



# 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 22 MAY 2023 AT 7.00 PM**

Susan Parsonage  
Chief Executive  
Published on 12 May 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://youtube.com/live/mNcubTb4fv8?feature=share>

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<b>Our Vision</b>
<b><i>A great place to live, learn, work and grow and a great place to do business</i></b>
<b>Enriching Lives</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Champion excellent education and enable our children and young people to achieve their full potential, regardless of their background.</li> <li>• Support our residents to lead happy, healthy lives and provide access to good leisure facilities to enable healthy choices for everyone.</li> <li>• Engage and empower our communities through arts and culture and create a sense of identity for the Borough which people feel part of.</li> <li>• Support growth in our local economy and help to build business.</li> </ul>
<b>Providing Safe and Strong Communities</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and safeguard our children, young and vulnerable people.</li> <li>• Offer quality care and support, at the right time, to reduce the need for long term care.</li> <li>• Nurture our communities: enabling them to thrive and families to flourish.</li> <li>• Ensure our Borough and communities remain safe for all.</li> </ul>
<b>Enjoying a Clean and Green Borough</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play as full a role as possible to achieve a carbon neutral Borough, sustainable for the future.</li> <li>• Protect our Borough, keep it clean and enhance our green areas for people to enjoy.</li> <li>• Reduce our waste, promote re-use, increase recycling and improve biodiversity.</li> <li>• Connect our parks and open spaces with green cycleways.</li> </ul>
<b>Delivering the Right Homes in the Right Places</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer quality, affordable, sustainable homes fit for the future.</li> <li>• Ensure the right infrastructure is in place, early, to support and enable our Borough to grow.</li> <li>• Protect our unique places and preserve our natural environment.</li> <li>• Help with your housing needs and support people, where it is needed most, to live independently in their own homes.</li> </ul>
<b>Keeping the Borough Moving</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain and improve our roads, footpaths and cycleways.</li> <li>• Tackle traffic congestion and minimise delays and disruptions.</li> <li>• Enable safe and sustainable travel around the Borough with good transport infrastructure.</li> <li>• Promote healthy alternative travel options and support our partners in offering affordable, accessible public transport with good transport links.</li> </ul>
<b>Changing the Way We Work for You</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be relentlessly customer focussed.</li> <li>• Work with our partners to provide efficient, effective, joined up services which are focussed around our customers.</li> <li>• Communicate better with customers, owning issues, updating on progress and responding appropriately as well as promoting what is happening in our Borough.</li> <li>• Drive innovative, digital ways of working that will connect our communities, businesses and customers to our services in a way that suits their needs.</li> </ul>
<b>Be the Best We Can Be</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be an organisation that values and invests in all our colleagues and is seen as an employer of choice.</li> <li>• Embed a culture that supports ambition, promotes empowerment and develops new ways of working.</li> <li>• Use our governance and scrutiny structures to support a learning and continuous improvement approach to the way we do business.</li> <li>• Be a commercial council that is innovative, whilst being inclusive, in its approach with a clear focus on being financially resilient.</li> <li>• Maximise opportunities to secure funding and investment for the Borough.</li> <li>• Establish a renewed vision for the Borough with clear aspirations.</li> </ul>

**MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Councillors - To be confirmed at Annual Council on 18 May 2023**

**Substitutes - To be confirmed at Annual Council on 18 May 2023**

ITEM NO.	WARD	SUBJECT	PAGE NO.
1.		<p><b>ELECTION OF CHAIR</b> To elect a Chair for the 2023/24 Municipal Year.</p>	
2.		<p><b>APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR</b> To appoint a Vice Chair for the 2023/24 Municipal Year.</p>	
3.		<p><b>APOLOGIES</b> To receive any apologies for absence.</p>	
4.		<p><b>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING</b> To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2023.</p>	5 - 12
5.		<p><b>DECLARATION OF INTEREST</b> To receive any declarations of interest.</p>	
6.		<p><b>PUBLIC QUESTION TIME</b> 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 <a href="http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/publicquestions">www.wokingham.gov.uk/publicquestions</a></p>	
7.		<p><b>MEMBER QUESTION TIME</b> To answer any member questions.</p>	
8.	None Specific	<p><b>ANNUAL FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE</b> To receive the annual update on Flood Risk Management within the Borough.</p>	13 - 18

- |            |               |  |                |
|------------|---------------|--|----------------|
| <b>9.</b>  | None Specific | <b>COMBATING DRUGS PARTNERSHIP</b><br>To consider a report on the “Combatting Drugs Partnership”.  | <b>19 - 26</b> |
| <b>10.</b> | None Specific | <b>ACTIVE TRAVEL TASK AND FINISH GROUP - APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS</b><br>To appoint Members to the Active Travel Task and Finish Group for the 2023/24 Municipal Year. | <b>27 - 32</b> |
| <b>11.</b> | None Specific | <b>WORK PROGRAMME</b><br>To consider the Committee’s work programme for the 2023/24 municipal year.  | <b>33 - 36</b> |

**Any other items which the Chair decides are urgent**

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

**CONTACT OFFICER**

**Callum Wernham**  
**Email**  
**Postal Address**

Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist  
democratic.services@wokingham.gov.uk  
Shute End, Wokingham, RG40 1BN

## MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 6 MARCH 2023 FROM 7.00 PM TO 9.25 PM

### **Committee Members Present**

Councillors: David Cornish (Vice-Chair, in the Chair), Shirley Boyt, Norman Jorgensen, Chris Johnson, Pauline Jorgensen Alistair Neal, and Beth Rowland (Substitute)

### **Other Councillors Present**

Councillors: Morag Malvern (WBC RBFRS Representative)

### **Officers Present**

Narinder Brar (Community Safety Manager), Neil Carr (Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist) and Callum Wernham (Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist)

### **76. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were submitted from Peter Dennis, Laura Blumenthal and Gregor Murray.

Beth Rowland attended the meeting as a substitute for Peter Dennis.

### **77. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 23 January 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

It was confirmed that the matters arising from the meeting held on 23 January 2023 had been circulated via email to the Committee.

### **78. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **79. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions.

### **80. MEMBER QUESTION TIME**

There were no Member questions.

### **81. LOCAL POLICE FORCE PRESENTATION**

The Committee considered a presentation from the Local Police Force, set out in agenda pages 13 to 16.

The presentation outlined the priorities for the Local Policing Area, including operations relating to sexual offenses, domestic abuse, knife crime, burglary, and keyless vehicle thefts. A number of partnership working examples were outlined, including a closure order on Ashridge Road, and ongoing facilitation of Wokingham Shop Watch.

The Committee were advised of the initial outcome of the Force Review, which proposed a 5-area command model which would place Wokingham with West Berkshire and Reading. It was unlikely that any changes would happen within Wokingham for at least a year, whilst the changes would feature a push towards neighbourhood policing, which was a crucial part of service delivery. A consultation was due to commence shortly, with a final decision due in July 2023.

Andy Cranidge (Area Commander – Bracknell and Wokingham), and Narinder Brar (Community Safety Manager) attended the meeting to answer Member queries.

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

- The Committee expressed a desire to submit a response to the Force Review, and requested that an item return to the Committee in May 2023;
- Were there opportunities for improvement with regards to communication from the police to residents, especially due to a spate of vehicle crimes in the Earley area? Police response – This spate of crimes was being carried out by organised criminals and gangs. Comments regarding communication issues would be taken on board. The best thing that individuals could do to protect themselves from keyless vehicle theft was to purchase and use a faraday box. The Force would make strides to ensure that more people were aware of outcomes to reports of crime;
- It was noted that a more detailed breakdown of crimes carried out within the Borough could be circulated to the Committee;
- It was noted that one crime could be recorded in more than one category;
- Why had car manufacturers not provided solutions to keyless car thefts? Police response – Manufacturers do not want to supply faraday pouches as it gave the impression that the vehicle could be stolen easily. The Force was engaging with local dealerships on this matter;
- Were the figures of domestic abuse victims likely to include individuals who had been abused on multiple occasions? Police and WBC Officer response – This figure included victims who had reported crimes multiple times. On average, a victim would report 35 instances of domestic abuse prior to making a 1<sup>st</sup> report;
- Was it possible to ‘reboot’ the Shop Watch in Woodley, could schools have a dedicated police liaison officer, and had neighbourhood policing been tried before? Police response – It was important to have good relationships with local schools, and this was being championed in the area. Neighbourhood policing had always operated locally, however recruitment of new officers often involved an element of protected learning which took them away from frontline duties which had to be covered by neighbourhood policing officers. Neighbourhood policing was a priority for the PCC and 80 new officers were being deployed to help drive neighbourhood policing;
- It was noted that a neighbourhood police officer had attended the most recent Woodley Town Centre Management Initiative, and there had been quite a lively discussion regarding antisocial behaviour in the precinct;
- Was there additional funding within the Community Safety partnership for the Shop Watch Woodley scheme? WBC officer response – The Wokingham Town scheme was funded for 2 years, and additional costings would be required to expand this to Woodley. Officers were aware that the Woodley precinct was currently an antisocial behaviour hotspot. A visual and CCTV audit of the precinct had been undertaken, and the CSP was looking to match funding received from the ‘proceeds of crime fund’;

- It was noted that national antisocial behaviour week was scheduled for the week commencing 10 July 2023;
- It was noted that as retailers were now, in general, employing less staff this left the remaining staff more vulnerable to shoplifting with less time to report such instances. Retailers should look to take additional responsibility for staffing and security of their premises;
- It was requested that a spokesperson for the Community Safety Partnership attend a meeting of the Woodley Town Centre Management Initiative, in part to discuss issues relating to antisocial behaviour;
- It was noted that an alert had gone out via 'Thames Valley Alert' regarding how people could take precautions against keyless car thefts;
- It was noted that there was a desire to have a closer working relationship with the Council's antisocial behaviour team. If the police could engage with antisocial behaviour offenders from an early stage, then this could have a positive impact on future knife crime numbers, as perpetrators of knife crime frequently had a history of antisocial behaviours;
- Was it usual for only twenty percent of reported crimes to have any form of action taken? Police response – This figure was around the national average of twenty one percent, however there was a focus to improve on these figures' year-on-year;
- What additional steps could Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) take to assist the police force? Police response – Additional liaison between the police and the WBC antisocial behaviour team would be beneficial, and it was likely that the antisocial behaviour team was not supported by the police as much as it could be. Informal conversations between local Ward Members and neighbourhood police officers were key, and direct contact information could be shared to help facilitate this.

**RESOLVED** That:

- 1) Andy Cranidge and Narinder Brar be thanked for attending the meeting;
- 2) The Committee formulate a response to the Force Review consultation, with an item scheduled for May 2023 to help facilitate this;
- 3) A spokesperson for the Community Safety Partnership be requested to attend a meeting of the Woodley Town Centre Management Initiative;
- 4) A more detailed breakdown of crimes carried out within the Borough be circulated to the Committee;
- 5) Additional liaison between the police and the WBC antisocial behaviour team be investigated;
- 6) Options be explored to facilitate more informal conversations and relationships between neighbourhood police officers and local Ward Members;

7) An annual update be considered by the Committee in March 2024.

## **82. LOCAL FIRE SERVICE PRESENTATION**

The Committee considered a presentation, set out in agenda pages 17 to 26, which provided an annual update on the work of the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) within the Borough.

The presentation outlined that 1073 safe and well visits had been carried out during the last 12 months, a quality assurance process for protection activities had been implemented, and 1019 incidents in the Borough had been responded to within 10 minutes on 64 percent of occasions. A consultation was underway, CRMP, which set out 6 strategic priorities for the RBFRS. The consultation was scheduled to close at the end of March 2023.

Dave Crease (Group Manager – RBFRS) and Morag Malvern (Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) RBFRS representative) attended the meeting to answer Member queries.

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

- Were ‘very high risk’ properties based on the likelihood of a fire or the potential consequences of a fire? RBFRS response – This rating was mainly based on the potential consequences, for example a fire breaking out at a care home or a high-rise residential building;
- Was the RBFRS responsible for responding to any incidents at AWE Burghfield? RBFRS response – AWE Burghfield had a small on-site fire service to respond to minor incidents. The RBFRS worked closely with this team, and were on hand to respond to emergencies;
- It was requested that the link to the RBFRS consultation be emailed to all Members;
- It was noted that any building in excess of five storeys was required to be inspected on a more frequent basis;
- It was noted that should Members or residents have concerns regarding the suitability or conformity of a fire door or alarm system, this should be reported directly to the RBFRS to allow a protection officer to attend and undertake a safety audit;
- How would savings be achieved without compromising vital frontline services? RBFRS response – Many savings were being achieved via cross-border partnership working arrangements, and reductions to back-office staff. The RBFRS were losing some frontline staff to areas such as London who offered higher salaries. Apprenticeships were proving popular and were helping the RBFRS to recruit;
- Would any changes to the Local Policing Areas impact how the RBFRS worked with the police? RBFRS response – There were a variety of communication channels including via the Community Safety Partnership available to facilitate good partnership working.

**RESOLVED** That:

- 1) Dave Crease and Morag Malvern be thanked for attending the meeting;

- 2) The link to the RBFRS consultation be emailed to all Members;
- 3) An annual update be considered by the Committee in March 2024.

### **83. AGREEMENT OF TASK AND FINISH GROUP REPORTS**

The Committee considered a report, set out in agenda pages 27 to 48 and supplementary agenda pages 3 to 12, which set out the reports of the Preferred Registered Providers (PRP) Task and Finish Group and the Local Cycling, Walking and Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) Task and Finish Group.

#### PRP Task and Finish Group

Shirley Boyt, PRP Task and Finish Group Chair, stated that there had been a previous focus on delivery of social housing, whilst this report emphasised the need for increased tenant involvement and tenant satisfaction measures. The Group had provided Members with a greater understanding of the processes underpinning social housing delivery and management within the Borough.

It was noted that the report would promote a much-improved approach to tenant involvement.

In response to a query regarding how the PRPs were involved in this process, it was noted that the Chair of the Group had sat on the interviews with prospective PRPs. In addition, tenants of PRPs had been sent surveys which had provided context for the Group.

It was noted that, if agreed at the Executive, the Group's recommendations would be included within the partnership agreement with PRPs, to be signed in April 2023.

In response to a query regarding the powers of the housing Ombudsman, it was noted that the new Government White Paper would provide them with increased powers.

#### LCWIP Task and Finish Group

Al Neal, LCWIP Task and Finish Group Chair, stated that the Group had met on 2 occasions and had received a considerable amount of detail and data. Due to timescales and the quantity of data provided to the Group, the Group resolved to focus on the draft LCWIP report document. Individual schemes were proposed to be considered by the Active Travel Task and Finish Group prior to public consultation.

It was noted that the Group was pleased to see schemes being re-considered where they had received a considerable amount of criticism.

It was noted that the proposed Active travel Task and Finish Group would assess the LCWIP document on a 6-monthly basis and scrutinise specific schemes prior to consultation. It was recommended that this Group initially consist of the same membership as the LCWIP Task and Finish Group, and subsequent membership was to be agreed annually at the first meeting of the municipal year of the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Active Travel Task and Finish Group would likely be required to meet periodically for a number of years, assessing developments to the LCWIP and scrutinising detailed design proposals for specific projects as and when bids were submitted. Whilst the core Group would assess the LCWIP document on a 6-monthly

basis, relevant Ward Members and Town and Parish Council representatives would be included in meetings relating to detailed design of specific schemes prior to public consultation.

It was requested that officers consider whether the Active Travel Task and Finish Group could be renamed to something such as a 'Working Group' or 'Select Committee', as the Group was proposed to exist for a considerable length of time with no set 'finish' date.

**RESOLVED** That the Committee:

- 1) Thanked Callum Wernham for attending the meeting;
- 2) Considered and agreed the Preferred Registered Providers Task and Finish Group report, set out within the supplementary agenda;
- 3) Considered and agreed the Local Cycling, Walking and Infrastructure Plan Task and Finish Group report, set out as Appendix 2 to the report;
- 4) Confirmed the formation of the Active Travel Task and Finish Group, to assess the LCWIP on a 6-monthly basis and to scrutinise specific schemes prior to consultation;
- 5) Noted that the Active Travel Task and Finish Group would provide periodic updates to the Committee, on the work undertaken since the last update;
- 6) Requested officers to consider whether the Active Travel Task and Finish Group could be renamed, for example to a Working Group.

#### **84. WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee considered their work programme, set out in agenda pages 49 to 52.

**RESOLVED** That:

- 1) Callum Wenham and Neil Carr be thanked for attending the meeting;
- 2) An item relating to the Force Review consultation be scheduled for May 2023;
- 3) The item regarding earmarked reserves be scheduled for 3 July 2023;
- 4) Officers circulate the briefing update regarding burial capacity within the Borough via email;
- 5) A briefing note be circulated to the Committee, providing additional detail with regards to the Organisational Foundation Programme;
- 6) The Committee discuss specific details of what information they wanted in relation to upcoming items during the work programme item of each meeting;
- 7) It was noted that the Arts and Culture Update could be moved to a later Committee date if the Committee's schedule proved busy;
- 8) An action tracker item be included within each Committee agenda for the 2023/24 municipal year;

- 9) An item be considered in relation to how strategic planning worked with development control. An MS Teams call be considered to assess exactly what information the Committee wished to see.

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# Agenda Item 8.

<b>TITLE</b>	Flood Risk Management Update
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 22 May 2023 at 7pm
<b>WARD</b>	None specific
<b>STRATEGIC DIRECTOR</b>	Giorgio Framallicco
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	Ian Shenton, Executive Member for Environment

## **OUTCOME**

To inform Members of the progress made with the Lead Local Flood Authority's (LLFA) duties under the Flood and Water Management Act (FWMA) 2010 during 2022/2023.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Committee review the report and note the ongoing work in relation to flood risk reduction in the Borough and offer comment.

## **SUMMARY OF REPORT**

Flood risk management is a key responsibility for Wokingham Borough Council (WBC), in its role as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), following the introduction of the Flood and Water Management Act (FWMA) in 2010. The LLFA has been progressing with the implementation of its responsibilities, to manage the coordination of surface water and groundwater flood risk, to protect residents from flooding, whilst continuing to deliver existing reactive drainage maintenance services. This report provides an update to Members on the progress made during 2022/23. The next 12 months will also see further progress which will be reported back to the committee in 2024.

## **Background**

Drainage within the Borough is complex in the sense that some of our gulleys discharge into a Thameswater sewer network. This calls for continuous partnership working with the utilities provider, to ensure that both systems are harmoniously functioning optimally, to reduce flood risk in the Borough. This symbiotic relationship can only be effective if both parties work in synergy.

2022/23 has been an interesting year in the sense that we had a relatively dry summer, followed by some heavy burst of rainfall during December, as well as some freezing temperatures in January.

During the 2022/23 financial year, the Flooding and Drainage team made further progress in fulfilling Wokingham Borough Council's (WBC) statutory obligations as Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) under the Flood and Water Management Act

(FWMA) 2010. The primary responsibility as an LLFA is to manage the coordination of surface water and groundwater flood risk, to protect residents from flooding.

As the highways authority, WBC is also responsible for ensuring that the highway drainage system is working effectively, to prevent highway and property flooding following heavy rainfall.

To deliver these responsibilities, several actions have been taken over the past 12 months, including:

1. CCTV condition surveys and repair works to the highway drainage system.
2. The delivery of capital drainage schemes across the borough.
3. Ongoing revenue drainage maintenance works.
4. Comments on planning applications in relation to flooding and drainage.
5. Smart drainage trials.
6. Manhole Inventory.
7. Thames RFCC funding to reduce surface water flood risk.
8. Designation of additional flood defense structures
9. Section 21 Asset Register

### **1. CCTV drainage surveys and repair works.**

The drainage network in the Borough has been there for decades and because it is beneath the surface, we do not really notice when failures start occurring, until the damage is severe and starts manifesting above ground. When this happens, the pipe needs to be surveyed with a camera, to assess the damage done and depending on the level of damage done, repairs or a complete replacement of the pipe can be commissioned.

Pipe repair or replacement works usually require travel disruptions, via traffic lights or road closures. The inconvenience for residents implies that as a Borough, we start looking at replacing the drainage pipes within the Borough, so that they can last another 30 years before they are done again. This is a costly investment, but worthwhile, for long-term savings.

Between April 2022 and February 2023, despite tight budgetary constraints, the drainage team commissioned CCTV surveys and pipe replacement works at the following locations:

Shinfield Road  
Headley Road East

## Barkham Road phase 2

The repair works resulting from the CCTV works have led to a significant drop in reports of surface water flooding in these locations and consequently has allowed the emergency flood response team to focus elsewhere.

### **2. Delivery of capital drainage schemes**

In addition to the program of CCTV surveys and pipe replacement works carried out in the 2022/23 financial year, officers have worked with our capital projects team to complete construction of the Barkham Ride capital drainage scheme.

Even though this scheme had been designed and waiting to be delivered, construction was delayed because a road space license could not be acquired, from street works, due to other works in the area.

The drainage team obtained the street works permit to construct during 2022/23 and construction was completed in August 2022.

Officers are also working hard with our consultants (WSP) to wrap up the detail design for the Church Lane Flood Alleviation Scheme, which has experienced ecological setbacks, as well as the discovery of a power cable line, running straight through the area of the proposed attenuation basin.

Working in collaboration with SSEN, we have agreed a way forward and detailed design can continue, to finalize construction details and drawings. Once the construction drawings have been submitted by WSP, we will open tenders for construction, and hopefully deliver the project in 2023/24.

### **3. Ongoing drainage revenue works.**

WBC's contractor emptied over 40,000 gullies between January 2022 and March 2023, as part of the annual gully cleansing program. As normal, the contractor records the silt levels within the gulleys, allowing officers to continue to develop a risk based approach to gully cleansing. WBC now has over 5 years of silt level monitoring, allowing officers to identify areas where silt builds up rapidly. This information is reviewed annually, to update the annual gully cleansing program, ensuring that a risk-based approach is used and that areas prone to silt build up are targeted more regularly.

In addition, drainage issues reported by residents, on an ad-hoc basis, were responded to. These include issues on the highways network, localized flooding, gully emptying, delivery of sandbags, replacement of small sections of pipe, installation of new drainage, manhole and gully lid replacements.

It is worth mentioning that the freezing temperatures experienced led to several pipe bursts, which had to be responded to, by the team, to mitigate property flooding.

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

Compared to the 673 planning consultations responded to during 2021/22, the Flooding and Drainage team have responded to over 700 planning applications during 2022/23.

Even though the team is one man short, over 500 of the 700 consultations were responded to within the statutory consultation period.

Our responses to planning consultations help to ensure that the most appropriate drainage strategies are being implemented by developers and this contributes towards reducing surface water flood risk across the borough, taking climate change into consideration.

#### **5. Smart drainage trials**

Between February and December 2021, the drainage team, in collaboration with the capital program team piloted a scheme that uses gulley sensors to identify when a gulley needs emptying, allowing for proactive maintenance of the gulley, thus reducing the number of reactive responses to flood incidents. 3 roads benefitted from the smart drainage sensor trial and these roads included Gipsy Lane and Wilderness Road, in Earley and Reading Road, Arborfield.

The results of this Map16 based trial have not generated meaningful data, however, other suppliers are being explored, to determine if the smart drainage sensors will provide the cost savings that we are hoping for.

If the smart drainage sensor trial proves successful in these locations, the drainage team will look at rolling the scheme out on a much wider basis across the borough.

This will ultimately replace the annual gulley cleansing program and achieve cost savings as well as proactive gully maintenance, rather than reactive, as it is at the moment.

#### **6. Manhole Inventory**

During the 2022/23 financial year the drainage team commissioned the clearance of 25% of the council's 5000 manholes, in accordance with the requirement of the Highways Maintenance Management Plan, which states that all WBC highways drainage manholes must be inspected at least once every 5 years to record their condition and identify any required maintenance.

We are now completing year 4 of clearing 25% of the manholes in the Borough. At the end of year 4, we would revert to clearing 20% of our manhole infrastructure each year to ensure that all manholes are cleared at least once every 5 years.

Manhole maintenance ensures that the drainage team can proactively carry out manhole upgrades and repairs before it leads to flooding.

Data from all the maintenance visits are captured in our drainage database for future reference.

## **7. Thames RFCC funding to reduce surface water flood risk.**

The drainage team continues to look for opportunities for extra funding, working in partnership with different stakeholders, to acquire funding for projects within the Borough, that will reduce flood risk.

Despite being unsuccessful in our bid for the Thameswater funding last year, we were not discouraged and working in collaboration with Swallowfield Parish Council and Swallowfield Flood Resilience Group, we applied for the Thames RFCC 2022/23 funding for Natural Flood Management projects.

Our application was successful and we were awarded £47K, towards funding the Swallowfield/Riseley Natural Flood Management Scheme.

The paperwork is being finalised for the funds to be transferred.

Once the funds have been received, we will open tenders for the scheme to be delivered, to help alleviate some of the surface water flood issues in Riseley and Swallowfield.

## **8. Designation of additional flood defence structures**

The Council remains committed to designating structures within the borough, that could have an impact on flood risk if significant changes are made to them. This means that the owner of the structure is unable to do anything to it without the prior consent of the LLFA. Furthermore, the structure will be shown as a designated structure on the local land charges register so that any successive owner is aware of the significance of it in terms of flood risk.

## **9. Section 21 Asset Register**

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

The register helps the Council to develop more informed maintenance regimes, which can take account of the assets important for managing flood risk. It also helps to establish where the borough's drainage and watercourse systems are, allowing for quicker identification of the responsible authority in incidences of flooding.

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

<b>List of Background Papers</b>
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The Flood and Water Management Act 2010
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<a href="http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/community-and-safety/emergencies/drainage-and-flooding/">http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/community-and-safety/emergencies/drainage-and-flooding/</a>
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<b>Contact</b> Boniface Ngu	<b>Service</b> Place and Growth (CHGBI)
	<b>Email</b> Boniface.Ngu@wokingham.gov.uk
<b>Date</b> 29/03/2022	<b>Version No.</b> 2.0

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Combating Drugs Partnership</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 22 May 2023
<b>WARD</b>	None specific;
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	Director, Place and Growth - Giorgio Framaliccio

## **OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY**

The Combatting Drugs Partnership (CDP) 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 produce action plans required by local 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 since late 2023. This report outlines the progress and outcomes of the CDP and how this aligns with the local drug and alcohol strategy and priorities.

## **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**

At the meeting of the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 23 January 2023 the committee considered a report that provided information on the newly formed Combatting Drugs Partnership (CDP) covering the local authority areas of Wokingham, Reading and West Berks. The lead officer was unable to attend the meeting however Councillor Ian Shenton, the Executive Member for Environment, Sport and Leisure, attended and took questions. It was agreed that the report would be considered at a later date.

The report provides a summary of the formation of the CDP and it's progress to date in helping to deliver Wokingham's requirements as outlined 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 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. The action plan agreed by the CDP is now at the implementation stage and will need to be progressed with key partners including TVP, Probation, Health etc. At the CDP meeting in 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 at the next meeting of the CSP in June.

## Background

At the meeting of the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 23 January 2023 the committee considered a report that provided information on the newly formed Combatting Drugs Partnership (CDP) covering the local authority areas of Wokingham, Reading and West Berks. The lead officer was unable to attend the meeting however Councillor Ian Shenton, the Executive Member for Environment, Sport and Leisure, attended and took questions. It was agreed that a response to the following questions would be provided at a future meeting, a written response is also set out in Appendix 1.

### Questions

1. How widespread was the drugs problem within the Wokingham Borough Council Area?
2. What actions were being considered to break the cycle of demand?
3. Could further comment be provided regarding the relatively high levels of 'drug driving'?
4. What was being done to combat the use of Nitrous Oxide, especially amongst school children?

## Analysis of Issues

### Combatting Drugs Partnership 2022

In 2021, a two-part independent review of drugs was undertaken by Dame Carol Black. Part One of the review 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 £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 and Chair of the CDP is Matthew Barber (TVP Police and Crime Commissioner)

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 be produced by December 2022. The needs assessment has been produced and this has informed Berkshire West action plan with individual requirements for the three local authorities. The Public Health grant is used to ensure provision of services to support people to recover from misuse of drugs 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 unprecedented financial pressures as a result of; the longer term impact of the COVID-19 crisis, Brexit, the war in Ukraine and the general economic climate of rising prices and the increasing cost of debt. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are optimised and 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)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	N/A	N/A	N/A

<b>Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision</b>
N/A

<b>Public Sector Equality Duty</b>
An equalities assessment was undertaken in February 2021.

<b>Climate Emergency – <i>This Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to playing as full a role as possible – leading by example as well as by exhortation – in achieving a carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030</i></b>
There will be no impact as a result of this decision on the Council’s carbon neutral objective.

<b>Reasons for considering the report in Part 2</b>
None

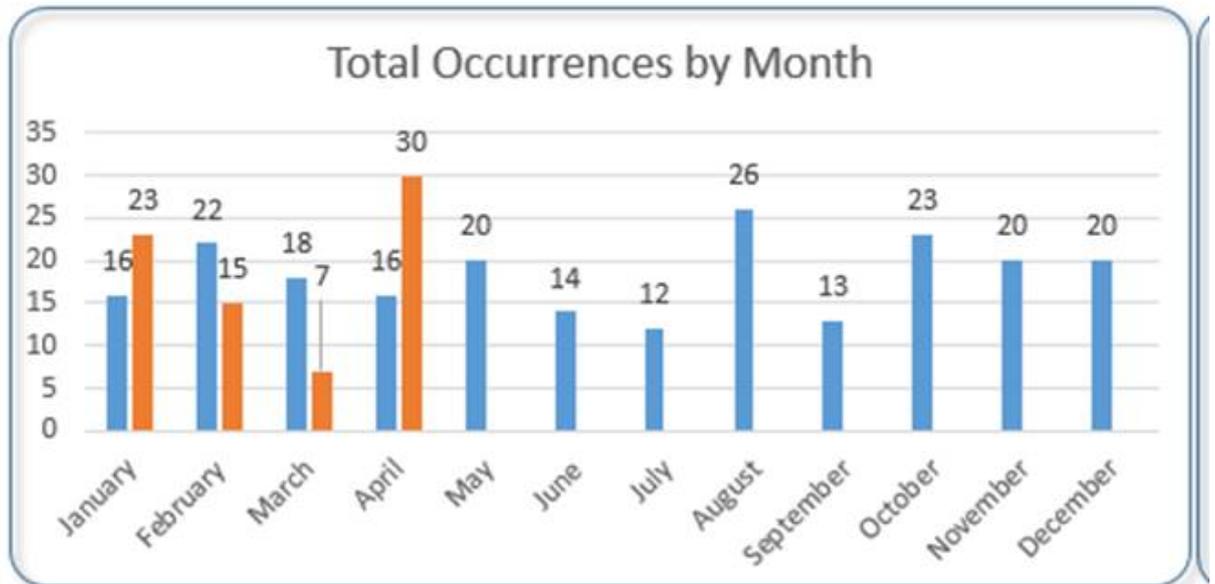
<b>List of Background Papers</b>
<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-drugs-phase-one-report/reviewof-drugs-summary">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-drugs-phase-one-report/reviewof-drugs-summary</a>  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-drugs-phase-two-report/reviewof-drugs-part-two-prevention-treatment-and-recovery">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-drugs-phase-two-report/reviewof-drugs-part-two-prevention-treatment-and-recovery</a>  <a href="https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1079147/From_harm_to_hope_PDF.pdf">https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1079147/From_harm_to_hope_PDF.pdf</a> <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/drugs-strategy-guidance-for-local-deliverypartners">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/drugs-strategy-guidance-for-local-deliverypartners</a>

<b>Contact</b> Narinder Brar	<b>Service</b> Place
	<b>Email</b> narinder.brar@wokingham.gov.uk

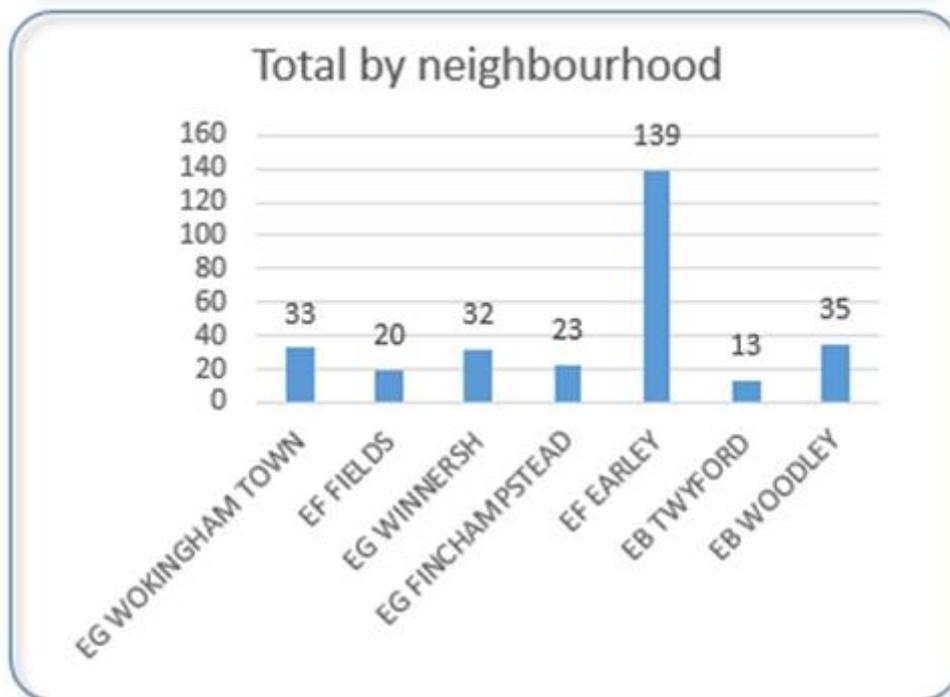
## APPENDIX 1

### 1) How widespread is the drugs problem in the Wokingham Borough Council area?

Wokingham – Drug Offences (January 2022 to April 2023) by month:



Wokingham – Drug Offences (January 2022 to April 2023) by neighbourhood:



**Adults in Treatment (Wokingham) (2013 – 2022)**

Category	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Opiate	145	150	120	110	110	120	120	130	155
Non-opiate only	25	30	35	25	30	35	35	65	65
Alcohol only	135	135	140	110	105	120	120	140	155
Non-opiate & Alcohol	35	40	50	35	40	40	40	50	55

**Main points from the Berkshire West Drug and Alcohol Needs Assessment (October 2022) Executive summary**

- There are an estimated 6,000 adults across Berkshire West who have problem drug or alcohol use with rates per population higher than the England average in Reading, particularly around opiate use.
- There is a large gap between those estimated to require treatment and those who are currently accessing.
- Each year, around 150 deaths in Berkshire West are alcohol related and a further 20 are related to drugs.
- Approximately 2,500 hospital admissions are due to alcohol specific causes, poisoning by drug misuse, or drug related mental and behaviour disorders.
- Across Berkshire West there has been an increase in young people admitted to hospital due to substance misuse.
- There is a strong association between problem drug use and violent crime. 30% of those suspected of a serious violent crime in the Thames Valley have previous history of drug use/supply and drug-related homicides are increasing.
- Potentially associated with targeted policing, the recording of crimes relating to the possession of cannabis and drug trafficking are on the rise.
- We know of 375 children in Berkshire West who are living with adults who are in drug or alcohol treatment.
- Rates of people in drug treatment are increasing across Berkshire West
- We see an increase in cannabis use amongst the treatment population particularly in West Berkshire
- There has been an increase in the use of cocaine amongst people living in West Berkshire and Wokingham. Use of alcohol and opiates/crack have remained more stable in comparison.
- 57% of adults in drug treatment and 61% of adults starting alcohol treatment were identified as having a mental health treatment need at the start of treatment with 70% and

80% already accessing mental health support.

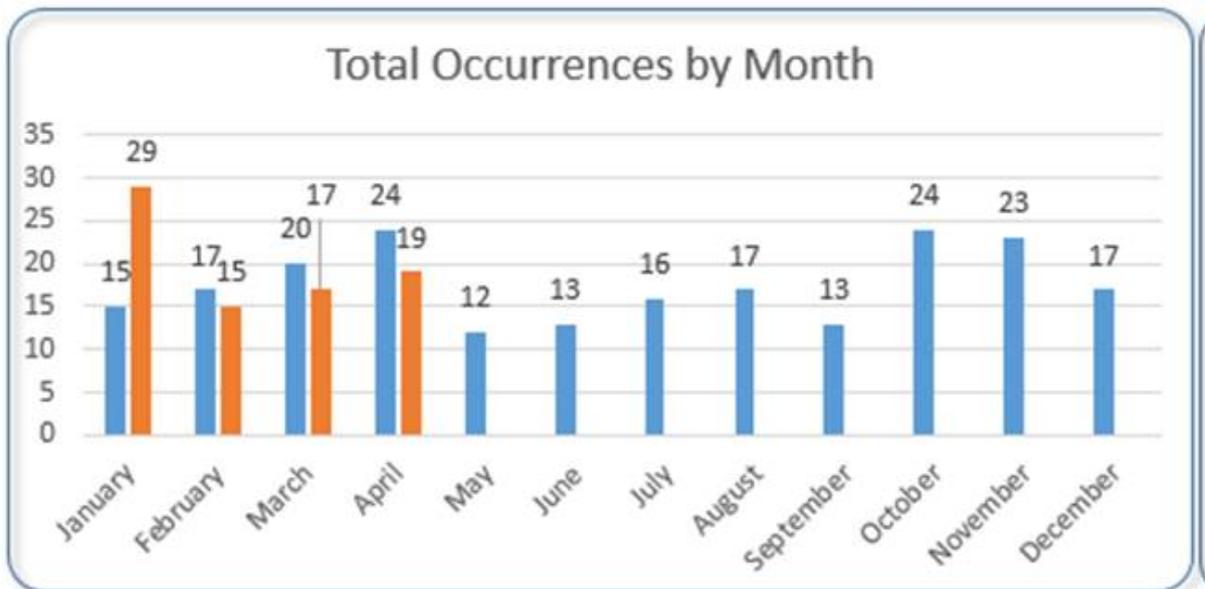
- This report shows clear differences in pattern of problem drug and alcohol use, and associated harms across the three local authority areas. These differences serve to highlight the importance of tailoring services across and within all levels of prevention to match population need.

**2) What actions are being considered to break the cycle of demand?**

The implementation of Buprenorphine, a medicine used to treat dependence on opioid (narcotic) drugs such as heroin or morphine, is a treatment for opiate addiction that means service users are more likely to stay on medication and not relapse into drug use.

**3) Could further comment be provided regarding the relatively high levels of ‘drug driving’?**

Drink / Drug Offences (January 2022 to April 2023): this is both Drink and Drug Offences as TVP don't separate them.



The ability of Police to carry out roadside drug wipes on motorists suspected of being impaired by drugs will have resulted in a rise in the number of charges/convictions. The increase in cases may, or may not, be because of more drug use but is more likely to be that it's only relatively recently being tested at the roadside. A response from TVP on the policy and Roads Policing statistics have been requested.

**4) What is being done to combat the use of Nitrous Oxide, especially amongst school children?**

Whilst illegal to sell nitrous oxide to anyone under the age of 18, it is not illegal to possess. It is a problem nationally and locally, The government is proposing to ban the sale or possession as part of its recent ASB Action Plan proposals.

Education package developed for teachers, students and guardians and offered to all Wokingham Secondary Schools which includes awareness around nitrous Oxide.

# Agenda Item 10.

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Appointment of Members to the Active Travel Task and Finish Group</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 22 May 2023
<b>WARD</b>	None Specific;
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers

## **OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY**

Overview and Scrutiny provides an independent “critical friend” challenge to the Executive, whilst working with the Executive and other public service providers for the benefit of the public. Submission of recommendations for improvement to the Executive, on issues of particular importance, is an example of good governance.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee appoint 5 Members to the Active Travel Task and Finish Group for the 2023/24 Municipal Year from the Membership of the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee or wider Overview and Scrutiny Membership.

## **SUMMARY OF REPORT**

The report seeks appointment of 5 Members to the Active Travel Task and Finish Group. The Group’s Terms of Reference are appended as Annex A to this report.

## Background

The Active Travel Task and Finish Group was formed by the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their meeting on 6 March 2023. The Group are requested to assess the Locally Cycling, Walking and Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) on a 6-monthly basis and to scrutinise specific schemes prior to consultation.

The Group have reviewed the first stage of the Reading Road Active Travel Scheme via a Teams meeting on 30 March 2023.

## Analysis of Issues

The Active Travel Task and Finish Group will likely be required to meet periodically for a number of years, assessing developments to the LCWIP and scrutinising detailed design proposals for specific projects as and when bids were submitted. Whilst the core Group will assess the LCWIP on a 6-monthly basis, relevant Ward Members and Town and Parish Council representatives will be included in meetings relating to detailed design of specific schemes prior to public consultation.

Periodic updates from the Group will be presented to the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, detailing their review of any changes to the LCWIP in addition to their overview and scrutiny of specific proposed schemes. Any specific recommendations to the Executive which require a report will be agreed by the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Suggestions and alterations relating to specific schemes, where the Group (including Ward Members and Town and Parish Council representatives) were fully supportive in addition to highways officers and the Executive Member are proposed to amend scheme proposals directly for expediency purposes, with a summary update provided to the Committee at a later date.

It has previously been suggested that the Group should be renamed from a Task and Finish Group, as the Group would not be concluding their work for some time. At present, Overview and Scrutiny Committees are only allowed to appoint to "Task and Finish Groups" via the constitution and their Terms of Reference.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

***The Council faces unprecedented financial pressures as a result of; the longer term impact of the COVID-19 crisis, Brexit, the war in Ukraine and the general economic climate of rising prices and the increasing cost of debt. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are optimised and are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.***

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

<b>Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision</b>
The administration of the Active Travel task and Finish Group would necessitate officer time, which can be delivered via existing resourcing.

<b>Cross-Council Implications</b>
The Active Travel Task and Finish Group will allow for scrutiny input into design proposals for major Active Travel schemes alongside local Ward Members and representatives from relevant Town and Parish Councils, prior to public consultation.

<b>Public Sector Equality Duty</b>
Due regard has been given to WBC’s duties under the Equality Act.

<b>Climate Emergency – <i>This Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to playing as full a role as possible – leading by example as well as by exhortation – in achieving a carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030</i></b>
There are no negative impacts associated with appointment of Members to the Active Travel Task and Finish Group on WBC’s declaration of a Climate Emergency.

<b>Reasons for considering the report in Part 2</b>
N/A

<b>List of Background Papers</b>
Formation of Active Travel Task and Finish Group Report – 6 March 2023, Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

<b>Contact</b> Callum Wernham	<b>Service</b> Governance
<b>Telephone No</b> 0118 974 6000	<b>Email</b> callum.wernham@wokingham.gov.uk

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### **WBC Overview and Scrutiny**

#### **Active Travel Task and Finish Group**

##### **Terms of Reference**

1. To consider the live LCWIP document on a 6-monthly basis and to formulate any recommendations for improvement to the Executive;
2. To consider the detailed design proposal of specific active travel schemes prior to public consultation, alongside relevant Ward Members and relevant representatives from Town and Parish Councils;
3. To provide comment and suggestions for improvement on specific active travel schemes, with recommendations to the Executive provided where appropriate;
4. To provide updates to the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the work of the Group.

##### **Witnesses**

- WBC Members and Officers;
- Town and Parish Councils;
- Expert groups – e.g. SusTrans
- 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
3 July 2023	<b>Community Safety Partnership Update</b>	To receive the annual update on the work of the Community Safety Partnership.	Work programme	Narinder Brar
	<b>Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy Update</b>	To consider an update on the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy.	Committee request	Narinder Brar
	<b>Anti-Abuse Charter Update</b>	To receive an update on the implementation of the Anti-Abuse Charter.	Council Request	Narinder Brar
	<b>Directorate Priorities</b>	To receive the priorities for the Place & Growth and Resources and Assets Directorates	Committee Request	Graham Ebers/ Giorgio Framalico
	<b>Work Programme</b>	To consider the work programme for the Committee for 2023-24	Standing Item	Democratic Services

## Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

1.	Scrutinising the development of the Council's Budget for 2024/25
2.	Reviewing the work of the Community Safety Partnership, the effectiveness of local policing and fire and rescue services
3.	Scrutinising progress on the Local Plan Update and the Council's Five Year Land Supply
4.	Scrutinising delivery of the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy
5.	Scrutinising delivery of the Anti-Abuse Strategy
6.	Exercising the Council's flood risk management responsibilities by monitoring flood risk activities and partnership working with Towns and Parishes
7.	Scrutinising delivery of the Drug and Alcohol Misuse Strategy
8.	Scrutinising the Voluntary Sector Commissioning Strategy
9.	Scrutinising burial capacity across the Borough and the Council's plans to ensure adequate future capacity
10.	Scrutinising measures to develop closer working relationships with Town and Parish Councils and the voluntary sector
11.	Scrutinising service and policy developments relating to the Council's public facing services and its in-house support services
12.	Reviewing highways and transport issues including highways contracts, customer service, car parking, Bus Strategy and cycling infrastructure
13.	Scrutinising the Council's Arts and Culture Strategy
14.	Scrutinising performance of the in-house Enforcement and Safety service
15.	Scrutinising the Council's Housing Services to ensure that the needs of local residents and communities are being met
16.	Considering the report of the Active Travel Task and Finish Group
17.	Scrutinising the Borough-wide Parking Management Strategy
18.	Scrutinising the operation and performance of the Council-owned companies and shared service arrangements
19.	Appointing Task and Finish Groups as appropriate

### ***Task and Finish Groups***

Active Travel Task and Finish Group

**Future Meeting Dates and Provisional Items**

4 September 2023; WBC Earmarked Reserve Report

2 October 2023; MTFP

30 October 2023; MTFP

7 November 2023; MTFP

28 November 2023; MTFP

19 December 2023; MTFP

22 January 2023;

4 March 2024; Police and Fire Presentation; Flood Risk Management Update

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