgan as Senior Responsible Officer (SRO). All our properties and their usage and potential usage is being reviewed under the Assets Opportunities Programme.
Officers explore options to extend the offer of WBC's contact centre to other services such as the Police or Fire services.	We will explore further as part of the Customer Excellence Organisation Foundation Programme. Clarity required around scope i.e. in hours, out or both. We know from experience working with our own out of hours provider, the income levels are not generally high. Cost to run may outweigh income.
Self Insuring smaller value assets and liabilities	<p>Although there are a couple of exceptions (e.g. schools' contents) the excess under our Property policy for the majority of claims is £25,000 rising to £50,000 for some claims. Therefore, we do actually self-insure up to at least £25,000 per claim which would certainly cover smaller items.</p> <p>We will also consider increasing the £25,000 excess to £50,000 at renewal in June. The insurance reserve is used to fund self-insured claims and we will need to look at a further provision depending on the level of claims going forward.</p>

Local Government Finance Settlement

Headlines (MTFP based on same assumed level of 2022/23 support)

Core Spending Power increase - £10.9m (£151m 2022/23 to £161.9m 2023/24) – 7.2% increase

- of which £9.1m is Council Tax – government assuming 4.99% increase
- therefore providing additional funding

(£1.8m) (6.9% incr)

Adult social care pressures (package costs and wage inflation)

£2m

Net income/(pressure) on MTFP

£0.2m*

**Potential further grant income to be negotiated from Better Care Fund to cover pressure*

Number of areas of funding still not detailed – including Homelessness and Public Health

Risk on Business Rates levy still to be understood – initial govt calculations - £2.9m pressure





Revenue



MTFP Summary Changes from Lockdown 1 to Lockdown 2

MTFP Summary	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000
Budget Gap Lockdown 1	£4,068	£3,292	£4,203
Budget Gap Lockdown 2	£0	£3,329	£5,558
Change from Lockdown 1	(£4,068)	£37	£1,355



MTFP Summary – Lockdown 1

	Yr 1 - 23/24			Yr 2 - 24/25			Yr 3 - 25/26		
	Growth	Savings	Net	Growth	Savings	Net	Growth	Savings	Net
Adult Social Care	£2,819	(£2,350)	£469	£5,129	(£4,050)	£1,079	£7,229	(£5,100)	£2,129
Chief Executive	£70	(£415)	(£345)	£930	(£415)	£515	£930	(£415)	£515
Children's Services	£4,535	(£1,970)	£2,565	£5,523	(£2,540)	£2,983	£6,263	(£3,000)	£3,263
Place and Growth	£1,219	(£2,409)	(£1,190)	£1,219	(£4,918)	(£3,699)	£1,219	(£5,263)	(£4,045)
Resources & Assets	£787	(£1,296)	(£509)	£787	(£1,542)	(£755)	£787	(£2,072)	(£1,285)
Total	£9,430	(£8,440)	£990	£13,588	(£13,465)	£123	£16,428	(£15,850)	£577
2022/23 MTFP Budget Gap			£2,272			£2,272			£2,272
Net growth / savings (from above)			£990			£123			£577
Inflation (pay award + contractual inflation)			£8,931			£15,472			£22,043
Council Tax - 1.99% Increase			(£2,489)			(£5,090)			(£7,670)
Council Tax - 1.00% ASC Precept			(£1,251)			(£2,557)			(£3,863)
Additional Council Tax Base (1.5% / 1% / 1%)			(£1,886)			(£3,144)			(£4,402)
Social Care Grant			(£500)			(£500)			(£500)
Adult Social Care Reform			£3,130			£6,130			£9,770
Adult Social Care Reform - Income			(£3,130)			(£6,130)			(£9,770)
Children's Education Reform			£360			£360			£360
Children's Education Reform - Income			(£360)			(£360)			(£360)
Foundation Savings			(£2,000)			(£3,283)			(£4,253)
Revised Budget Gap			£4,068			£3,292			£4,203



Revenue – Key Changes

- Increase in Council Tax beyond to 2.99% & 2% ASC precept (in all of the next three years)
- £1.4m utilisation of Reserves (in year one)
- Decommissioning / Staffing Reductions not already submitted £1.4m
- Social Care charging reforms delayed and reprofiled to 2025/26
- Additional pay and contract inflation (inc ASC) added to years two and three
- Social Care new grant and repurposed reform grant used to support 2023/24 ASC inflation
- DSG deficit recovery plus 1% each year

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MTFP Summary – Lockdown 2

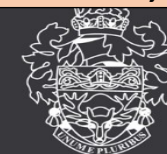


	Yr 1 - 23/24			Yr 2 - 24/25			Yr 3 - 25/26		
	Growth	Savings	Net	Growth	Savings	Net	Growth	Savings	Net
Adult Social Care	£2,819	(£2,350)	£469	£5,129	(£4,050)	£1,079	£7,229	(£5,100)	£2,129
Chief Executive	£198	(£402)	(£204)	£1,058	(£402)	£656	£1,058	(£402)	£656
Children's Services	£4,535	(£1,970)	£2,565	£5,523	(£2,540)	£2,983	£6,263	(£3,000)	£3,263
Place and Growth	£969	(£2,337)	(£1,368)	£969	(£4,548)	(£3,579)	£969	(£4,743)	(£3,775)
Resources & Assets	£887	(£1,346)	(£459)	£887	(£1,592)	(£705)	£887	(£2,122)	(£1,235)
Total	£9,408	(£8,405)	£1,004	£13,566	(£13,132)	£434	£16,406	(£15,367)	£1,038



MTFP Summary – Lockdown 2

	Yr 1 - 23/24 £000	Yr 2 - 24/25 £000	Yr 3 - 25/26 £000
2022/23 MTFP Budget Gap	£2,272	£2,272	£2,272
Net growth / savings (from above)	£1,004	£434	£1,038
Inflation (pay award + contractual inflation)	£10,931	£21,185	£30,231
Council Tax - 1.99% Increase	(£2,489)	(£5,090)	(£7,670)
Council Tax - 1.00% ASC Precept	(£1,251)	(£2,557)	(£3,863)
Council Tax - Additional 1.00% ASC Precept	(£1,251)	(£2,557)	(£3,863)
Council Tax - 1.00% DSG Deficit Recovery	(£1,251)	(£2,557)	(£3,863)
Contribution to DSG Deficit Recovery	£1,251	£2,557	£3,863
Additional Council Tax Base (1.5% / 1% / 1%)	(£1,886)	(£3,144)	(£4,402)
Social Care Grant (22/23 Budget £1.4m)	(£2,500)	(£2,500)	(£2,500)
Adult Social Care Charging Reform	£0	£0	£3,130
Adult Social Care Charging Reform - Income	£0	£0	(£3,130)
Children's Education Reform	£360	£360	£360
Children's Education Reform - Income	(£360)	(£360)	(£360)
Foundation Savings	(£2,000)	(£3,283)	(£4,253)
Transfer from Reserves (PFI equalisation)	(£1,400)	£0	£0
Additional Foundations; Workforce Savings	(£1,431)	(£1,431)	(£1,431)
Budget Gap	£0	£3,329	£5,558
Pressures from "at risk"	£4,429	£6,281	£7,701
Remaining Budget Risk	£4,429	£9,610	£13,259



Inflation Assumptions

	Yr 1 - 23/24	Yr 2 - 24/25	Yr 3 - 25/26
Contracts	2,850	3,300	3,300
Adult Social Care	3,663	2,526	2,163
Pay and Pension (4% / 4% / 3%)	4,418	4,428	3,583
Per Year	10,931	10,254	9,046
<i>Cumulative</i>	<i>10,931</i>	<i>21,185</i>	<i>30,231</i>

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Adult Social Care Changes – Lockdown 2

Special Items

	Bid Name	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000
Lockdown 1		300	200	500
Special Items	Demand management - resource investment to deliver change	500	0	0
Lockdown 2		800	200	500



Chief Executive Changes – Lockdown 2

	Bid Name	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000
Lockdown 1		(345)	515	515
Growth	Social Care system increased software licence and hosting costs	128	128	128
Savings	Community to run smaller libraries and remodel as Local community hubs	13	13	13
Lockdown 2		(204)	656	656



Children's Services Changes – Lockdown 2

	Bid Name	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000
Lockdown 1		2,565	2,983	3,263
Savings	Transforming Children's Services	266	266	(34)
Savings	Home to School Transport	(266)	(266)	(266)
Savings	Shared Services	0	0	200
Savings	Improving Operational Efficiency through Process Improvement and Use of Technology	0	0	100
Lockdown 2		2,565	2,983	3,263



Place and Growth Changes – Lockdown 2

	Bid Name	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000
Lockdown 1		(1,190)	(3,699)	(4,045)
Growth	Domestic Abuse - Commissioned Services	(75)	(75)	(75)
Growth	Sustainment of 7 day week Anti-Social Behaviour Service at same level as 2022/23	75	75	75
Growth	Waste and recycling - increase in property numbers	(250)	(250)	(250)
Savings	Introduction of charge for garden waste bins of £40 per bin	20	(10)	0
Savings	Options for outsourcing DAC activity	0	0	0
Savings	Increase Watercourse fees to developers from £50 to £2,000	40	40	40
Savings	Increase hourly rate for licensing team from £59 to £65	(5)	(5)	(5)
Savings	Additional charges for residents second parking permits - £900	62	0	0
Savings	Parking charges - Stretch target for Off Street proposed increase in charges	0	250	250
Savings	Stretch target for On Street proposed introduction of parking charges	0	140	280
Savings	Efficiencies from merging the highways services	(45)	(45)	(45)
Savings	Thames Valley Park P&R (lease income from the Hospital)	0	0	0
Lockdown 2		(1,368)	(3,579)	(3,775)



Place and Growth Changes – Lockdown 2

Special Items



	Bid Name	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000
Lockdown 1		1,217	319	69
Special Item	Sustainment of 7 day week Anti-Social Behaviour Service at same level as 2022/23	75	0	0
Special Item	Domestic Abuse - Commissioned Services	75	0	0
Lockdown 2		1,367	319	69



Resources and Assets Changes – Lockdown 2

	Bid Name	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000
Lockdown 1		(509)	(755)	(1,285)
Savings	Long-term Empty Property Premium	(50)	(50)	(50)
Growth	Carnival Estates Management	(30)	(30)	(30)
Growth	Coroners Court	130	130	130
Lockdown 2		(459)	(705)	(1,235)



Resources and Assets Changes – Lockdown 2

Special Items

Bid Name		2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000
Lockdown 1		370	130	0
Special Items	Increase in Council Tax Reduction Scheme and fund for tackling poverty	250	0	0
Lockdown 2		620	130	0



Identified Risks– Lockdown 2

Service	Type	Risks	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000
Adult Social Care	Savings	Review the application of Continued Health Care (CHC) claims	200	400	400
Chief Executive	Growth	Social Care system increased software licence and hosting costs	128	128	128
Children's Services	Savings	Home to School Transport - delay in demand management mitigations	266	266	266
Children's Services	Growth	Unaccompanied asylum seekers - delay in demand management mitigations	200	150	100
Place and Growth	Savings	Introduction of On Street Parking Controls - 100 spaces per year for next two years	280	280	280
Place and Growth	Savings	Reduce reliance on consultants for Transport Planning expertise	65	100	100
Place and Growth	Savings	Highways Operational Savings	397	150	0
Place and Growth	Savings	Introduction of Moving Traffic Offence Enforcement	103	205	205
Place and Growth	Savings	Reduce the community engagement team by 2 posts	92	92	92
Place and Growth	Special Item	Ecology officer resource for comments on planning applications and new responsibilities under the Environment Bill	48	0	0
Resources and Assets	Growth	Leisure income - continuing impact of COVID and the cost of living	350	350	350
Resources and Assets	Growth	Debt charges to support current capital programme funding gap	0	660	1,080
Organisational Foundations (OFP)	Savings	Failure to achieve OFP saving (including potential duplication)	300	500	700
Corporate	Inflation	General inflation	2000	3000	4000
Total			4,429	6,281	7,701



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Capital



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Capital Summary – Lockdown 1

	Year 1 - 2023/24			Year 2 - 2024/25			Year 3 - 2025/26			Total Three Years £m
	Reprofile from 2022/23 £m	MTFP / New Bid £m	Total £m	Reprofile from 2022/23 £m	MTFP / New Bid £m	Total £m	Reprofile from 2022/23 £m	MTFP / New Bid £m	Total £m	
	Adult Social Care	3	6	10	7	3	10	0	2	
Children's Services	0	12	12	0	37	37	0	24	24	73
Chief Executive's Office	0	3	3	0	2	2	0	1	1	6
Place and Growth	30	30	60	40	16	56	15	28	43	159
Resources & Assets	75	39	115	2	16	18	5	10	15	147
Total Capital Expenditure	109	90	199	48	74	122	20	65	85	406
Funded by;										
Developer Contributions			(24)			(47)			(10)	(81)
Capital Grants			(17)			(34)			(22)	(74)
Capital Receipts			(5)			(4)			(0)	(9)
Supported Borrowing			(123)			(28)			(29)	(180)
General Fund Borrowing			(14)			(6)			(5)	(25)
Total Capital Funding			(185)			(119)			(66)	(369)
Funding (Surplus) / Gap			14			3			20	37

Income/funding is shown in brackets
Annual figures are **not** cumulative (cumulative figures in col on far right)



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Capital Changes – Lockdown 2

Area	Project Name	Movement				Revised Budget (Over 4 Years)	Comments
		23/24 £,000	24/25 £,000	25/26 £,000	26/27 £,000		
P&G	Managing Congestion	0	0	(5,000)	(7,000)	0	SAVINGS - Yr 3 + 4 removed
P&G	Bridge Strengthening - Earley Station Footbridge	(6,687)	6,687	0	0	6,787	REPROFILE
P&G	Denmark Street Environmental Improvements	(791)	0	(641)	(470)	500	SAVINGS - £0.5m kept for Yr 3
P&G	Wokingham Town Centre Regeneration Environmental Improvements	(646)	0	(830)	(200)	0	SAVINGS
P&G	California Crossroads	200	(200)	(5,698)	(350)	5,520	REPROFILE - Yr 1 + Yr 2 SAVINGS - Yr 3 + Yr 4
P&G	Public Rights of Way Network	(2,120)	(737)	(737)	(737)	708	SAVINGS
P&G	A327 Cycleway	680	0	0	0	1,030	REPROFILE from 22/23 (£680k)
P&G	Sports Provision to Serve North & South SDL's	0	(4,058)	0	0	2,162	SAVINGS
P&G	Toutley Highways Depot Modernisation (including new bid)	(3,284)	1,284	0	0	10,749	REPROFILE + £2M SAVINGS
P&G	Active Travel & Bus Priority	(1,046)	0	0	0	2,954	SAVINGS
P&G	California Lakeside Refurbishment	600	0	0	0	600	NEW BID - S106 + Parish CIL
CS	School Kitchens	(50)	(50)	(50)	(50)	200	SAVINGS
CS	UASC accommodation	500	0	0	0	500	NEW BID
R&A	New pool at Arborfield	(1,000)	(6,000)	1,000	6,000	7,000	REPROFILE
R&A	Replacement of boilers and hot water system at Shute End Offices - new bid	(122)	0	0	0	0	SAVINGS
Total movement		(13,766)	(3,074)	(11,956)	(2,807)		

Capital Summary – Lockdown 2

	Year 1 - 2023/24			Year 2 - 2024/25			Year 3 - 2025/26			Total Three Years £m
	Reprofile from 2022/23 £m	MTFP / New Bid £m	Total £m	Reprofile from 2022/23 £m	MTFP / New Bid £m	Total £m	Reprofile from 2022/23 £m	MTFP / New Bid £m	Total £m	
	Adult Social Care	3	7	10	7	3	10	0	2	
Children's Services	0	13	13	0	37	37	0	24	24	74
Chief Executive's Office	0	3	3	0	2	2	0	1	1	6
Place and Growth	25	22	47	36	23	59	15	15	30	137
Resources & Assets	75	38	113	2	10	12	5	11	16	141
Total Capital Expenditure	109	78	186	45	74	119	20	53	73	378
Funded by;										
Developer Contributions			(15)			(8)			(0)	(23)
Capital Grants			(19)			(35)			(22)	(75)
Capital Receipts			(3)			(10)			(0)	(13)
Supported Borrowing			(134)			(52)			(34)	(220)
General Fund Borrowing			(17)			(5)			(5)	(27)
Total Capital Funding			(187)			(110)			(61)	(358)
Funding (Surplus) / Gap			(1)			9			12	20

Income/funding is shown in brackets
Annual figures are **not** cumulative (cumulative figures in col on far right)



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Capital Summary – Lockdown 3 Changes

		2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Revised Budget	Comments
Children's Services	Spencer's Wood Primary School (New Build)	0	(5,138)	(3,500)	0	School not expected to be required in MTFP period, ringfenced S106 funding available (options to be explored on use of this)
Place & Growth	Wokingham Borough Cycle Network	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)	0	Future schemes subject to external bids (grant funding, etc)
	Bridge Strengthening - Earley Station Footbridge	0	(4,687)	0	2,100	Revised budget based on repair option (details to be confirmed)
	Greenways	0	(1,500)	(2,603)	1,496	Future schemes subject to external bids (grant funding, etc)
	Land Acquisition for Major Road Schemes – Spend	(7,292)	0	0	1,000	1 remaining property to buy, to be re-sold when works complete.
	Gypsy, Roma, Traveller (GRT) Additional Pitches	0	(1,590)	1,590	1,590	Reprofile from year 2 to year 3
	Seaford Court - Spend	300	3,000	530	3,830	New Bid – £3m funded from S106 Affordable Housing
	Seaford Court – Funding	(300)	(3,000)	(530)		
	Wellington Road – Spend	4,000	1,930	0	5,930	New Bid – Funded from S106 Affordable Housing, Homes England Grant (tbc) and Supported Borrowing (i.e. self funded)
Wellington Road – Funding	(4,000)	(1,930)	0			
Total expenditure movements		(8,292)	(13,915)	(5,513)		



Capital Summary – Lockdown 3

	Year 1 - 2023/24			Year 2 - 2024/25			Year 3 - 2025/26			Total Three Years £m
	Reprofile from 2022/23 £m	MTFP / New Bid £m	Total £m	Reprofile from 2022/23 £m	MTFP / New Bid £m	Total £m	Reprofile from 2022/23 £m	MTFP / New Bid £m	Total £m	
Adult Social Care	3	7	10	7	3	10	0	2	2	22
Children's Services	0	13	13	0	31	31	0	21	21	65
Chief Executive's Office	0	3	3	0	2	2	0	1	1	6
Place and Growth	26	25	51	37	18	55	15	14	29	134
Resources & Assets	75	38	113	2	10	12	5	11	16	141
Total Capital Expenditure	106	84	189	45	74	119	20	48	68	368
Funded by;										
Developer Contributions			(18)			(6)			(1)	(24)
Capital Grants			(20)			(50)			(22)	(92)
Capital Receipts			(3)			(10)			(0)	(13)
Supported Borrowing			(133)			(26)			(22)	(181)
General Fund Borrowing			(18)			(7)			(5)	(30)
Total Capital Funding			(191)			(99)			(50)	(340)
Funding (Surplus) / Gap			(1)			11			18	28

Income/funding is shown in brackets
Annual figures are **not** cumulative (cumulative figures in col on far right)



Capital Summary – Lockdown 3 Changes

	Year 1 - 2023/24	Year 2 - 2024/25	Year 3 - 2025/26	Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m
LD2 - Funding (Surplus) / Gap)	(1)	9	12	20
LD3 - Funding (Surplus) / Gap)	(1)	11	18	28
Movement	0	2	6	8

- Changes in LD3 include;
 - Reductions of £27m from expenditure budgets over 3 years (see next slide)
 - £6m of the reductions not funded from ringfenced and / or CIL income leaving £21m of funding to be removed alongside the expenditure
 - Introduction of risk around overall CIL funding shortfall, £14m in total

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	£m	Funding Gap £m
Capital gap - LD2		20
Less expenditure removed (next slide)	(27)	(7)
Removal of ringfenced / CIL funding	21	14
Add latest shortfall from overall CIL income	14	28
Capital gap - LD3		28



Appendix B

Temporary Worker Report

Executive Summary

This report contains the data from the end of quarter 2 for 2022/23, and the narrative that would normally be provided alongside this data as part of the quarterly Personnel Board report regarding the use of temporary workers in each of the Directorates.

- It is important to recognise that there are specific scenarios where reliance on temporary workers is both a necessary and appropriate resourcing solution to meet service delivery needs especially in areas where staffing numbers are governed by statutory requirement e.g., in the care services.
- Agency Workers make up 6% of our workforce; Consultants make up 0.7% of our workforce
- We continue to focus on reducing reliance on high-cost temporary workers by appropriate strategic resourcing solutions supported by ongoing improvement work on our management information systems & resourcing process.
- Notwithstanding the above, it is important to recognise that there are specific scenarios where reliance on agency workers is both a necessary and appropriate resourcing solution obviously underpinned by commercial cost governance.
- As at end of Q2 there were 95 agency workers at a cost of £2,261,599, 11 Consultant workers at a cost of £257,135.

Analysis by Directorate

1. Adult Social Care and Health

There remain national difficulties in recruiting permanent Social Workers, Occupational Therapists and Advanced Mental Health Practitioners and this has required the directorate to use agency workers to ensure consistent, safe provision of services and maintain performance against KPI's. This has been combined by an increase in referrals, a steep rise in Safeguarding inquiries and evidence of increased complexity for customer as a result of Covid, mental health problems and social isolation. Agency staff have been used to cover time-limited, grant funded initiatives to respond to the impact of these pressures.

The long-standing agency staff have mainly been utilised flexibly across the whole service to meet the needs as they arise, cover vacancies that we have been unable to recruit to and to fulfil the roles created by grant funded initiatives. There is currently a 15% vacancy rate that is being covered by agency workers.

As part of a longer-term strategy, a specialist Recruitment and Retention post has been appointed with a view to improving recruitment of key staff, to reduce the reliance on agency staff and to focus on permanent solutions. This will be supported by the recent launch of a dedicated ASCH recruitment page designed to better promote careers in Social Care and the benefits and advantages of working for Wokingham Borough Council.

Additional transformation funding in 2022/23 has also been used to secure agency support to drive demand down, review high cost packages and contribute towards savings targets.

2. Children's Services

There continue to be challenges regionally, sub regionally and nationally in recruitment to the children's workforce. This includes social work, Educational Psychology and other key parts of the workforce such as data and intelligence. There is a national shortage of trained and qualified workers for particular roles- eg the Doctorate level qualification for Educational Psychology has had a notable impact. We continue to be in competition with other LAs to attract, recruit and retain in these key roles.

We are responding creatively to these challenges by recruiting trainees and growing our own social work workforce.

3. Resources & Assets

A national skills shortage challenge continues to impact the Council's ability to recruit auditors however reliance is decreasing, and a review of the internal structure has helped to encourage and generate more interest from applicants. Recruitment strategies will continue to be developed to reduce reliance on agency workers through internal development and opportunities.

Agency workers are being used to fill vacancies in several departments including Income & Assessments whilst work is being undertaken to move to a permanent structure following consultation.

Agency usage within the property team is being used to support specific projects whose cost is capitalised against the projects worked on.

4. Chief Executive Office

Engagement of temporary consultant resource has been necessary to support the transitional arrangements to improve the HR provision for the organisation. This is constantly under review and will be removed as the new HR structure embeds.

5. Place & Growth

Within Place and Growth, Highways is a national sector that is underpinned by an agile, contracting labour force. Across the sector, due to the nature of national schemes and projects, specialists are interim in nature – contracting when and where schemes are financed and as such, there are nationally very few specialists who undertake permanent placements. Most of the high-cost agency workers identified in the report fall into this category and as such, whilst we continue to apply good governance and replace contractors with permanent staff as and when we can, the nature of this industry remains reliant on agency workers.

**Consultant/ Interim Workers as at 1st october
2022**

Service	Total Number of Consultant/ Interim Workers	Tenure				
		<6 mths	6 mths-1 yr	1-2 yrs	2-3 yrs	3+ years
Adult Social Care & Health	0	0	0	0	0	0
Children's Services	4	0	0	1	2	1
Place & Growth	3	0	1	1	0	1
Resources & Assets	1	1	0	0	0	0
Chief Executives Office	3	3	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	11					

**Agency Workers
as at 1st october
2022**

Service	Total Number of Agency Workers	Posts	Number in Posts	Tenure				
				<6 mths	6 mths-1 yr	1-2 yrs	2-3 yrs	3+ years
Adult Social Care & Health	29	Social Worker	21	3	5	8	2	3
		Others	8	6	2	0	0	
Children's Services	35	Social Worker	20	7	5	3	1	4
		SEND Officer	5	1	0	1	3	0
		Others	10	4	4	2	0	0
Place & Growth	13	Highways & Transport	5	2	1	0	1	1
		Housing	6	1	2	1	0	2
		Others	2	0	1	1	0	0
Resources & Assets	14	Revenue	7	6	0	1	0	0
		Procurement	2	2	0	0	0	0
		Others	5	3	1	1	0	0
Chief Executives Office	4	Others	4	3	0	1	0	0
TOTAL	95							

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WBC Overview and Scrutiny

Local Cycling, Walking and Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) Task and Finish Group

Terms of Reference

1. To consider the latest draft and information relating to the LCWIP, and to formulate any recommendations for improvement to the Executive;
2. To consider the summary of results from the latest consultation, to inform any potential recommendations to the Executive;
3. To produce a final report to the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee and, subsequently, the Executive with any recommendations for improvement.

Witnesses

- WBC Members and Officers;
- 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
6 Feb 2023 (Provisional Extraordinary, date subject to change)	Recommendations to the Executive	To agree the final reports and recommendations from Task and Finish Groups for submission to the Executive.	Committee Task and Finish Groups	Callum Wernham
	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
6 March 2023	Police and Fire Services Update	To receive updates on the work of the local Police and Fire Services	Work programme	Callum Wernham
	Flood Risk Management Update	To receive an update on flood risk management within the Borough.	Work programme	Boniface Ngu
	Violence Against Women and Girls Update	To consider an update to the emerging VAWAG plan.	Committee request	Francesca Hobson
	Anti-Abuse Charter Update	To consider implementation of the anti-abuse charter.	Council request	Narinder Brar
	Task and Finish Group Report	To agree the report and recommendations of the "Preferred Registered Providers" Task and Finish Group, for submission to the Executive.	Committee Task and Finish Group	Callum Wernham
	Work Programme	To consider the work programme for the Committee for 2022-23	Standing Item	Democratic Services

Task & Finish Groups - 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.

LCWIP Task and Finish Group.

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