



# WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

A Meeting of the **COUNCIL** will be held in Council Chamber  
- Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham RG40 1BN on  
**THURSDAY 23 MARCH 2023 AT 7.30 PM**

Susan Parsonage  
Chief Executive  
Published on 15 March 2023

**Note:** Members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting or participate in the meeting virtually, in accordance 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/BdaV8T5RoIY?feature=share>

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.

<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>

To: The Members of Wokingham Borough Council

ITEM NO.	WARD	SUBJECT	PAGE NO.
113.		<b>APOLOGIES</b> To receive any apologies for absence.	
114.		<b>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING</b> To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 February 2023.	15 - 36
115.		<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b> To receive any declarations of interest.	
116.		<b>MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</b> To receive any announcements by the Mayor.	
117.		<b>PUBLIC QUESTION TIME</b> 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 <a href="http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/publicquestions">www.wokingham.gov.uk/publicquestions</a>	
117.1	None Specific	Ann Dally has asked the Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Services the following question:  <b>Question:</b> As Councillors may be aware the <i>Prevention Concordat for Better Mental Health</i> ( <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/prevention-concordat-for-better-mental-health">https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/prevention-concordat-for-better-mental-health</a> ) is underpinned by a prevention-focused holistic approach to improving our resident's mental health, which in turn contributes to a fairer and more equitable society.  The Concordat emphasises collaborative cross-sector working to deliver the best evidenced-based practise	

to support wellbeing and good mental health within the whole population, for those at greater risk and for those currently receiving treatment.

Could you tell us what plans have been made for Wokingham Borough Council to sign up to the updated *Prevention Concordat for Better Mental Health*, with its commitment to promote good mental health for all by strengthening protective influences while reducing risk factors.

117.2     None Specific

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

**Question:**

With the Council's finances squeezed like never before it is disappointing that the Highway's Department continues to waste money. I've already highlighted the use of single use signs littering the Borough, and the problem has got worse since then.

Back in the day when a Highways Officer painted white lines around a pothole it was a sure indicator that it would soon be fixed. But now it seems due to a lack of communication the paint is allowed to fade, and the holes allowed to get bigger necessitating another officer to come out and re-mark the crater. And, of course the bigger the hole gets the more expensive it will be to repair.

As an example, I've provided a photo for Members of a growing crater in Crutchley Road but there are many others like it.

Does the Council have a plan to break this vicious cycle?

118.

**PETITIONS**

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

119.     None Specific

**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 16 February 2023 by Councillor Norman Jorgensen:

*'For 20 years, Wokingham Borough Council maintained a policy of having bins collected every week. Careful management of the Council's money made this possible, even when other local authorities,*

*strapped for cash, went to fortnightly, or even three-weekly collections.*

*Collecting bins every week is important.*

*It means that families, especially with small children, aren't stuck with nappies and other non-recyclable waste. A lot of homes in the borough have nowhere to store waste and no external access to back gardens, leading to rubbish piling up in the streets and creating a public health issue.*

*The new Liberal Democrat led coalition administration running Wokingham Borough Council won't commit to keeping weekly bin collection.*

*We challenged them to give a guarantee, and instead, they hide behind having a consultation. When asked if they would keep weekly bin collection, if local people said that's what they wanted, Wokingham's Coalition Administration refused to make that promise.*

*Please complete the Council's consultation and explain why changing to 2 to 3 weekly collections is not acceptable.*

*If you want Wokingham Borough Council to carry on collecting your bins every week, please support our campaign.*

*Sign this petition and send a message that the Lib Dem-led coalition cannot ignore.*

*Keep WBC Weekly Bin Collections.'*

**Councillor Norman Jorgensen as the petition organiser has submitted the following Motion:**

**'This Motion is a result of 1,800 residents signing a petition calling on the Council to maintain weekly waste collections.**

**Wokingham Borough Council shall**

- 1. Accept the views of those who signed the petition and the 76% of residents who responded to the Council's consultation on future waste collection who did not like the idea of moving to fortnightly general and dry recycling waste collections.**

2. Maintain weekly kerbside collections of general, dry recycling and food waste.
3. Increase the proportion of materials recycled and reduce costs by offering residents more options.
4. Communicate better with residents to ensure they understand what they can recycle.'

**Statement from the Chief Finance Officer:**

*The Chief Finance Officer comments are purely an assessment of the Financial Implications associated with the Motion as written and are not an opinion on the policy direction or intention contained within them.*

There is an estimated loss in savings of £150k in 2023/24, £500k in 2024/25, rising to £1m from 2025/26 onwards, directly associated with the Motion not to proceed with Alternative Waste Collection. Enhanced communications and diversion of waste aligned to a reduction in Blue Bags can be delivered within existing resources and this is estimated to generate up to £100k p.a. in saving. It is not possible to assess the financial implications associated with the proposal of 'offering residents more options' until those options have been identified.

Therefore, the net lost income directly associated with the Motion is estimated to be £150k 2023/24, £450k in 2024/25, rising to £900k from 2025/26 onwards and will need to be found from further cost reductions and/or additional sources of income in setting future years' service budgets.

120. None Specific

**COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND CONSULTATION**

37 - 44

To approve the Council's submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council approves its submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission as recommended by the Electoral Review Working Group and as set out at Appendix 1.

To agree changes to the Council's Constitution as listed below.

**RECOMMENDATION**

- 1) That Council agrees the following changes to the Constitution, as recommended by the Monitoring Officer via the Constitution Review Working Group:
  - a. that Rules 4.2.9.7 Asking the Question at the Meeting and 4.2.9.8 Supplementary Question be amended as set out in paragraph 1 of the report;
  - b. that Rule 5.2.4.2 Scheme of Delegation to the Executive be amended as set out in paragraph 2.1;
  - c. that it be noted that Rule 5.2.10.24 [Responsibilities of Executive Member for Environment, Sport and Leisure] will be amended as set out in paragraph 2.2 of the report;
  - d. that Rule 8.1.1 [Planning Committee terms of reference] be amended as set out in paragraph 3 of the report;
- 2) That Council agree the Employee Assistance Provider Scheme be made available to all Members (as detailed in paragraph 4 of the report);
- 3) That Council notes that the size of the Constitution Review Working Group will increase to five Members, two of which shall be members of the Opposition;
- 4) That Council agree the amendments to the Audit Committee terms of reference as set out in Appendix 1 of the report noting that the changes will come into effect from the new municipal year with the exception of the responsibility for approving the Council's statement of accounts which will remain with the Audit Committee until clarification of the appropriate Council body to sign future statement of accounts has been provided to Council.

122.	All Wards	<b>MEMBER PARENTAL LEAVE POLICY RECOMMENDATION</b> To agree the Member Parental Leave Policy at Appendix A.	65 - 78
123.	None Specific	<b>ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE AUDIT COMMITTEE 2022/23</b> To receive a report from the Chair of the Audit Committee on the work undertaken by the Audit Committee.  <b>RECOMMENDATION:</b> That the report from the Chair of the Audit Committee be noted.	79 - 88
124.	None Specific	<b>ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AND THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES 2022/23</b> To receive a report from the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on the work undertaken by the Management Committee and the associated Overview and Scrutiny Committees over the past year.  <b>RECOMMENDATION:</b> That the report from the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee be noted.	89 - 114
125.	None Specific	<b>REPORTS FROM MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES</b> To note those reports from Members on Outside Bodies as circulated in the agenda.  <b>RECOMMENDATION:</b> That the reports from Members appointed to Outside Bodies be noted.	115 - 156
126.		<b>MEMBER QUESTION TIME</b> 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.	
126.1	None Specific	Gary Cowan has asked the Executive Member for Climate Emergency and Resident Services the following question:  <b>Question:</b> In the Council Chamber you said I am afraid that I need to finish my statement by raising an issue, and	



that is the issue of poor behaviour. We have been told about some instances of behaviour on the part of councillors, and I mean councillors plural, towards officers that has fallen short of the standard we would expect. I want to take this opportunity to remind you that all councillors should treat officers with respect in this Chamber and in their correspondence with them. Robust discussions are perfectly possible without descending into bullying and harassment. Please make sure that you do not cross this line. There have been relatively few complaints about councillor behaviour in this Council compared to many. We would like that to continue.

You say we have been told of instances. Who are the **we**? The word **plural** is also used which implies that there are more than one Councillor.

Accusing elected Councillors of bullying and harassing Officers without any evidence in a formal public arena is insulting to all 54 members of the Council and brings the Council into disrepute.

My question simply is should you not apologise in public for this statement.

126.2

Abdul Loyes has asked the Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Services the following question:

**Question:**

After all the concerns raised by residents over the past 18 months about access to GP appointments, what is the coalition doing to keep the pressure on GPs and their PCNs to make more face-to-face appointments and more surgery space available to our ever-increasing local population?

126.3     South Lake

Laura Blumenthal has asked the Executive Member for Active Travel, Transport and Highways the following question:

**Question:**

Nightingale Road roundabout continues to flood badly every time it rains. The Council has been investigating this issue with Thames Water for a long time. Please can you share when residents can expect the drainage issue to be fixed?

126.4	None Specific	<p>Jackie Rance has asked the Leader of the Council the following question:</p> <p><b>Question:</b> A petition signed by 1,800 residents to stop development at Hall Farm was handed to the Council in December last year. The Leader of the Council accepted it and took the trouble to have himself photographed taking receipt.</p> <p>Now the petitioners have been told that they can't have a debate at Full Council on the grounds it would force members of the Planning Committee to take a stance on a planning decision. However, there have been examples where Council has debated petitions on planning decisions before – in January 2019, a debate was held on a petition relating to South of Cutbush Lane, with Planning Committee members leaving the room. Can the Leader explain why it was possible to have a debate then, but not now?</p>
126.5	Sonning	<p>Michael Firmager has asked the Executive Member for Environment, Sport and Leisure the following question:</p> <p><b>Question</b> Residents in my ward are concerned about pollution in the Thames. Sonning is synonymous with the beautiful winding river and the wildlife that live along it. Can you tell me what powers the Council has to stop sewage from Thames Water entering our stretch of river?</p>
126.6	None Specific	<p>Norman Jorgensen has asked the Executive Member for Environment, Sport and Leisure the following question:</p> <p><b>Question:</b> At Budget Council, Councillor Ian Shenton described a petition signed by 1,779 residents on waste collection as "spurious." Will he apologise to residents for his disregard of their views?</p>
126.7	Barkham	<p>Rebecca Margetts has asked the Executive Member for Children's Services the following question:</p> <p><b>Question</b> I'm delighted that the Conservative Government has announced funding for new SEND schools in Wokingham Borough. However, I'm surprised that the Liberal Democrat-led coalition administration has identified Rooks Nest Farm in Finchampstead as a potential site for a new school. Why build on green fields when there are other more sustainable sites available?</p>

**127. 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.

**128. STATEMENTS BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND EXECUTIVE MEMBERS**

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

**129. 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.

**130. 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.

**130.1 None Specific**

**Motion 499 submitted by Shirley Boyt**

‘This Council values the contribution of all key workers. The pandemic highlighted those who provide an invaluable service to our community and who should be regarded as key workers.

Key workers in our community are suffering hardship caused by a combination of low pay and the high cost of living in this Borough.

Many are in receipt of means tested benefits and qualify for Council Tax Relief.

Many are using foodbanks and/or other help provided by the Hardship Alliance.

The cost of living in the Borough means that there are shortages of key workers. A Google search in the first week of January revealed 73 local NHS vacancies, 72 care worker vacancies and more than 100 vacancies for teachers and/or classroom assistants.

This Council seeks to address this issue by:

Undertaking a full review of Key Worker Housing Provision including but not limited to:

- 1.Setting a more realistic income threshold
- 2.Reviewing the list of eligible occupations
- 3.Working with Preferred Registered Partners and developers to  
provide a range of Key Worker Homes suitable for families as well as single occupants.
- 4.Using S106 agreements to ensure that all new developments  
include Key Worker Homes for 'social' rather than 'affordable' rent.'

#### **Statement from Chief Finance Officer**

*The Chief Finance Officer comments are purely an assessment of the Financial Implications associated with the Motion as written and are not an opinion on the policy direction or intention contained within them.*

**The supply and availability of affordable housing is a limited and costly resource, whilst the Council has numerous objectives and obligations to meet through affordable housing provision. One of these is the prevention of homelessness and limiting the reliance on temporary accommodation, which if not addressed, can have significant ongoing Revenue implications for the Council. The prioritisation of any particular nature of need should be considered in this context and the financial implications of this would need to be carefully worked through.**

**A review of the policy would not in itself lead to any financial implications, however the agreement of any changes would need to be considered and approved by Executive along with**

**their financial impact.**

130.2      None Specific

**Motion 500 submitted by Andy Croy**

‘Over many years, residents and Members have made submissions to Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) asking for road crossings, traffic calming and other requests related to Highways and pedestrian safety in their area.

And for many years there has been a distinct lack of transparency in dealing with requests from residents and Members. Requests have been described as ‘in the pool’. This has become a synonym for ‘sunk without a trace’.

The petitioning process is particularly problematic as once a formal response from WBC has been received by the petitioner, there is no obligation on WBC to provide any future update.

Council calls on the Executive Member for Highways to usher in a new era of transparency and cause to be published on the WBC website a Schedule which allows residents and Members to see at a glance the status of road crossings, traffic calming and other resident and Member requests related to dangers on WBC highways.

The Schedule should rank and grade requests and schemes by their stage in the assessment and delivery process in such a way as to give residents and members and understanding of the likelihood and timing of a request progressing, an outline of future milestone and any constraints.

The Schedule should include requests made by petitions in the last four years.

Where any request had been rejected, the request and reason for rejection should also be shown on the Schedule.

The Schedule should not rely on administrative versions of the ‘pool’, such as deferral to the finalising of the Local Cycling and Infrastructure Plan or Local Transport Plan, as a way of delaying an assessment as resident and Member requests deserve to be considered on their own merits.

The Schedule would be updated at least twice a year and the first version would be published by 1<sup>st</sup> October 2023.’

### **Statement from the Chief Finance Officer**

*The Chief Finance Officer comments are purely an assessment of the Financial Implications associated with the Motion as written and are not an opinion on the policy direction or intention contained within them.*

**There is no direct financial implication associated with this Motion as it is assumed that the schedule can be produced and maintained within existing resources.**

### **CONTACT OFFICER**

**Priya Patel**  
**Email**  
**Postal Address**

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