



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

A Meeting of the **COUNCIL** will be held in Council Chamber
- Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham RG40 1BN on
THURSDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2022 AT 7.30 PM

Susan Parsonage
Chief Executive
Published on 9 November 2022

Note: 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/-jU01Lq-39U>

This meeting will be filmed for inclusion on the Council's website.

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.

To: The Members of Wokingham Borough Council

ITEM NO.	WARD	SUBJECT	PAGE NO.
71.		APOLOGIES To receive any apologies for absence.	
72.		MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 October 2022.	15 - 44
73.		DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST To receive any declarations of interest.	
74.		MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS To receive any announcements by the Mayor.	
75.		PUBLIC QUESTION TIME To answer any public questions A period of 30 minutes will be allowed for members of the public to ask questions submitted under notice. The Council welcomes questions from members of the public about the work of the Council Subject to meeting certain timescales, questions can relate to general issues concerned with the work of the Council 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	
75.1	Maiden Erlegh	David Portus asked the Executive Member for Environment, Sport and Leisure the following question: Question: The Football Facility plan is founded on the premise that it needs to be within the Wokingham Borough area. It is stated that teams have to travel outside this area to play. Wokingham Borough only came about by dissolution of Berkshire County Council and its borders are arbitrary and run through urban and suburban areas. Residents of Earley and Wokingham Borough will typically travel outside the nominal boundary for work,	

shopping, leisure, health care and education on a daily basis. Many of these journeys are within walking distance.

In fact, Maiden Erlegh School has two sites in Earley and even these are in separate Boroughs.

The technical appraisal did not initially identify Maiden Erlegh as the most suitable location. In fact, that was Laurel Park recreation ground, now rejected for same reasons which make Maiden Erlegh School an inappropriate site.

So why did the site appraisal deliberately disregard the nearby Sol Joel Playing Fields, which were bequeathed to the Town specifically for sport and leisure use?

75.2 Maiden Erlegh

Sandra Spencer asked the Executive Member for Environment, Sport and Leisure the following question:

Question:

We are all aware that Wokingham Borough Council is in a dire financial situation, and is seeking to reduce costs wherever possible. The proposed 3G pitch at Maiden Erlegh School in Earley was priced at £800,000 before recent inflation - to be paid for by the Football Association and the council. Bearing in mind building projects can run seriously over budget, and that the school has perfectly adequate sports facilities for all the pupils on roll both on site and at the nearby Sol Joel playing fields, is it wise to press ahead with the plan - and who will be liable for any shortfall if there are unexpected extra costs?

75.3 Maiden Erlegh

Jeremy Evershed asked the Executive Member for Environment, Sport and Leisure the following question:

Question:

Thank you for your previous commitment to closely scrutinise the Business Case for the plastic pitch given the Council's financial situation.

The Council can't afford this proposal to become a burden on the public purse with on-going maintenance, administration and £25,000 per annum sinking fund commitment given the threats elsewhere to services.

I don't believe you responded to my question on potential Noise Reduction fences previously; but in response to other 'Noise' questions, did suggest that Service Level Agreements would apply to people using pitches.

I am familiar with SLA in commercial scenarios where an under-performing supplier is penalised. Can you please elaborate on how SLA's would work in the Maiden Erlegh setting, giving examples where the Council has applied penalties (and received payment) and at the same time retained their Sports customers over the last 10 years, to demonstrate how this is a successful strategy, as I'm not convinced?

75.4 Maiden Erlegh

David Walker asked the Executive Member for Environment, Sport and Leisure the following question:

Question:

In order to create a level base for the proposed 3G pitch at Maiden Erlegh School, an area shown as over 8,500 square metres, it may be necessary to transport and spread over 6,000 cubic metres of foundation material on the School field before the artificial pitch can be laid.

Taking into account the many Maiden Erlegh residents' strongly voiced concerns to Council members about issues of public safety, environmental damage and health matters relating to this proposal, does the Council believe that such a costly and intrusive project can be justified?

75.5 None Specific

Helen Palmer asked the Executive Member for Climate Emergency and Resident Services the following question:

Question:

Will Wokingham Council support the Climate and Ecology Bill - A recent report from the Natural History Museum with RSPB rated England as the 7th most nature depleted country in the world. UK woodland cover is just 13% of land area compared to a European average of 38%. Our bare uplands contribute to lowland flooding. Government plans to plant woodland at a rate that will take 10 years to increase cover from 13% to 14%.

The new Environment Act is a post-Brexit bill designed to tidy up loose ends, looking at selected

issues, but does not tackle the core problems at the heart of the ecological crisis and has nothing whatsoever to do with climate change.

Climate and nature are inextricably connected, and in the CE Bill, they are addressed together via a joined up, whole of government approach.

The Bill, drafted by scientists, legal experts, ecological economists, requires the UK to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, to actively restore biodiverse habitats, rather than merely protect them and to stop damaging our natural world.

The Bill now has support of MPs across 8 political parties and of 203 Councils, including in Oxford, Oxfordshire, and Henley. Will Wokingham Borough Council become the 204th?

75.6 Norreys

Peter Humphreys asked the Executive Member for Active Travel, Transport and Highways the following question:

Question:

Having declared a climate emergency and announced a black hole in the finances it is perplexing that every night for the past year the Council has floodlit the white elephant **unopened can't** park, **can't** ride facility at Coppid Beech. Indeed, the flashing electric charge points are switched on 24/7 but also can't be used due to large blocks of concrete in front of them. At such a prominent spot adjacent to the principal approach route to the town this sends out completely the wrong message and is both highly embarrassing and costly.

With no publicly announced plan to ever open the P&R and with the green gap destroyed the Council needs to consider repurposing the site. A high-rise block of flats would make a significant contribution to the housing target imposed on the Borough and reduce the amount of virgin countryside that needs to be concreted over. Unlike most of the new housing developments around the town there are road links directly onto the motorway network and direct bus links to the town and Bracknell. As a brownfield site this clearly makes for a better development location than a greenfield location.

Does the Council have a view on this?

75.7 Maiden Erlegh Jim Badoo asked the Executive Member for Environment, Sports, and Leisure the following question:

Question:
During the recent consultation evenings at Maiden Erlegh School regarding the 3G pitch, it was explained to us that the ground level close to residential properties would be raised to create a level surface since the current ground slopes towards the properties. It has also been explained that acoustic fencing will be put in place in an attempt to reduce noise levels.

Can you please explain a) how high the ground will be raised by b) how high the fencing will be and c) how close it will be to residential properties?

75.8 Maiden Erlegh Karen Brown asked the Executive Member for Environment, Sport, and Leisure the following question:

Question:
We are told the Football Foundation identified 524 football teams in the borough, but we have not seen this mysterious list. Apparently, footballers will be encouraged to walk or cycle to Maiden Erlegh school, but we have no idea how many live close enough for this to be realistic. We are told the remainder will be within a 45-minute drive to Maiden Erlegh, which means they will be coming from far and wide.

When will you publish the full list of teams, detailing what facilities they have already, whether the same players are included in multiple teams, what ages they are, why their needs cannot be met more locally and how often they play?

76. PETITIONS
To receive any petitions which Members or members of the public wish to present.

77. PETITION DEBATE
The following petition containing in excess of 1,500 signatures, which is the threshold to trigger a debate at Council, was submitted at the Council meeting held on 20 October 2022:

'From January 2023 Wokingham Borough Council will double most car parking charges. It will also start charging for parking on Sundays, Bank Holidays and in the evenings up to 10pm.'

We call on the Council to drop these punitive increases for the following reasons:

- *Residents face significant cost increases in every part of their lives due to the Cost of Living crisis. It is wrong to raise charges at this time.*
- *Retailers in our town centre are recovering from the effects of Covid. They do not need their trade damaged by punitive car parking charges.*
- *It is in the interests of every resident that we have a vibrant and active town centre which draws people to visit. These charges will be a disincentive to visiting your local town and damaging to the local economy.'*

78.

MEMBER QUESTION TIME

To answer any member questions:

A period of 30 minutes will be allowed for Members to ask questions submitted under Notice.

Any questions not dealt with within the allotted time will be dealt with in a written reply.

78.1

Bulmershe and Whitegates

Shirley Boyt asked the Executive Member for Active Travel, Transport, and Highways the following question:

Question:

The Park and Ride on Thames Valley Park is an expensive white elephant. And worse still it attracts ASB in the form of illegal car meets. The likelihood of the MRT rearing its head again is extremely unlikely in the post-covid environment, where far fewer work-related journeys are being made. The car park should be put to an alternative use, and I would suggest turning it into a solar farm. Please can officers be instructed to carry out a feasibility study into this at the earliest opportunity?

78.2

None Specific

Sam Akhtar asked the Executive Member for Climate Emergency and Resident Services the following question:

Question:

What steps has the Council taken to reduce the carbon footprint of Council properties?

78.3 Evendons Adrian Mather asked the Executive Member for Active Travel, Transport and Highways, the following question:

Question:

On the 1st of October a Thames Water lorry fell into a sinkhole caused by a collapsed sewer in Evendons Lane. This has caused significant disruption to the residents of the whole area. In addition, Evendons school, the teachers, pupils, parents and carers have been disrupted.

This is not the first time that a Thames Water lorry has fallen into a sinkhole. In November 2021 a similar lorry fell into another sinkhole in Elms Field for the same reasons. I understand that the Elms Field situation is still not fully resolved by Thames Water.

Please can the Executive member for Highways confirm that Thames Water is doing all it can to resolve the Evendons Lane disruption?

78.4 None Specific Gary Cowan asked the Executive Member for Planning and Local Plan the following question:

Question:

What is the meaning of the term 'ON BALANCE' used by the Borough Council's Planning Officers regularly at Planning Committee Meetings?

78.5 None Specific Keith Baker asked the Executive Member for Active Travel, Transport and Highways the following question:

Question:

What has exacerbated the higher increase is that there hasn't been an increase in car parking charges in Wokingham for nearly five years. Had there been then the increase would not have been such a shock." Said Cllr Fishwick in his "From the Chamber" article in the Wokingham Today paper on 27th October. This mantra has been repeated many times by Councillor Fishwick and others at meetings, the press and social media.

Using the Bank of England Inflation Calculator, applying accumulative inflation from 2018 until September 2022, you get this data.

	Inflation adjusted	New Charges
1 hour	£0.97	£1.30
2 hour	£1.45	£2.50

4 hour	£2.34	£4.50
6 hour	£3.51	£6.50
Over 6 hour	£4.67	£9.00

It is clear from this chart that the actual inflation adjusted charges are significantly lower than the charges the Liberal Democrat Executive are imposing on our residents and businesses. Apart from the 1-hour rate which is a 34% increase all the others are between 72% and 92%. Clearly your statement about the regular increase not being such a shock is totally wrong. Could you explain how you have got this so dramatically wrong?

78.6 None Specific

Abdul Loyes asked the Executive Member for Equalities, Inclusion and Fighting Poverty the following question:

Question:

How has the Council ensured that everyone entitled to the £150 rebate to help with the cost of energy bills received it before the September deadline?

78.7 Coronation

Alison Swaddle asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

Question:

Residents in my ward are concerned about the increases in cost of off-street parking. Does the Leader of the Council agree that the following statement should apply to the policies of this Council, "trust individuals to make their own decisions about how they live their lives?"

78.8 None Specific

Laura Blumenthal asked the Executive Member for Housing the following question:

Question:

Please can you tell me how much Wokingham Borough Council paid for emergency accommodation for residents in the last year?

78.9 None Specific

Pauline Jorgensen asked the Deputy Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Housing the following question:

Question:

Nationally the Liberal Democrat Party has pledged to build 300,000 houses per year, the same amount as the Government, why should residents believe that the administration will be able to reduce the numbers of houses when they have made no progress so far?

78.10 Wokingham Without Chris Bowring asked the Executive Member for Active Travel, Transport and Highways the following question:

Question:

Wokingham Without Parish Council members and the Police strongly agree that the current speed limits on Honey Hill in Wokingham Without ward are excessive and dangerous to road users including pedestrians. Would the executive member be willing to attend a site visit with local Borough and parish councillors to apprise him of the perceived problems?

78.11 None Specific Andy Croy asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

Question:

The Conservatives are trying to disenfranchise many people in the Borough by making it harder to vote.

The ID restrictions, and allowable IDs, have been described as worse than voter suppression measures seen in parts of the United States.

What steps will Wokingham Borough Council be taking to ensure not a single resident is deterred from exercising their democratic right to vote the next time they go to the polling station?

78.12 None Specific Charles Margetts asked the Executive Member for Active Travel, Transport & Highways the following question:

Question:

The previous Conservative administration allocated £20 million some years ago into an anti congestion budget. The purpose of this was to improve vehicle flow through key road bottlenecks to ease congestion. Officers had worked up a scheme to improve traffic flow on London Road and were planning to move onto several other schemes across the borough. It is my understanding that £12 million was unallocated at the time of the May election and available for this work. I have been advised by officers that this budget has been renamed the active travel budget. Can you tell me which of the original schemes planned at the time of the local election are still progressing and which new active travel schemes have been incorporated in this programme.

79. MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND WARD MATTERS

A period of 20 minutes will be allowed for Members to ask questions in relation to the latest circulated volume of Minutes of Meetings and Ward Matters

80. STATEMENTS BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, EXECUTIVE MEMBERS, AND DEPUTY EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

To receive any statements by the Leader of the Council and Executive Members.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 4.2.23 the total time allocated to this item shall not exceed 20 minutes, and no Member shall speak for more than 5 minutes.

81. STATEMENT FROM COUNCIL OWNED COMPANIES

To receive any statements from Directors of Council Owned Companies.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 4.2.24 the total time allocated to this item shall not exceed 10 minutes, and no Director, except with the consent of Council, shall speak for more than 3 minutes.

82. MOTIONS

To consider any motions

In accordance with Procedure Rule 4.2.11.2 a maximum period of 30 minutes will be allowed for each Motion to be moved, seconded and debated, including dealing with any amendments. At the expiry of the 30-minute period debate will cease immediately, the mover of the Motion or amendment will have the right of reply before the Motion or amendment is put to the vote.

82.1 None Specific

Motion 493 submitted by Rebecca Margetts
'Wokingham Borough Council congratulates the England Lionesses on their incredible achievement of becoming European Champions. Many of these women were not offered the opportunity as children to play football at school and the only reason for their success was they were prepared and able to travel great distances to pursue their dream. Wokingham Borough Council believes all children should be offered the opportunity at school to play football and calls on all primary schools in Wokingham Borough to ensure that football is offered to every child who

wishes to play.’

Statement from the Chief Finance Officer

– There are no financial implications arising from this proposal.

82.2 None Specific

Motion 494 submitted by Gary Cowan

‘This Council asks the Constitution Review Working Group to review the Council’s Constitution with the aim of making it fit for the 21st century by attempting to reflect the needs of Councillors, Officers and Residents. To achieve that aim we ask the LGA to work with us in putting into place a modern, fit for purpose, new Constitution.’

Statement from the Chief Finance Officer

– No direct Financial Implications, it is assumed the required activities will be undertaken within existing resources which may require a diversion from other priorities.

82.3 Wescott

Motion 495 submitted by Charles Margetts

Residents who live of William Heelas Way in Wokingham have raised significant concerns with me about the speed of traffic and the lack of protection for parents and young children accessing Floreat Montague Park Primary School. The link road between London Road and the future Southern Relief Road has a 30mph speed limit and traffic levels which will only get busier when the Southern Relief Road opens. At the last council meeting residents handed in a petition signed by over 500 people calling for a 20 mph speed limit outside the school, the provision of barriers around the pavements and full reinstatement of a pedestrian crossing on William Heelas Way. Wokingham Borough Council believes it is of vital importance that young children can travel to this school on foot or by bicycle in complete safety. To ensure children can walk and cycle safely to school Wokingham Borough Council agrees to meet the requests of the petition without further delay.

Statement from the Chief Finance Officer

– Wokingham Borough Council, in line with all Council’s, is currently facing some of the most financially challenging times it has ever faced, primarily due to inflationary linked aspects of the global economic landscape as well as unprecedented demand for service. In this context the council is not

predicting an underspend position for 22/23,
unfortunately there is no additional money that can be
allocated to this proposal.

CONTACT OFFICER

Priya Patel
Tel
Email
Postal Address

Head of Democratic and Electoral Services
07902 402031
priya.patel@wokingham.gov.uk
Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham, RG40 1BN