



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.

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.
113.		APOLOGIES To receive any apologies for absence.	
114.		MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 February 2023.	15 - 36
115.		DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST To receive any declarations of interest.	
116.		MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS To receive any announcements by the Mayor.	
117.		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	
117.1	None Specific	Ann Dally has asked the Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Services the following question: Question: As Councillors may be aware the <i>Prevention Concordat for Better Mental Health</i> (https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/prevention-concordat-for-better-mental-health) 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.

CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION

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	<p>MEMBER PARENTAL LEAVE POLICY RECOMMENDATION To agree the Member Parental Leave Policy at Appendix A.</p>	65 - 78
123.	None Specific	<p>ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE AUDIT COMMITTEE 2022/23 To receive a report from the Chair of the Audit Committee on the work undertaken by the Audit Committee.</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION: That the report from the Chair of the Audit Committee be noted.</p>	79 - 88
124.	None Specific	<p>ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AND THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES 2022/23 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.</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION: That the report from the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee be noted.</p>	89 - 114
125.	None Specific	<p>REPORTS FROM MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES To note those reports from Members on Outside Bodies as circulated in the agenda.</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION: That the reports from Members appointed to Outside Bodies be noted.</p>	115 - 156
126.		<p>MEMBER QUESTION TIME To answer any member questions.</p> <p>A period of 30 minutes will be allowed for Members to ask questions submitted under Notice.</p> <p>Any questions not dealt with within the allotted time will be dealt with in a written reply.</p>	
126.1	None Specific	<p>Gary Cowan has asked the Executive Member for Climate Emergency and Resident Services the following question:</p> <p>Question: In the Council Chamber you said I am afraid that I need to finish my statement by raising an issue, and</p>	

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 Jackie Rance has asked the Leader of the Council the following question:
- Question:**
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.
- 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?
- 126.5 Sonning Michael Firmager has asked the Executive Member for Environment, Sport and Leisure the following question:
- Question**
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?
- 126.6 None Specific Norman Jorgensen has asked the Executive Member for Environment, Sport and Leisure the following question:
- Question:**
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?
- 126.7 Barkham Rebecca Margetts has asked the Executive Member for Children's Services the following question:
- Question**
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?

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 1st 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.

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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF
THE COUNCIL
HELD ON THURSDAY, 16 FEBRUARY 2023 FROM 7.30 PM TO 10.00 PM**

Members Present

Councillors: Caroline Smith (Mayor), Beth Rowland (Deputy Mayor), Sam Akhtar, Parry Batth, Rachel Bishop-Firth, Laura Blumenthal, Chris Bowring, Shirley Boyt, Prue Bray, Rachel Burgess, Anne Chadwick, Stephen Conway, David Cornish, Andy Croy, David Davies, Peter Dennis, Lindsay Ferris, Michael Firmager, Paul Fishwick, Jim Frewin, Maria Gee, David Hare, Peter Harper, Pauline Helliars-Symons, Graham Howe, Chris Johnson, Clive Jones, Norman Jorgensen, Pauline Jorgensen, Sarah Kerr, Tahir Maher, Morag Malvern, Charles Margetts, Rebecca Margetts, Adrian Mather, Andrew Mickleburgh, Stuart Munro, Alistair Neal, Jackie Rance, Ian Shenton, Imogen Shepherd-DuBey, Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey, Mike Smith, Wayne Smith, Bill Soane, Alison Swaddle and Shahid Younis

Members In Attendance Virtually

Councillors: Gregor Murray

104. Minute Silence

The Mayor referred to the recent earthquake in Turkey and Syria which had killed over 40,000 people and left millions homeless. The Mayor stated that everyone's thoughts were with the victims and their families. The Mayor asked Members to stand for a minute's silence.

105. Apologies

Apologies for absence were submitted from Keith Baker, Gary Cowan, Phil Cunnington, John Halsall and Abdul Loyes.

Gregor Murray attended the meeting on Microsoft Teams.

106. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 19 January 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor, subject to a word change on Page 39 – 100.8 – Question from Pauline Jorgensen – in line 1 "leaflets" should read "leaves".

107. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

108. Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor had no announcements.

109. Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

110. Petitions

The following Member presented a petition in relation to the matter indicated.

The Mayor's decision as to the action to be taken is set out beneath the petition.

Norman Jorgensen	Norman Jorgensen presented a petition containing 1,800 signatures from residents who wished to see the continuation of weekly waste and recycling collections across the
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	<p>Borough.</p> <p>To be forwarded to officers in the Place and Growth department.</p>
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111. Medium Term Financial Plan and Associated Reports

The Council considered four reports which together comprised a single Agenda item:

- Housing Revenue Account Budget 2023/34 as set out on Agenda pages 47 to 56;
- Capital Programme and Strategy 2023/26 as set out on Agenda pages 57 to 88;
- Treasury Management Strategy 2023/26 as set out on Agenda pages 89 to 140;
- Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/26 including Revenue Budget Submission 2023/24, as set out on Agenda pages 141 to 158.

The Mayor reminded Members that a total of 90 minutes would be set aside for the debate.

The Mayor also reminded Members that Appendix A to the Medium Term Financial Plan (the Statutory Resolution) and the Council Tax by Band and Parish, had been circulated.

111.1 Clive Jones, Leader of the Council - Statement on the Budget

I present this prudent, forward-looking, and compassionate Budget to the Council together with the circulated amended page that does not change the figures but better represents our Climate Emergency endeavours.

This is the first Budget that the Liberal Democrats have proposed for many years and is probably the most challenging budget process this Council has ever experienced. With inflation at over 10%, rising demand for services, shortfalls in anticipated income and now higher interest rates, we have had to endure a financial storm of tropical intensity.

The unprecedented financial challenges have obliged us to take difficult decisions to ensure the council's financial viability. I am pleased to say that we did not shy away from those tough decisions and as a result of taking them we have been able to eliminate the ongoing shortfall we inherited of £2.3m and have now set a balanced budget for 2023-24 that plans for the future and leaves the Council's finances in a better state than we found them almost a year ago.

Before I turn to some of the details of the Budget, I would like to thank my Executive and our Corporate Leadership Team for the immense work they have put into this Budget. We began preparation in May when we took over the administration and we have had to go through three major reviews of our Capital Programme to arrive at this balanced budget.

I would also like to thank the cross-party Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee which has been considering and commenting on our proposals

since late summer.

Moving to the key features of our Budget submission. Our Budget proposals include much needed, substantial investment in our vital services totalling £15m. £6.3m is for Children's Services and £3.6m is for Adult Social Care. In addition, we have had to provide a staggering sum to cover the costs of inflation of just under £11m, which is £3m more than provided for in this current year. To help Councillors, you will find this set out on pages 59 and 60 of the MTFP.

The costs of investing in services and providing for inflation are funded in part by finding just short of £12m, primarily achieved through over £10m of cost reductions and some new income. This is the furthest this Council has had to go in many years in finding savings and possibly ever but is wholly necessary to meet the unavoidable financial pressures we face. Our efficiencies programme is more than double the £5.1m proposed last year and more than 60% of the total of the last four years' proposed savings.

As many previous Council leaders have said "we get very little from central government," my predecessors have complained that Wokingham is the poorest funded Unitary Authority per head of population in the country and unfortunately their government allows this sorry state to continue. This year we received a meagre £1.8 million more from the government at a time when we have had additional challenges of increased funding required for necessary statutory services and inflation totalling £26m. Wokingham receives an incomprehensible £30m per year less than if we were funded in the same way as the average unitary authority.

This situation must not continue. Something seriously needs to change for us to get a fairer deal for the residents of Wokingham Borough. We have lobbied Cabinet Ministers to present our case for more money from the government. But sadly, the government seems not to be listening. I am not alone in asking for more money, I know of council leaders from all over the country from all parties including the Conservatives who are complaining about being starved of cash by this government.

We continue to work to reduce the number of agency staff working at the council. The previous administration started to try to address this issue which is of course difficult as many agency staff work in adult social care and children's services areas where we have significant statutory responsibilities. If this was an easy issue to resolve, I am sure the previous administrations would not have struggled to contain agency spending in the way that they did for quite a few years. We are confident that we will be able to make savings in this area in the coming years.

We have been hearing from the opposition that if we had opted for elections every four years instead of three out of four there would be a saving to the council of £300,000. A bit of a red herring because there would have been no saving until the elections of 2025, 2027 and 2028. And the saving would then not be £300,000 a year, but a quarter of that sum.

An illustration of our responsible financial management is the significant financial contribution and ongoing commitment towards addressing the deficit associated with rising Education, Health and Care plans. An area known as Dedicated Schools Grant, where a deficit has been allowed to grow over the past four or five years

under the previous administration and has now reached a magnitude of alarming proportions. This financial contribution, together with an enhanced focus by the Council's leadership will ensure we get on top of this and avoid the Council sleep walking into a serious financial crisis.

Our Capital Programme for next year of just over £100m both addresses the £14m funding gap presented in last year's MTFP and delivers significant much needed capital investment in our community. This is detailed on pages 82-85 of the MTFP and includes investment in housing, investment in regeneration, investment in roads and transport and includes funding for a dementia care home.

As I have said before we have had to make some difficult and tough decisions. Increasing the Council Tax by 4.99% is one of those decisions. This has been forced on us by the government – which has made it clear that it expects councils to do this as part of its budget package. It's a pretty well-known fact that the majority of councils across the country, Lib Dem, Independent, Conservative or Labour run councils will increase Council Tax by the maximum allowed by the government. By the way... this is also what the Conservatives have done here in Wokingham for many years. Of this 4.99% increase 2% will be going towards the increased costs of Adult Social care which David Hare will talk about and 1% towards sorting out the problem left by the previous administration in our special educational needs funding.

The overall Budget proposal significantly enhances the financial resilience of the Council, which has been achieved in the most challenging financial landscape and demonstrates that we hold financial responsibility amongst our highest of priorities. This Budget invests in our community where help is needed, achieved through tenacious financial management to control, and reduce spend and making difficult decisions where required. It also leaves us with an improved General Fund Balance of £9.3m at the end of next year (as shown on page 10) and we will look to further strengthen this going forward.

Financial rigour, financial resilience and financial responsibility is the hallmark of this Budget, to ensure we are in the best possible position to support those most in need. Targeting our limited resources on those who are struggling is something we regard as the right thing to do, especially in hard times.

Madam Mayor, I commend this prudent, forward-looking, and compassionate Budget to the Council together with the circulated amended page that does not change the figures but better represents our climate emergency endeavours.

111.2 Pauline Jorgensen, Leader of the Conservative Group - Statement on the Budget

I want to make it very clear to residents that this budget is the work of the Coalition of Liberal Democrats, Labour and Independents and they are all equally responsible for the proposals. It is a budget that is built on a falsehood that has been repeated since the Liberal Democrats took power with the help of their allies. They claim that they have no choice because of the state they found the Council's finances in. Every poor decision, that is their excuse. It's always somebody else's fault. And it's simply not true.

Don't just take my word for it. At the last Executive meeting, the Council's own Chief Financial Officer (CFO) said that the Council's Finances were in good shape under the previous Conservative administration. The CFO's report sets out that, in 2020, Wokingham Borough was rated in the top 20 for financial sustainability by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy. The most recent data, published 2020-21, shows an even further improved position on indicators of financial stress, such as maintaining or improving reserves and the cost of social care as a proportion of total expenditure compared to other local authorities. Demonstrating that the previous Conservative administration's stewardship of the Council's finances was better than many other councils during the difficult pandemic period.

Power means making choices. When they do anything at all, the record of this administration is to repeatedly make the wrong choices. Since May the record of the Coalition has been one of dither and delay. There's certainly been a lot of talk but almost no action. Perhaps having been in opposition for the last two decades they aren't accustomed to making decisions, or maybe they are trying to duck the big issues. Having made broad sweeping promises in Opposition they find themselves incapable of acting.

Councillor Jones has bet the house on being able to reduce housing numbers. He's told everyone that will listen about his brush-past with Michael Gove and his invitation to a round table that we're still waiting to happen. And in the meantime, no sign of the Local Plan. We're left exposed to speculative development, endless costly appeals, and a growing pressure on services and infrastructure with no plan to address it.

This Budget before us continues the theme of poor choices. The choices of the Liberal Democrats, propped up by Labour and the Independents, are not taken in the best interests of our local residents or our communities – they are driven by ideology. Take car parking charges. Despite thousands of people in this Borough signing a petition begging the Council not to double parking charges and 40 businesses explaining how the changes will damage employment, the administration pressed on. Yet this budget acknowledges that this excruciating hike in charges won't save £500,000 as had been claimed, because £350,000 has had to be allocated to make up for the drop-off in usage of car parks and park and rides. So, residents and local businesses are being made to suffer not to save the Council's finances at all but because the administration doesn't want people to use cars. We believe that parking charges should be frozen this year to protect local business, with rises pegged to inflation in coming years if economic circumstances support it.

Then we turn to the coalition's decision to stop weekly collection of bins. Members have heard tonight that thousands of residents have signed a petition calling for weekly collection to be retained. We know that the Liberal Democrats have already made their minds up, because it's included in the Budget, and presumably Labour and the Independents will be whipped to fall in behind them. The sad truth is that this reduction in a service will not save a single penny in this coming year. Every household in the Borough will see a Council service reduced, families with young children and the disabled will be hit worst and we fear fly tipping and waste dumped in litter bins will increase – all costing the Council more. Worse still the Lib/Lab

coalition propose to take £2m out of reserves to pay for this change. Had the Conservative Group set the Budget, we would have maintained weekly bin collection, and would have made changes to encourage and increase recycling, we have looked at what other local authorities do and there are significant opportunities. Which brings me on to food waste caddy liners. Once again, we tried to put a stop to this nonsensical decision by the Liberal Democrats and their allies, but our pleas fell on deaf ears. As such, their budget tonight will scrap the purchase and distribution of the liners for food waste caddies. We are clear that we would have continued these caddy liners. We want to make it easier for residents to recycle, and recycling more organic matter including the used pet bedding and waste which currently fills many blue bags.

We Conservatives believe that people don't create waste for fun and need to be encouraged to recycle not punished because of their circumstances. The administration could have chosen to deliver increased savings by helping people to separate their leftover food from general waste. Instead, they're making it harder for households to recycle food waste. Why? Because the Liberal Democrats, aided by Labour and the Independents, want to use the money to fund their pet projects.

The Budget gives us an insight into where the money diverted from residents' services is instead going to be spent. On a Citizens' Assembly on climate change, even though consultative processes had already been set up. Undertaking community engagement on equality and anti-poverty rather than doing something about them. Lots of talking shops and consultations which their track record suggests they will then ignore. Increasing the number of Council and committee meetings while hiding information and frustrating debate.

The three specific items that I've mentioned – car parking charges, weekly waste collection and caddy liners – will be the subject of an amendment tonight. These are all areas where we've tried over and over to get the administration to think again. I say to Liberal Democrat, Labour and Independent Members: this is your last chance to listen to residents and do the right thing.

Other Conservative Members will highlight different areas where we would have acted differently had we set the Budget. We would have liked to have produced a fully comprehensive alternative Budget. But unlike the administration, we didn't have many months of preparation supported by hundreds of officers. I would however like to publicly thank the CFO and senior officers for their help and input. As such, we'll highlight the areas where we think funding could increase or decrease in order to achieve a balanced Budget, with the clear caveat that we don't have all the detailed figures that the administration has. This situation should be very familiar to the Liberal Democrats – it's exactly what they did over a number of years, including last year when they replied to the Budget.

One of the Liberal Democrats' first acts on taking office was to reject moving to full Council elections, instead of the current system of elections by-thirds, despite all out elections being what residents wanted and despite the electoral commission advising that elections by thirds leads to low turnout and that all out elections are fairer and more equitable to the electorate. But also despite officers estimating it would save the Council £4million over the 4-year period. Is this the action of an administration

facing difficult financial decisions?

Madam Mayor, what the Liberal Democrats are offering to residents tonight is less for more:

- bins will be collected less often,
- projects such as the solar farm to generate an income significantly delayed,
- Bohunt School expansion delayed,
- a real terms cut in road maintenance,
- no progress on housing numbers or the Local Plan,
- and, in return, people will pay more Council Tax, higher fees, and increased charges.

When residents made the decision to leave this Council as no overall control last May, they signalled that they wanted something different. We accept that. But almost 10 months on, it's becoming increasingly clear to local people that the Liberal Democrat-led experiment has not only failed, it is one that they can ill-afford. The Liberals did not put these changes in the manifesto they were elected on. I say to all people who don't like increased charges, worse road maintenance and worse services when you next get a chance to vote before you put your X in the box ask yourself, what are the Liberals planning which they dare not tell me about. If you refuse to listen to residents and disregard their views; if you put up fees and charges but reduce services; if you fail to act on planning and put the whole Borough at risk then why should residents put their trust in you?

The residents of Wokingham Borough deserve better. They deserve an administration that will invest in services, not cut them. They deserve to have their taxes and charges kept to a level they can afford. They deserve to have a Council Leader who will actually act to cut housing numbers and plan for future development, not just talk about it. They deserve to have a Council that will deliver on local communities' priorities, not the latest ideological fad of a group of councillors. And the best way for local people to get a Council that will truly be on their side, is to return a Conservative administration at this May's local elections.

112. Budget Amendment

It was proposed by Councillor Stuart Munro and seconded by Councillor Charles Margetts that the proposed Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/26 and Revenue Budget Submission 2023/24 be amended with the Budget changes set out in the table below:

Service	Budget Changes	Additional Spending	Savings	Rationale
		£,000	£,000	
Highways	Freeze car parking charges	500	-350	Based on no car parking charge increase, netting off the cost of £350k additional budgeted spending as a result of reduced usage of car parks and park and rides
	Road, pavement and pothole fund	1,000	-330	Increase budget by inflation (50% capital, 50% revenue) - £1m road and pothole budget partly grant funded
	California Crossroads – reduce capital		-84	S106 allocations from 22/23 carried forwards to 23/24. Reallocate carry forward to 22/23 on local roads in

	borrowing costs			Capital Programme. Reduce Capital borrowing costs in Revenue budget. £5.72m total cost, of which £4.2m could be reallocated to replace borrowing
	Accelerate street light night time switch off		-30	Nine months acceleration
Environment	Maintain weekly waste collection		-70	Maintain weekly waste – no cost, no benefits 2024; saving interest on Capital of 2% - £70k
	Keep caddy liners	80		Caddy liners only – no delivery cost required
	Outdoor gyms no longer progressing		-3	
Other	Scrap Climate Citizens' Assembly		-90	Already allocated deliberative process – additional £90k
Children's	Cancellation of St Cecilia delay costs following successful handover		-100	
CEX & Resources	Community engagement		-115	Remove Special Item spend increase
	Remove Overhead Growth		-741	Overhead growth
	Capital contingency reduction		-25	Interest charge on £1.5 m
	Remove high cost interims		-250	
Total		1,580	-2,188	

In proposing the amendment, Stuart Munro stated that it demonstrated how the Conservative Group would make savings and reallocate money. The amendment was a prudent proposal which was what residents wanted. The amendment would deliver savings of £2.1m from reductions in wasteful increased spending on back office staff, too much focus on communications, too much focus on projects that were no longer progressing and removing expensive interim posts. The proposals would reallocate money to freeze current car park charges, increase spending on road maintenance and retain weekly waste collections. Previous Conservative administrations had built up over £100m of available reserves. The Liberal Democrat Budget failed its own test of sound finance and failed to address the needs and wants of residents. It lacked the ambition to continue the Conservative goal of getting the local economy back on its feet after Covid. It wasted money on internal reorganisations while cutting back and underinvesting on services affecting our communities such as roads and waste. It took money out of residents' pockets that could have been found through better financial management.

In addition to the amendment, Members received a copy of a paper from the Chief Finance Officer which provided an assessment of the proposed Budget amendment. The paper stated that the Budget Amendment put forward additional growth proposals and/or reduced income proposals totalling £1.6m. To fund this, £2.2m of savings had been proposed. The Substantive Budget Submission already incorporated a significant cost reduction/income generation challenge of £11.8m, which for context was more than double the £5.1m agreed at Council last year and

was over 7% of the Council's Net Budget. The additional savings would increase this total to £14m, or almost 9% of the Council's Net Budget. This would inevitably add sizeable risk on top of the challenging targets and subsequent risks already included in the Substantive Budget Submission.

Councillor Clive Jones stated that he did not accept the proposed amendment.

In opposing the amendment, Councillor Stephen Conway referred to the Chief Finance Officer's paper. Councillor Conway felt that the amendment demonstrated a lack of understanding of the financial challenges facing the Council. He stated that the amendment was based on inaccurate assumptions and false figures. It proposed to forego savings and income generation without a plausible explanation as to how the shortfall would be made up. The Conservatives pinned their hopes on abolishing a Citizens' Assembly which was not in the Budget and making savings in interim staff. They ran the Council for 20 years and made no such savings. The current administration had made savings and increased income in the Place and Growth budget in order to protect Children's and Adult services. The proposed Budget sought to target help on those who needed it most. It had gone through a rigorous process of scrutiny since last autumn. It deserved to be rejected by all Councillors who believed in sound finances and focussing help on those who needed it most.

Upon being put to the vote, voting on the amendment was as follows.

For	Against	Abstain
Sam Akhtar	Rachel Bishop-Firth	
Parry Bath	Shirley Boyt	
Laura Blumenthal	Prue Bray	
Chris Bowring	Rachel Burgess	
Anne Chadwick	Stephen Conway	
David Davies	David Cornish	
Michael Firmager	Andy Croy	
Peter Harper	Peter Dennis	
Pauline Helliard-Symons	Lindsay Ferris	
Graham Howe	Paul Fishwick	
Norman Jorgensen	Jim Frewin	
Pauline Jorgensen	Maria Gee	
Charles Margetts	David Hare	
Rebecca Margetts	Chris Johnson	
Stuart Munro	Clive Jones	
Jackie Rance	Sarah Kerr	
Wayne Smith	Tahir Maher	
Bill Soane	Morag Malvern	
Alison Swaddle	Adrian Mather	
Shahid Younis	Andrew Mickleburgh	
	Alistair Neal	
	Beth Rowland	
	Ian Shenton	

	Imogen Shepherd-Dubey	
	Rachelle Shepherd-Dubey	
	Caroline Smith	
	Mike Smith	

The Mayor confirmed that the amendment was **lost**.

112.1 Housing Revenue Account Budget 2023/24

It was proposed by Clive Jones and seconded by Stephen Conway that the Housing Revenue Account Budget 2023/24, as set out on Agenda pages 47 to 56, together with the revised recommendation set out in the supplementary paper, be approved.

Voting on the item was as follows:

For	Against	Abstain
Sam Akhtar		
Parry Batth		
Rachel Bishop-Firth		
Laura Blumenthal		
Chris Bowring		
Shirley Boyt		
Prue Bray		
Rachel Burgess		
Anne Chadwick		
Stephen Conway		
David Cornish		
Andy Croy		
David Davies		
Peter Dennis		
Lindsay Ferris		
Michael Firmager		
Paul Fishwick		
Jim Frewin		
Maria Gee		
David Hare		
Peter Harper		
Pauline Helliard-Symons		
Graham Howe		
Chris Johnson		
Clive Jones		
Norman Jorgensen		
Pauline Jorgensen		
Sarah Kerr		
Tahir Maher		
Morag Malvern		
Charles Margetts		
Rebecca Margetts		
Adrian Mather		

Andrew Mickleburgh		
Stuart Munro		
Alistair Neal		
Jackie Rance		
Beth Rowland		
Ian Shenton		
Imogen Shepherd-Dubey		
Rachelle Shepherd-Dubey		
Caroline Smith		
Mike Smith		
Wayne Smith		
Bill Soane		
Alison Swaddle		
Shahid Younis		

RESOLVED: That Council approve the following:

- 1) the Housing Revenue Account budget for 2023/24 (Appendix A);
- 2) Council house dwelling rents be increased by up to 5.99%, effective from 3 April 2023, in line with the Council's Rent Setting Policy, approved by the Executive on 27 October 2022;
- 3) garage rents be increased by 5.99%, effective from April 2023;
- 4) Shared Equity rents be increased by 5.99%, effective from April 2023;
- 5) Tenant Services Charges be increased by 5.99%, effective from April 2023;
- 6) the Housing Major Repairs (Capital) Programme for 2023/24, as set out in the report;
- 7) sheltered room guest charges for 2023/24 remain unchanged at £9.50 per night per room.

112.2 Capital Programme and Strategy 2023-2026

It was proposed by Clive Jones and seconded by Stephen Conway that the Capital Programme and Strategy 2023/26, as set out on Agenda pages 57 to 88, be approved.

Voting on the item was as follows:

For	Against	Abstain
Rachel Bishop-Firth	Sam Akhtar	
Shirley Boyt	Parry Batth	
Prue Bray	Laura Blumenthal	
Rachel Burgess	Chris Bowring	
Stephen Conway	Anne Chadwick	
David Cornish	David Davies	

Andy Croy	Michael Firmager	
Peter Dennis	Peter Harper	
Lindsay Ferris	Pauline Helliard-Symons	
Paul Fishwick	Graham Howe	
Jim Frewin	Norman Jorgensen	
Maria Gee	Pauline Jorgensen	
David Hare	Charles Margetts	
Chris Johnson	Rebecca Margetts	
Clive Jones	Stuart Munro	
Sarah Kerr	Jackie Rance	
Tahir Maher	Wayne Smith	
Morag Malvern	Bill Soane	
Adrian Mather	Alison Swaddle	
Andrew Mickleburgh	Shahid Younis	
Alistair Neal		
Beth Rowland		
Ian Shenton		
Imogen Shepherd-Dubey		
Rachelle Shepherd-Dubey		
Caroline Smith		
Mike Smith		

RESOLVED: That Council approve the following:

- 1) the Capital Strategy for 2023/26 – Appendix A;
- 2) the three year Capital Programme for 2023/26 – Appendix B;
- 3) the draft Vision for Capital Investment over the next five years – Appendix C;
- 4) the use of developer contribution funding (S106 and CIL) for Capital projects, as set out at Appendix D. Approval is sought up to the project budget.

112.3 Treasury Management Strategy 2023-2026

It was proposed by Councillor Imogen Shepherd-Dubey and seconded by Councillor Clive Jones that the Treasury Management Strategy 2023/26, as set out on Agenda pages 89 to 140, be approved.

Voting on the item was as follows:

For	Against	Abstain
Sam Akhtar		Maria Gee
Parry Batth		
Rachel Bishop-Firth		
Laura Blumenthal		
Chris Bowring		
Shirley Boyt		
Prue Bray		
Rachel Burgess		

Anne Chadwick		
Stephen Conway		
David Cornish		
Andy Croy		
David Davies		
Peter Dennis		
Lindsay Ferris		
Michael Firmager		
Paul Fishwick		
Jim Frewin		
David Hare		
Peter Harper		
Pauline Helliard-Symons		
Graham Howe		
Chris Johnson		
Clive Jones		
Norman Jorgensen		
Pauline Jorgensen		
Sarah Kerr		
Tahir Maher		
Morag Malvern		
Charles Margetts		
Rebecca Margetts		
Adrian Mather		
Andrew Mickleburgh		
Stuart Munro		
Alistair Neal		
Jackie Rance		
Beth Rowland		
Ian Shenton		
Imogen Shepherd-Dubey		
Rachelle Shepherd-Dubey		
Caroline Smith		
Mike Smith		
Wayne Smith		
Bill Soane		
Alison Swaddle		
Shahid Younis		

RESOLVED: That Council:

- 1) note the Treasury Management Strategy, set out in Appendix A, including the following additional appendices:
 - Prudential Indicators (Appendix B);
 - Annual Investment Strategy 2023/24 (Appendix C);

- Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy (Appendix D);

2) note that the Audit Committee agreed the Treasury Management Strategy, including the change of minimum credit rating for investments, on 1 February 2023 and has recommended the report to Council.

112.4 Medium Term Financial Plan 2023-2026 Including Revenue Budget Submission 2023/24

It was proposed by Councillor Clive Jones and seconded by Councillor Stephen Conway that the Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/26, including the Revenue Budget Submission 2023/24, set out on Agenda pages 141 to 158, be approved.

Voting on the item was as follows:

For	Against	Abstain
Rachel Bishop-Firth	Sam Akhtar	Jim Frewin
Shirley Boyt	Parry Batth	
Prue Bray	Laura Blumenthal	
Rachel Burgess	Chris Bowring	
Stephen Conway	Anne Chadwick	
David Cornish	David Davies	
Andy Croy	Michael Firmager	
Peter Dennis	Peter Harper	
Lindsay Ferris	Pauline Helliard-Symons	
Paul Fishwick	Graham Howe	
Maria Gee	Norman Jorgensen	
David Hare	Pauline Jorgensen	
Chris Johnson	Charles Margetts	
Clive Jones	Rebecca Margetts	
Sarah Kerr	Stuart Munro	
Tahir Maher	Jackie Rance	
Morag Malvern	Wayne Smith	
Adrian Mather	Bill Soane	
Andrew Mickleburgh	Alison Swaddle	
Alistair Neal	Shahid Younis	
Beth Rowland		
Ian Shenton		
Imogen Shepherd-Dubey		
Rachelle Shepherd-Dubey		
Caroline Smith		
Mike Smith		

RESOLVED: That Council:

- 1) approve the Medium Term Financial Plan (MFTP) 2023/26, including the Budget Submission for 2023/24 and the Summary of Budget Movements (SOBM);
- 2) note, in relation to the Capital Programme, that additional challenges have

emerged in the secondary school places capital programme, are currently being worked through and will be reported to the Executive in early 2023/24, in order to seek the necessary budget provision;

- 3) approve the Statutory Resolution that sets out the 2023/24 Council Tax levels (as set out in Appendix A to the report);
- 4) approve that, in the event that there are any changes to the provisional precept of the Fire Authority or parishes arising from their precept setting meetings being held before the end of February 2023, the Deputy Chief Executive (S151 Officer) be delegated authority to enact all relevant changes to the MTFP, Statutory Resolution and Council Tax levels.

Note: The Statutory Resolution is attached as an Appendix to the Minutes of the meeting.

113. Treasury Management Mid Year Report 2022-23

Council considered the Treasury Management Mid-Year report 2022/23, set out at Agenda pages 159 to 166.

The report provided a summary of the Council's treasury management activities during the first six months of 2022/23. It was presented to Council for the purpose of monitoring and review in line with the treasury management practices. The report stated that the Council had adhered to all the agreed prudential indicators with the exception of internal borrowing. This included ensuring the necessary liquidity to deliver the Council's day to day operations.

It was proposed by Imogen Shepherd-Dubey and seconded by Clive Jones, that the recommendation in the report be approved.

Upon being put to the vote it was:

RESOLVED That the Council note:

- 1) that the Treasury Management Mid-Year report was considered and agreed by the Audit Committee at their meeting on Wednesday 30 November 2022;
- 2) that all approved indicators, set out in the Treasury Management Strategy, have been adhered to, with the exception of internal borrowing, which is forecast to be higher than set out in the strategy and ratio of financing costs to net Revenue stream – General Fund;
- 3) due to the current uncertainty in the interest rate market, the internal borrowing parameter is being reviewed with the Council's treasury management advisers and will be reported back as part of the Treasury Management Strategy;
- 4) the contents of "Table A", as set out in the report, which shows the net benefit per Council Tax D equivalent, from the income generated less the financing costs on all borrowing to date equates to £15.29 per Band D for 2022/23 – this income is used by the Council to continue to provide priority services for the Borough's residents;

- 5) as at the end of September 2022, the forecast for the total external General Fund debt was £112m at March 2023, which reduces to £81m after taking into account cash balances (net indebtedness) reducing interest costs in the current economic climate;
- 6) the Executive agreed, on 27 October 2022, recommendation 3 of the Capital Monitoring 2022/23 – Q2 report “note that due to the current uncertainty surrounding higher interest rates, as part of our financial management process, a review is to be undertaken to determine what Capital projects can be postponed this year, to minimise exposure to borrowing at high rates – any postponement to be agreed by the Executive.

114. Energy Contract Procurement

Council considered a report, set out at Agenda pages 167 to 183, which sought approval for a procurement strategy for the migration of the Energy Buying Strategy from the current framework provider (CCS – Crown Commercial Service) to the Laser Framework.

The report stated that the rationale for moving framework suppliers was to ensure best value (energy price) for the Council. The significant rise in energy prices over the past eighteen months had prompted an investigation into measures to enable the Council to procure smarter. It was considered that the levels of service offered by the Laser Framework would exceed the current CCS offer and would also deliver significant levels of additional flexibility, adaptivity and responsiveness in tariff pricing and trading arrangements. The proposed procurement strategy was in line with the Council's procurement regulations.

It was proposed by Councillor Sarah Kerr and seconded by Councillor Chris Johnson, that the recommendation in the report be approved.

It was noted that recommendation 4) should refer to the Executive Members for Finance and Housing.

Upon being put to the vote, it was:

RESOLVED That Council:

- 1) approves the procurement strategy set out in the Procurement Business Case for the migration of the Council's Energy Buying Strategy from the current framework provider (CCS – Crown Commercial Service) to the Laser Framework;
- 2) approves the Procurement Business Case;
- 3) notes that an updated Procurement Business Case will be reported back to the Executive and Council, with proposed contract terms and timescales for implementation;
- 4) delegates authority to the Director of Resources and Assets, in consultation with the Executive Members for Finance and Housing, to engage with framework

suppliers and negotiate on future contract provision, in line with the approved procurement strategy.

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REVENUE BUDGET & STATUTORY RESOLUTION 2023/24

The Leader of the Council proposes the budget submission contained in the Medium Term Financial Plan and moves the following statutory resolution required to fix the Council Tax for each Band in each part of the Council's area in accordance with the decision on the level of Council Tax. The Localism Act 2011 has made significant changes to the Local Government Finance Act 1992, and now requires the billing authority to calculate a Council Tax requirement for the year, not its budget requirement as previously.

The Leader of the opposition group will make their budget speech and propose any amendments that they wish to the budget proposals put forward by the Leader of the Council.

1. That it be noted that at its meeting on 19th January 2023 Council calculated the following amounts for the year 2023/24 in accordance with regulations made under Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended by the Localism Act 2011 and the Local Government Finance Act 2012:-

- (a) 76,247.10 being the amount calculated by the Council, (Item T) in accordance with regulation 31B of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011 and the Local Government Finance Act 2012), as its council tax base for the year

- (b) Part of the Council's area.

Arborfield and Newland	1,279.1
Barkham	2,336.8
Charvil	1,473.2
Earley	12,005.7
Finchampstead	6,553.7
Remenham	328.7
Ruscombe	580.2
St. Nicholas Hurst	1,106.7
Shinfield	7,613.2
Sonning	827.0
Swallowfield	1,078.6
Twyford	3,046.3
Wargrave	2,143.5
Winnersh	4,433.8
Wokingham	17,230.6
Wokingham Without	3,315.7
Woodley	10,894.3
	<u>76,247.1</u>

being the amounts calculated by the Council, in accordance with regulation 6 of the Regulations, as the amounts of its council tax base for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a parish precept relates.

2. Calculate that the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2023/24 (excluding Parish precepts) is £133,572,720. This includes £17,572,669 in respect of the Adult Social Care precept; this is based on a 2.0% increase on the 2022/23 council tax and annual increases from 2015/2016.
3. That the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2023/24 in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, amended by the Localism Act 2011. The precept shown below for Thames Valley Police was approved on 27th January 2023 and the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority was approved on 15th February 2023:-

- (a) £356,768,340 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2)(a) to (f) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by parish councils
- (b) (£217,836,661) being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3)(a) to (d) of the Act
- (c) £138,931,679 being the amount by which the aggregate at 3(a) above, exceeds the aggregate at 3(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its council tax requirement for the year (Item R)
- (d) £1,822.12 being the amount at 3(c) above (Item R), all divided by 1(a) above (Item T), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the 'basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts).

(e) £5,358,959 being the aggregate amount of all special items (parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (as per the table below).

	2023/24			2022/23			Council
	TAX BASE	PARISH PRECEPT £	PARISH BAND D £	TAX BASE	PARISH PRECEPT £	PARISH BAND D £	Tax Increase %
Arborfield and Newland	1,279.1	105,321	82.34	1,298.9	106,955	82.34	0.00
Barkham	2,336.8	61,185	26.18	2,158.9	73,787	34.18	(23.41)
Charvil	1,473.2	90,000	61.09	1,464.9	87,059	59.43	2.79
Earley	12,005.7	1,007,815	83.94	11,974.9	988,054	82.51	1.73
Finchampstead	6,553.7	192,154	29.32	6,295.6	184,615	29.32	0.00
Remenham	328.7	29,138	88.65	327.3	27,751	84.79	4.55
Ruscombe	580.2	28,600	49.29	545.7	29,300	53.69	(8.20)
St. Nicholas Hurst	1,106.7	54,650	49.38	1,104.0	48,400	43.84	12.64
Shinfield	7,613.2	599,570	78.75	7,356.1	552,370	75.09	4.87
Sonning	827.0	42,200	51.03	829.5	39,002	47.02	8.53
Swallowfield	1,078.6	35,487	32.90	1,077.8	32,237	29.91	10.00
Twyford	3,046.3	153,382	50.35	3,026.4	127,238	42.04	19.77
Wargrave	2,143.5	213,865	99.77	2,150.9	204,404	95.03	4.99
Winnersh	4,433.8	191,166	43.12	4,465.3	186,917	41.86	3.01
Wokingham	17,230.6	1,118,820	64.93	16,712.9	1,014,210	60.68	7.00
Wokingham Without	3,315.7	239,957	72.37	3,299.4	227,400	68.92	5.01
Woodley	10,894.3	1,195,649	109.75	10,857.8	1,225,628	112.88	(2.77)
Total / Average	76,247.1	5,358,959	70.28	74,946.3	5,155,327	68.79	2.17

(f) £1,751.84 being the amount at 3(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 3(e) above by the amount at 1(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special items relates.

4. That it be noted that for the year 2023/24 the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for the Thames Valley has issued a precept to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each category of dwellings in the Council's area as indicated in the table below.

5. That the Council in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the aggregate amounts shown in the tables below as the amounts of Council Tax for 2023/24 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings.

SUMMARY OF COUNCIL TAX 2023/2024**Valuation Bands**

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Wokingham Borough Council	1,167.89	1,362.54	1,557.19	1,751.84	2,141.14	2,530.44	2,919.73	3,503.68
Thames Valley Police Authority	170.85	199.33	227.80	256.28	313.23	370.18	427.13	512.56
Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	52.63	61.41	70.18	78.95	96.49	114.04	131.58	157.90

Aggregate of Council Tax Requirement for each parish and the borough for each part of the Council's area:-

Arborfield and Newland	1,222.78	1,426.58	1,630.38	1,834.18	2,241.78	2,649.38	3,056.96	3,668.36
Barkham	1,185.34	1,382.90	1,580.46	1,778.02	2,173.14	2,568.26	2,963.36	3,556.04
Charvil	1,208.62	1,410.05	1,611.49	1,812.93	2,215.81	2,618.68	3,021.55	3,625.86
Earley	1,223.85	1,427.83	1,631.80	1,835.78	2,243.73	2,651.69	3,059.63	3,671.56
Finchampstead	1,187.44	1,385.34	1,583.25	1,781.16	2,176.98	2,572.79	2,968.60	3,562.32
Remenham	1,226.99	1,431.49	1,635.99	1,840.49	2,249.49	2,658.49	3,067.48	3,680.98
Ruscombe	1,200.75	1,400.88	1,601.00	1,801.13	2,201.38	2,601.64	3,001.88	3,602.26
St. Nicholas Hurst	1,200.81	1,400.95	1,601.08	1,801.22	2,201.49	2,601.77	3,002.03	3,602.44
Shinfield	1,220.39	1,423.79	1,627.19	1,830.59	2,237.39	2,644.19	3,050.98	3,661.18
Sonning	1,201.91	1,402.23	1,602.55	1,802.87	2,203.51	2,604.15	3,004.78	3,605.74
Swallowfield	1,189.82	1,388.13	1,586.43	1,784.74	2,181.35	2,577.96	2,974.56	3,569.48
Twyford	1,201.46	1,401.70	1,601.95	1,802.19	2,202.68	2,603.17	3,003.65	3,604.38
Wargrave	1,234.40	1,440.14	1,645.87	1,851.61	2,263.08	2,674.55	3,086.01	3,703.22
Winnersh	1,196.64	1,396.08	1,595.52	1,794.96	2,193.84	2,592.72	2,991.60	3,589.92
Wokingham	1,211.18	1,413.04	1,614.91	1,816.77	2,220.50	2,624.23	3,027.95	3,633.54
Wokingham Without	1,216.14	1,418.83	1,621.52	1,824.21	2,229.59	2,634.97	3,040.35	3,648.42
Woodley	1,241.06	1,447.90	1,654.75	1,861.59	2,275.28	2,688.97	3,102.65	3,723.18

Aggregate of Council Tax Requirements for each part of the Council's area:-

Arborfield and Newland	1,446.26	1,687.32	1,928.36	2,169.41	2,651.50	3,133.60	3,615.67	4,338.82
Barkham	1,408.82	1,643.64	1,878.44	2,113.25	2,582.86	3,052.48	3,522.07	4,226.50
Charvil	1,432.10	1,670.79	1,909.47	2,148.16	2,625.53	3,102.90	3,580.26	4,296.32
Earley	1,447.33	1,688.57	1,929.78	2,171.01	2,653.45	3,135.91	3,618.34	4,342.02
Finchampstead	1,410.92	1,646.08	1,881.23	2,116.39	2,586.70	3,057.01	3,527.31	4,232.78
Remenham	1,450.47	1,692.23	1,933.97	2,175.72	2,659.21	3,142.71	3,626.19	4,351.44
Ruscombe	1,424.23	1,661.62	1,898.98	2,136.36	2,611.10	3,085.86	3,560.59	4,272.72
St. Nicholas Hurst	1,424.29	1,661.69	1,899.06	2,136.45	2,611.21	3,085.99	3,560.74	4,272.90
Shinfield	1,443.87	1,684.53	1,925.17	2,165.82	2,647.11	3,128.41	3,609.69	4,331.64
Sonning	1,425.39	1,662.97	1,900.53	2,138.10	2,613.23	3,088.37	3,563.49	4,276.20
Swallowfield	1,413.30	1,648.87	1,884.41	2,119.97	2,591.07	3,062.18	3,533.27	4,239.94
Twyford	1,424.94	1,662.44	1,899.93	2,137.42	2,612.40	3,087.39	3,562.36	4,274.84
Wargrave	1,457.88	1,700.88	1,943.85	2,186.84	2,672.80	3,158.77	3,644.72	4,373.68
Winnersh	1,420.12	1,656.82	1,893.50	2,130.19	2,603.56	3,076.94	3,550.31	4,260.38
Wokingham	1,434.66	1,673.78	1,912.89	2,152.00	2,630.22	3,108.45	3,586.66	4,304.00
Wokingham Without	1,439.62	1,679.57	1,919.50	2,159.44	2,639.31	3,119.19	3,599.06	4,318.88
Woodley	1,464.54	1,708.64	1,952.73	2,196.82	2,685.00	3,173.19	3,661.36	4,393.64

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TITLE	Council Response to Local Government Boundary Commission for England Consultation
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Council on 23 March 2023
WARD	None Specific
LEAD OFFICER	Chief Executive - Susan Parsonage

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is the independent body that is responsible for deciding the boundaries between the wards of Wokingham borough. It is reviewing Wokingham borough to make sure councillors represent about the same number of electors, and that ward arrangements help the council work effectively. It wants to be sure that its proposals reflect community ties and identities.

RECOMMENDATION

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

SUMMARY OF REPORT

A new pattern of wards is being developed for Wokingham Borough Council.

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is an independent body accountable to Parliament. It recommends fair electoral and boundary arrangements for local authorities in England. In doing so, it aims to:

- Make sure that, within an authority, each councillor represents a similar number of electors
- Reflect the electoral cycle so that each ward is represented by three councillors
- Create boundaries that are appropriate, and reflect community ties and identities
- Deliver reviews informed by local needs, views and circumstances

On the 31 January the LGBCE published its proposal for a new warding pattern in Wokingham. [Microsoft Word - Wokingham DR report - FINAL](#) The Commission is running a consultation on these proposals until the 10 April 2023.

The ERWG has reviewed the Commission's proposal and drafted the submission on behalf of the Council. The proposed response largely supports the Commission's proposals. The ERWG could not reach a consensus on the issue of three member wards for the Twyford and Hurst and Southern ward arrangement and this response reflects this.

The LGBCE's final recommendations are due to be published on 4 July 2023. Changes will come into effect from May 2024 when all 54 seats will be elected.

Background

At its meeting of 17 February 2022, Council received an update on the LGBCE review and agreed to set up a cross-party Electoral Review Working Group (ERWG).

On the 24 March 2022, the Council agreed the Phase 1 submission on the number of Councillors as 54 Members. On the 30 August 2022, the LGBCE supported this proposal and launched their consultation on warding arrangements on this basis. The consultation ran until the 7 November 2022.

The Council submitted its warding proposals following approval by Council on the 20 October 2022.

The LGBCE published its proposal for new warding patterns in Wokingham on the 31 January 2023. The consultation is open to anyone to submit a response prior to the deadline on the 17 April 2023.

The ERWG met on the 15 February 2023 to discuss the Council's response, work through the options and agree the Council's draft response set out in Appendix 1.

LGBCE Timeline

Stage/Action	Timescale
Preliminary Period Informal dialogue with local authority. Focus on gathering preliminary information including electorate forecasts and other electoral data. Commissioner-level involvement in briefing group leaders on issue of Council size. Meetings also held with officers, group leaders, and members.	June 2021 to February 2022
Phase 1 - Council size submission Deadline for submission by Council of proposals on Council size for the Commission to consider.	25 March 2022
Phase 1 - Council size decision LGBCE analyses submissions from local authority and/or political groups on Council size and takes a "minded to" decision on Council size.	25 March to July 2022
Formal start of Review Consultation on future warding arrangements LGBCE publishes its initial conclusions on Council size. General invitation to submit warding proposals based on LGBCE's conclusions on Council size.	August to November 2022

Development of draft recommendations Analysis of all representations received. LGBCE reaches conclusions on its draft recommendations.	December 2022 to January 2023
Consultation on draft recommendations Publication by LGBCE of draft recommendations and public consultation on them.	31 January 2023 to 10 April 2023
Final recommendations Analysis of all representations received. LGBCE reaches conclusions on its final recommendations and publishes.	4 July 2023
Order made Statutory Instrument approved.	Average likely to be 4 months from being laid i.e. November 2023
New arrangements come into place for elections on	2 May 2024

The Submission

The Electoral Review Working Group has agreed this response to the Commission's proposals. The ERWG was able to unanimously support the Commission in all wards except for "Twyford and Hurst" and "Southern" ward. The majority supported the Commission's proposals but a minority view felt that both these areas better represented their communities with a two / one member ward arrangement. We have provided both options to the LGBCE.

Ward Naming

The Commission have proposed names for each of the wards. The ERWG felt that the retention of existing warding names should be retained and have suggested that these replace the proposals.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe funding pressures, particularly in the face of the COVID-19 crisis. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.

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

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision
None.

Cross-Council Implications
The Electoral Review will result in all-out local borough elections in May 2024 which will be a significant event requiring careful planning and delivery with support from services across the Council.

Public Sector Equality Duty
The outcome of the Review will determine the number of councillors for the Borough as well as both the number of wards and ward boundaries, allowing for the most effective representation of the Borough's diverse communities.

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>
There are no specific impacts of this decision on the Council's carbon neutral objective.

List of Background Papers
Appendix A

Contact Andrew Moulton, Paul Ohsan Ellis	Service Governance
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APPENDIX 1

Wokingham Borough Council response to the LGBCE Proposals Published on 31 January 2023

The Council established a cross party electoral review working group (ERWG) in February 2022 to lead the Council's engagement on the LGBCE's electoral review. The working group met throughout the process to undertake the detailed work in providing a set of proposals for Council. On the 31 January 2023 the Commission published its proposal. The ERWG met on the 15 February to consider the proposals and draft the Council's response. The group has sought to establish consensus on the proposals. Where consensus was not possible, we have outlined the different views of the group.

The Council has endorsed this response at its meeting on the 23 March 2023 and wishes to recognise the minority view expressed in the ERWG.

The Council welcomes the Commission's proposals for the Borough and believes that they provide a good reflection of the 3 criteria:

- Equality of representation.
- Reflecting community interests and identities.
- Providing for effective and convenient local government.

Warding Arrangements

The ERWG was strongly supportive of the Commission's proposals for:

- Northern
- Woodley (North, East and South)
- Winnersh
- Wokingham (Emmbrook, Evendons, Norreys and Wescott)
- Earley (North, South West and South East)
- Shinfield
- Arborfield with Barkham
- Finchampstead
- Wokingham Without

The Council reiterates the arguments for these wards as set out in the original submission.

The Council supports the Commission's proposals for the adjustments to the wards:

- Extension of the Arborfield and Barkham boundary to the south to the Borough boundary
- Hartigan Place in Woodley moves to North Woodley
- Ryhill Way in Shinfield moves to Earley
- Ryeish Green in Shinfield moves to Southern

- Adjustment of the Emmbrook – Wescott boundary to the centre of Earle Crescent

The ERWG could not reach consensus on the following wards:

- Twyford and Hurst
- Southern

The Majority view supported the Commission’s proposals that three member wards would best support the review’s objectives. The Minority view was that a two member and one member warding arrangement would more accurately reflect the community identity of these areas. The detailed arguments for each of these views are detailed in the Council’s original submission.

Ward Naming

The Council made the following comments on the names for wards:

The ERWG supports the naming of wards proposed by the Commission for:

- Winnersh
- Wokingham (Emmbrook, Evendons, Norreys and Wescott)
- Shinfield
- Arborfield with Barkham
- Finchampstead
- Wokingham Without

The Council notes the suggestion in the consultation that ‘Wokingham Without’ be named ‘Pinewood’. The Council strongly supports ‘Wokingham Without’ given the alignment with the Parish Council and the long history of the current name.

The ERWG gave consideration to the naming convention and would suggest the following:

- Northern changed to ‘Thames Ward’
- Twyford and Hurst changed to ‘Twyford, Ruscombe and Hurst’
- North Woodley changed to ‘Bulmershe and Coronation’
- East Woodley changed to ‘Loddon’
- South Woodley changed to ‘South Lake’
- North Earley changed to ‘Maiden Erleigh and Whitegates’
- South East Earley changed to ‘Hawkedon’
- South West Earley changed to ‘Hillside’
- Southern changed to ‘Spencer’s Wood and Swallowfield’

Town and Parish Council Arrangements

The Council did not take a view on the proposed electoral arrangements for Town and Parish Councils. We believe that the warding arrangements for the Towns and Parish

Councils are principally a matter for them and that they are best placed to make representations to the Commission.

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TITLE	Changes to the Constitution
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Council, 23 March 2023
WARD	None Specific
LEAD OFFICER	Andrew Moulton, Assistant Director, Governance

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

Reviewing the Council's Constitution on a regular basis ensures that it is relevant and fit for purpose.

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

SUMMARY OF REPORT

Chapter 1.1.4 of the Council's Constitution states that the Monitoring Officer will monitor and review the operation of the Constitution to ensure that its aims and principles are given full effect.

The report contains revisions to several areas in the Constitution which were agreed by the Constitution Review Working Group (CRWG) for recommendation to the Monitoring

Officer, at their meetings on 3 February 2023, and by the Audit Committee at their meeting on 1 February.

Background

1. Chapter 4.2 – Council Rules of Procedure

Nine Council meetings of Full Council have been scheduled during the 202/23 municipal year, and concluding all the business on the agendas has not always been possible due to time constraints and the amount of business. The Working Group considered benchmarking information from the other Berkshire local authorities around the frequency and content of their Council meetings to ascertain whether changes could be proposed which may expedite the Council meeting process.

The following amendment is proposed.

4.2.9.7 Asking the Question at the Meeting [Public Questions]

At the appropriate time, the question will be displayed on the screen within the meeting room, and the relevant Member will provide an answer. If the member of the public wishing to ask a question is not present, a written answer will be provided following the meeting.

This also applies to Member questions.

~~*the Mayor/Chairman will invite the questioner to put the question to the Member named in the notice. If a questioner who has submitted a written question is unable to be present, he/she may nominate a person who is not already asking a question to put the question on his/her behalf. Alternatively the Mayor/Chairman may put the question on their behalf, or may indicate that a written reply will be given.*~~

4.2.9.8 Supplementary Question

*A questioner who has put a question **attended the meeting** in person or virtually, may also put one supplementary question without notice to the Member who has replied to his/her original question but must not include any substantial new subject matter. A supplementary question must arise directly out of the original question or the reply. The Mayor/Chairman may reject a supplementary question on any of the grounds in Rule 4.2.9.5 or if he/she feels that new subject matter is being introduced. No person asking a supplementary question shall speak for longer than one minute. If the Mayor/Chairman considers that the questioner is making a statement he/she may rule that the questioner be not heard further.*

2. Chapter 5.2 – The Executive – Composition and Areas of Responsibility

2.1 The Working Group discussed the Executive areas of responsibility and agreed that the Executive was collectively responsible for a number of different areas and that these were addressed in a corporate manner in addition to via the individual specific portfolios. The following amendment is proposed to further highlight this:

5.2.4 Scheme of Delegation to The Executive

Subject to the general reservation of powers to the Council, the Terms of Reference of the Executive shall be as follows and it shall have delegated authority to exercise and perform the Powers and Duties of the Council in relation to the following functions.

5.2.4.2 Policy Formulation and Development

- a) *to exercise overall responsibility for the corporate working of the Council and its performance **including areas allocated to specific Executive Member portfolios***;

2.2 Rule 5.2.10.24 [Executive Member responsibilities – Executive Member Environment, Sport and Leisure) currently states:

To develop and manage the Council’s approach to:

- *Travellers*
- *Flytipping*
- *Vermin*
- *Noise*
- *Bonfires*

It is proposed that this be amended as follows:

To develop and manage the Council’s approach to:

- ~~*Travellers*~~
- ~~*Flytipping*~~
- ~~*Vermin*~~
- ~~*Noise*~~
- ~~*Bonfires*~~
- **Anti Social Behaviour**
- **Community Safety**
- **Crime Reduction**
- **Prevent**

3. 8.1.1 Planning Committee terms of reference

The Working Group considered a request to update the terms of reference of the Planning Committee.

The following amendments are proposed –

8.1.1

*The Planning Committee will carry out functions relating to town and country planning, highways and public rights of way as specified in Schedule 1 to the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 (the Functions Regulations) save for those contained in Part III of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and those which have not been delegated to the Assistant Director **Planning Place and Assistant Director Delivery and Infrastructure**. The Planning Committee will determine ~~planning~~ applications **for planning permission** where the recommendation is to be as follows: -*

- a) *Approval of new full applications falling into the ‘major’ category defined by Government with the exception of **1) minerals and-or waste proposals** (see ‘e’ below) **and 2) sites which have an area of 1 hectare or more but the proposal is for 9 or less dwellings, engineering operation or the erection of a means of enclosure. For clarification, “new full applications” excludes variation (S73 and 73A) and reserved matters applications.***
- b) *Approval of any matter the Committee has resolved it wishes to consider.*

- c) *Approval of the total or substantial demolition of Listed Buildings.*
- d) *Raising no objection to consultations from other Authorities where such proposals would significantly affect the Borough.*
- e) *Approval of applications for the creation of new Minerals and/or Waste sites.*
- f) *Approval of major departures from the Development Plan.*
- g) *Approval of applications where there is a legal agreement with a financial contribution which is contested by the applicant.*
- h) *Approval of applications submitted by or on behalf of a Borough Councillor.*
- i) *Approval of applications from, by or on behalf of (either solely or jointly with any other party) the Borough Council **for schools** which give rise to the employment of any more staff or pupils; or involves a net increase in development of more than 100 sq m. of floorspace **at a school**.*
- j) *Determination of any application not in the above categories at the discretion of the **Assistant Director Planning** ~~Director Place and Growth or the Lead Specialist Development Delivery or the Lead Specialist Development Management and Enforcement.~~*
- k) *Approval of applications by or on behalf of a member of staff that has a role or involvement in the planning process, eg anyone working in the Planning or Property sections or a member of the Corporate Leadership Team.*
- l) *Applications where the Ward Member(s), or consultations where the affected Ward Member(s), wish(es) the item to be 'listed'. This is conditional in that the listing must: -*
 - i) *Be in writing and within 21 days of the notification letter;*
 - ii) *state whether it applies if the recommendation is to ~~permit~~ **approve** or refuse (not both); and*
 - iii) ***be accompanied by** ~~provide~~ a **material** planning reason for **the request** ~~doing so~~.*
 - iv) ***in the case of householder applications, the Ward Member must first discuss the application with a planning officer (i.e. before the 21 day deadline)***

4. Employee Assistance Provider Scheme

A Members question was asked at the Executive meeting on 26 January regarding whether the Employee Assistance Provider Scheme was open to Members, and the matter was referred to the Constitution Review Working Group for consideration. Clarification was sought from the Assistant Director Human Resources who indicated that the scheme could be made available to Members, and that there would be a modest cost of approximately £300 to do so. It is recommended that this take effect and that all Members be advised that they could make use of the Employee Assistance Provider Scheme.

5. Constitution Review Working Group – size

The Constitution Working Group discussed the size of the Working Group and agreed that the size of the Constitution Review Working Group should be increased to five, that two members should be members of the Opposition, and the terms of reference be amended accordingly. The Constitution Review Working is not included in the Council’s political balance calculations.

6. 4.4 Audit Committee terms of reference

At its meeting on 1 February 2023, the Audit Committee considered proposed amendments to its terms of reference in line with the latest CIPFA guidance, published October 2022. Proposed amendments to come into effect in the new municipal year are attached as Appendix 1 to the report. Council is asked to note that further clarification is being sought from CIPFA as to whether Council should be the appropriate body to approve future statement of accounts. This clarification will be brought back to Council in due course.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe funding pressures, particularly in the face of the COVID-19 crisis. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	£300	Yes	Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£300	Yes	Revenue
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£300	Yes	Revenue

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

£300 for Employee Assistance for Members.

Cross-Council Implications

None

Public Sector Equality Duty

This report has had due regard to the public sector equality duty and where applicable and available has included information relating to impacts upon people with protected characteristics and inequality.

List of Background Papers

Council’s Constitution

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AUDIT COMMITTEE

Statement of purpose

The committee's purpose is to provide an independent, objective and high-level focus on the adequacy of governance, risk and control arrangements. Its role in ensuring there is sufficient assurance over governance, risk and control gives greater confidence to all those charged with governance that those arrangements are effective.

The committee has oversight of both internal and external audit, and risk management, together with the financial and governance reports,- helping to ensure there are adequate arrangements in place for both internal challenge and public accountability.

4.4.1 Composition and Meetings

Membership of the Audit Committee will be allocated in accordance with political balance rules. In addition, two independent members will be appointed to the Committee. The Committee shall meet four times per year in accordance with a schedule agreed by Council. Additional meetings may be arranged with the agreement of the ChairmanChair. The Audit Committee may appoint specialist advisors to support it in its work if required. Funding will be secured in advance of any appointment and financial commitment on a case by case basis.

4.4.2 Restrictions on Membership

Members of the Executive and Overview and Scrutiny Committees shall not be Members of the Audit Committee.

4.4.3 Functions

4.4.3.1 Governance, risk and control

- a) To review the council's corporate governance arrangements against the good governance framework, including the ethical framework, and consider the local code of governance.
- b) To monitor the effective development and operation of risk management in the council.
- c) To monitor progress in addressing risk-related issues reported to the committee.
- d) To consider reports on the effectiveness of internal controls and monitor the implementation of agreed actions.
- e) To consider reports on the effectiveness of financial management arrangements, including compliance with CIPFA's Financial Management Code.
- f) To consider the council's arrangements to secure value for money and review assurances and assessments on the effectiveness of these arrangements.

- g) To review the assessment of fraud risks and potential harm to the council from fraud and corruption.
- h) To monitor the counter fraud strategy, actions and resources.
- i) To review the governance and assurance arrangements for significant partnerships or collaborations.

4.4.3.1 Audit Activity – Monitoring the Council's Operations

- a) ~~To approve the Head of Governance and Improvement Services' annual report and opinion, and a summary of internal audit activity (actual and proposed) and the level of assurance it can give over the Council's corporate governance arrangements. In addition to approve any significant additional consulting services engaged upon during the year, since the submission of the annual internal audit plan~~
- b) ~~To consider summaries of specific internal audit reports as requested and make recommendations as appropriate.~~
- c) ~~To consider reports dealing with the management and performance of the providers of internal audit services and make recommendations as appropriate.~~
- d) ~~To consider a report on agreed internal audit recommendations not implemented within a reasonable timescale and agree actions as appropriate. The Committee may require Directors to attend for the consideration of specific reports.~~
- e) ~~To consider the external auditor's annual letter, relevant reports, and the report to those charged with governance.~~
- f) ~~To consider specific reports as agreed with the external auditor.~~
- g) ~~To comment on the scope and depth of external audit work, to ensure it gives value for money and to make recommendations as appropriate.~~
- h) ~~To commission work from internal and external audit.~~
- i) ~~To approve the External Audit Plan.~~
- j) ~~To agree the Treasury Management Strategy and Policies prior to recommendations being made to the Executive and Council.~~
- k) ~~To monitor treasury management decisions to ensure compliance with the approved Treasury Management Strategy.~~

4.4.3.2 Financial and governance reporting

Governance reporting

- a) To review the [Annual Governance Statement \(AGS\)](#) prior to approval and consider whether it properly reflects the risk environment and supporting assurances, including the head of internal audit's annual opinion.
- b) To consider whether the annual evaluation for the AGS fairly concludes that governance arrangements are fit for purpose, supporting the achievement of the authority's objectives.

Financial reporting

- a) To monitor the arrangements and preparations for financial reporting to ensure that statutory requirements and professional standards can be met, and that reporting is objective and fair.
- b) To review the annual statement of accounts. Specifically, to consider whether appropriate accounting policies have been followed and whether there are concerns arising from the financial statements or from the audit that need to be brought to the attention of the council.
- c) To consider the external auditor's report to those charged with governance on issues arising from the audit of the accounts.

4.4.3.2 Regulatory Framework

- a) ~~To maintain an overview of the Constitution in respect of contract procedure rules and financial regulations and to make recommendations to Council as appropriate.~~
- b) ~~To compliment the work of the Standards Committee in relation to its role in promoting good governance and ensuring adherence to the Codes of Conduct for Members and Officers, making recommendations to and receiving recommendations from it as appropriate.~~
- c) ~~To review any issue referred to it by the Council, Chief Executive or Directors.~~
- d) ~~To provide an independent assurance of the adequacy of the Risk Management Strategy and the associated control environment. In particular~~
 - i) ~~To receive the annual review of internal controls and be satisfied that the Annual Governance Statement properly reflects the risk environment and any actions required to improve it;~~
 - ii) ~~To receive quarterly reports reviewing implementation of the Council's Risk Management Policy and Strategy to determine whether strategic risks are being actively managed;~~
 - iii) ~~To review, revise as necessary and recommend adoption of the Risk Management Policy and Strategy to Executive when changes occur;~~
 - iv) ~~To have the knowledge and skills requisite to their role with regard to risk management and to undertake awareness training in respect of Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) as and when specific training needs are identified.~~

- e) ~~To agree the following policies prior to their adoption being recommended to Council for inclusion in the Constitution:~~
 - i) ~~Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy;~~
 - ii) ~~Whistleblowing Policy;~~
 - iii) ~~Anti-Money Laundering Policy;~~
 - iv) ~~Prosecution and Sanction Policy; and~~
 - v) ~~Anti-Bribery Policy.~~
- f) ~~To monitor Council policies on whistleblowing and the anti-fraud and anti-corruption strategy and the Council's complaints process.~~
- g) ~~To oversee the production of the Authority's Annual Governance Statement and to recommend its adoption.~~
- h) ~~To consider the Council's arrangements for corporate governance and agree necessary actions to ensure compliance with best practice.~~
- i) ~~To consider the Council's compliance with its own and other published standards and controls and to make recommendations as appropriate.~~

4.4.3.3 Arrangements for audit and assurance

To consider the council's framework of assurance and ensure that it adequately addresses the risks and priorities of the council.

External audit

- a) To support the independence of external audit through consideration of the external auditor's annual assessment of its independence and review of any issues raised by Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) or the authority's auditor panel as appropriate.
- b) To consider the external auditor's annual letter, relevant reports [including value for money](#), and the report to those charged with governance.
- c) To consider specific reports as agreed with the external auditor.
- d) To [review the external audit plan and](#) comment on the scope and depth of external audit work and to ensure it gives value for money.
- e) To consider additional commissions of work from external audit.
- f) To advise and recommend on the effectiveness of relationships between external and internal audit and other inspection agencies or relevant bodies.
- g) To provide free and unfettered access to the audit committee chair for the auditors, including the opportunity for a private meeting with the committee.

Internal audit

- a) [To support and oversee internal audit arrangements.](#)

- b) To approve the internal audit charter.
- c) To review proposals made in relation to the appointment of external providers of internal audit services and to make recommendations.
- d) To review and scrutinise the risk-based internal audit plan, including internal audit's resource requirements, the approach to using other sources of assurance and any work required to place reliance upon those other sources.
- e) To monitor progress against the internal audit plan and approve significant interim changes to the risk-based internal audit plan and resource requirements.
- f) To make appropriate enquiries of both management and the head of internal audit to determine if there are any inappropriate scope or resource limitations.
- g) To consider any impairments to the independence or objectivity of the head of internal audit arising from additional roles or responsibilities outside of internal auditing and to approve and periodically review safeguards to limit such impairments.
- h) To consider reports from the head of internal audit on internal audit's performance during the year, including the performance of external providers of internal audit services. These will include:
 - i) updates on the work of internal audit, including key findings, issues of concern and action in hand as a result of internal audit work
 - ii) regular reports on the results of the Quality Assurance & Improvement Programme (QAIP)
 - iii) reports on instances where the internal audit function does not conform to the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) and Local Government Application Note (LGAN), considering whether the non-conformance is significant enough that it must be included in the AGS.
- i) To consider the head of internal audit's annual report, including:
 - i) the statement of the level of conformance with the PSIAS and Local Government Application Note (LGAN) and the results of the QAIP that support the statement (these will indicate the reliability of the conclusions of internal audit)
 - ii) the opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the council's framework of
 - iii) governance, risk management and control, together with the summary of the work supporting the opinion (these will assist the committee in reviewing the AGS).
- j) To consider summaries of specific internal audit reports as requested.

- k) To monitor the implementation of internal audit recommendations by management and to receive reports outlining the action taken where the head of internal audit has concluded that management has accepted a level of risk that may be unacceptable to the authority or there are concerns about progress with the implementation of agreed actions.
- l) To contribute to the QAIP and in particular to the external quality assessment of internal audit that takes place at least once every five years.
- m) To consider a report on the effectiveness of internal audit to support the AGS where required to do so by the accounts and audit regulations
- n) To provide free and unfettered access to the audit committee chair for the head of internal audit, including the opportunity for a private meeting with the committee.

4.4.3.3 Accounts

- a) ~~To agree the annual statement of accounts. Specifically, to consider whether appropriate accounting policies have been followed and whether there are concerns arising from the financial statements or from the audit that need to be brought to the attention of the Council.~~
- b) ~~To consider the external auditor's report to those charged with governance on issues arising from the audit of the accounts.~~

4.4.3.4 Accountability arrangements

- a) To report to those charged with governance on the committee's findings, conclusions and recommendations concerning the adequacy and effectiveness of their governance, risk management and internal control frameworks, financial reporting arrangements and internal and external audit functions.
- b) To report to full council on a regular basis on the committee's performance in relation to the terms of reference and the effectiveness of the committee in meeting its purpose.
- c) To publish an annual report to full Council on the work of the committee, including a conclusion on the compliance with the CIPFA Position Statement.

4.4.3.4-5 Training

To identify training opportunities for Audit Committee Members and all Members of the Council in corporate governance issues and to make recommendations as appropriate.

4.4.4 Reporting Lines

The Audit Committee shall make formal recommendations to Council as appropriate, in accordance with its functions described in [Rule 4.4.3](#). The Minutes of the Committee shall be formally recorded and received by Council. The [Chairman-Chair](#) of the Committee shall draw to the attention of Council any issues that require action.

4.4.4.1

The Audit Committee shall have clear reporting lines and rights of access to other committees and functions, and make recommendations to these bodies as appropriate.

4.4.5 Review of Terms of Reference

These Terms of Reference shall be reviewed on an annual basis. Any changes proposed by the ~~Assistant Director Governance~~~~Head of Governance and Improvement Services~~, in consultation with the ~~Chairman~~Chair, shall be submitted to the Council for approval.

4.4.6 Public and Member Questions

Public and Member questions can be asked in accordance with the requirements set out in [Chapter 4.2](#) of this Constitution.

4.4.7 Petitions

Petitions can be submitted to the Audit Committee subject to the requirements of the Council's Petition Protocol described in Chapter 3.5 of this Constitution.

4.4.8 Quorum

The quorum of a meeting of the Audit Committee shall be three.

4.4.9 Speaking Rights

A Member of the Council who is not a Member of the Committee shall be entitled to attend and speak (but not vote) at any full meeting of the Audit Committee.

Members attending under the provision shall notify the ~~Chairman~~Chair of the Committee in advance that they will be attending.

Members of the public or other organisations shall only be entitled to speak at a full meeting of the Committee by invitation from the ~~Chairman~~Chair.

4.4.10 Disturbance by Public

If a member of the public interrupts proceedings, the ~~Chairman~~Chair will warn the person concerned. If they continue to interrupt, the ~~Chairman~~Chair will order their removal from the meeting room.

If there is a general disturbance in any part of the meeting room open to the public, the ~~Chairman~~Chair may call for that part to be cleared.

4.4.11 Duration of Meeting

As set out in [Chapter 4.2](#), unless the majority of Members present vote for the meeting to continue, any meeting of the Audit Committee that has not concluded by 10.30pm will adjourn immediately. If, once a motion to continue has been proposed and seconded, the majority of Members present vote to continue, the meeting will continue for a further period not exceeding 30 minutes.

Remaining business will be considered at a time and date fixed by the [ChairmanChair](#). If he/she does not fix a date the remaining business will be considered at the next ordinary meeting.

AUDIT COMMITTEE

Statement of purpose

The committee's purpose is to provide an independent, objective and high-level focus on the adequacy of governance, risk and control arrangements. Its role in ensuring there is sufficient assurance over governance, risk and control gives greater confidence to all those charged with governance that those arrangements are effective.

The committee has oversight of both internal and external audit, and risk management, together with the financial and governance reports, helping to ensure there are adequate arrangements in place for both internal challenge and public accountability.

4.4.1 Composition and Meetings

Membership of the Audit Committee will be allocated in accordance with political balance rules. In addition, two independent members will be appointed to the Committee. The Committee shall meet four times per year in accordance with a schedule agreed by Council. Additional meetings may be arranged with the agreement of the Chair. The Audit Committee may appoint specialist advisors to support it in its work if required. Funding will be secured in advance of any appointment and financial commitment on a case by case basis.

4.4.2 Restrictions on Membership

Members of the Executive and Overview and Scrutiny Committees shall not be Members of the Audit Committee.

4.4.3 Functions

4.4.3.1 Governance, risk and control

- a) To review the council's corporate governance arrangements against the good governance framework, including the ethical framework, and consider the local code of governance.
- b) To monitor the effective development and operation of risk management in the council.
- c) To monitor progress in addressing risk-related issues reported to the committee.
- d) To consider reports on the effectiveness of internal controls and monitor the implementation of agreed actions.
- e) To consider reports on the effectiveness of financial management arrangements, including compliance with CIPFA's Financial Management Code.
- f) To consider the council's arrangements to secure value for money and review assurances and assessments on the effectiveness of these arrangements.

- g) To review the assessment of fraud risks and potential harm to the council from fraud and corruption.
- h) To monitor the counter fraud strategy, actions and resources.
- i) To review the governance and assurance arrangements for significant partnerships or collaborations.

4.4.3.2 Financial and governance reporting

Governance reporting

- a) To review the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) prior to approval and consider whether it properly reflects the risk environment and supporting assurances, including the head of internal audit's annual opinion.
- b) To consider whether the annual evaluation for the AGS fairly concludes that governance arrangements are fit for purpose, supporting the achievement of the authority's objectives.

Financial reporting

- a) To monitor the arrangements and preparations for financial reporting to ensure that statutory requirements and professional standards can be met, and that reporting is objective and fair
- b) To review the annual statement of accounts. Specifically, to consider whether appropriate accounting policies have been followed and whether there are concerns arising from the financial statements or from the audit that need to be brought to the attention of the council.
- c) To consider the external auditor's report to those charged with governance on issues arising from the audit of the accounts.

4.4.3.3 Arrangements for audit and assurance

To consider the council's framework of assurance and ensure that it adequately addresses the risks and priorities of the council.

External audit

- a) To support the independence of external audit through consideration of the external auditor's annual assessment of its independence and review of any issues raised by Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) or the authority's auditor panel as appropriate.
- b) To consider the external auditor's annual letter, relevant reports including value for money, and the report to those charged with governance.

- c) To consider specific reports as agreed with the external auditor.
- d) To review the external audit plan and comment on the scope and depth of external audit work and to ensure it gives value for money.
- e) To consider additional commissions of work from external audit.
- f) To advise and recommend on the effectiveness of relationships between external and internal audit and other inspection agencies or relevant bodies.
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- a) To support and oversee internal audit arrangements.
- b) To approve the internal audit charter.
- c) To review proposals made in relation to the appointment of external providers of internal audit services and to make recommendations.
- d) To review and scrutinise the risk-based internal audit plan, including internal audit's resource requirements, the approach to using other sources of assurance and any work required to place reliance upon those other sources.
- e) To monitor progress against the internal audit plan and approve significant interim changes to the risk-based internal audit plan and resource requirements.
- f) To make appropriate enquiries of both management and the head of internal audit to determine if there are any inappropriate scope or resource limitations.
- g) To consider any impairments to the independence or objectivity of the head of internal audit arising from additional roles or responsibilities outside of internal auditing and to approve and periodically review safeguards to limit such impairments.
- h) To consider reports from the head of internal audit on internal audit's performance during the year, including the performance of external providers of internal audit services. These will include:
 - i) updates on the work of internal audit, including key findings, issues of concern and action in hand as a result of internal audit work
 - ii) regular reports on the results of the Quality Assurance & Improvement Programme (QAIP)
 - iii) reports on instances where the internal audit function does not conform to the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) and Local Government Application Note (LGAN), considering whether the non-conformance is significant enough that it must be included in the AGS.

- i) To consider the head of internal audit's annual report, including:
 - i) the statement of the level of conformance with the PSIAS and Local Government Application Note (LGAN) and the results of the QAIP that support the statement (these will indicate the reliability of the conclusions of internal audit)
 - ii) the opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the council's framework of
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- j) To consider summaries of specific internal audit reports as requested.
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- l) To contribute to the QAIP and in particular to the external quality assessment of internal audit that takes place at least once every five years.
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4.4.3.5 Training

To identify training opportunities for Audit Committee Members and all Members of the Council in corporate governance issues and to make recommendations as appropriate.

4.4.4 Reporting Lines

The Audit Committee shall make formal recommendations to Council as appropriate, in accordance with its functions described in [Rule 4.4.3](#). The Minutes of the Committee shall be formally recorded and received by Council. The Chair of the Committee shall draw to the attention of Council any issues that require action.

4.4.4.1

The Audit Committee shall have clear reporting lines and rights of access to other committees and functions, and make recommendations to these bodies as appropriate.

4.4.5 Review of Terms of Reference

These Terms of Reference shall be reviewed on an annual basis. Any changes proposed by the Assistant Director Governance, in consultation with the Chair, shall be submitted to the Council for approval.

4.4.6 Public and Member Questions

Public and Member questions can be asked in accordance with the requirements set out in [Chapter 4.2](#) of this Constitution.

4.4.7 Petitions

Petitions can be submitted to the Audit Committee subject to the requirements of the Council's Petition Protocol described in Chapter 3.5 of this Constitution.

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The quorum of a meeting of the Audit Committee shall be three.

4.4.9 Speaking Rights

A Member of the Council who is not a Member of the Committee shall be entitled to attend and speak (but not vote) at any full meeting of the Audit Committee.

Members attending under the provision shall notify the Chair of the Committee in advance that they will be attending.

Members of the public or other organisations shall only be entitled to speak at a full meeting of the Committee by invitation from the Chair.

4.4.10 Disturbance by Public

If a member of the public interrupts proceedings, the Chair will warn the person concerned. If they continue to interrupt, the Chair will order their removal from the meeting room.

If there is a general disturbance in any part of the meeting room open to the public, the Chair may call for that part to be cleared.

4.4.11 Duration of Meeting

As set out in [Chapter 4.2](#), unless the majority of Members present vote for the meeting to continue, any meeting of the Audit Committee that has not concluded by 10.30pm will adjourn immediately. If, once a motion to continue has been proposed and seconded, the majority of Members present vote to continue, the meeting will continue for a further period not exceeding 30 minutes.

Remaining business will be considered at a time and date fixed by the Chair. If he/she does not fix a date the remaining business will be considered at the next ordinary meeting.

TITLE	Member Parental Leave Policy
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Council on 23 March 2023
WARD	(All Wards);
LEAD OFFICER	Chief Executive - Susan Parsonage

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

To adopt a parental leave policy for Members in accordance with the motion that was approved at the 20 October 2022 Council meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

To agree the Member Parental Leave Policy at Appendix A.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

Wokingham Borough Council seeks to encourage and promote equality and diversity.

The Council therefore approved a Motion at its meeting in October 2022, which agreed to introduce a 'Parental Leave Policy' for members. At present, there is no legal right for those elected as local authority councillors, to take parental leave. It is intended by the introduction of this policy, that some of the barriers which may deter people from standing for public office will be removed.

The objective of this policy is to ensure that in so far as possible Elected Members are able to take appropriate leave at the time of birth or adoption thereby increasing the likelihood that there will be a greater diversity of experience, age and background of members. In addition the policy may also assist in retaining members and making it more accessible to individuals who might otherwise feel excluded from it.

The proposal is to effectively "stop the clock" at the point leave is taken so that a Member taking parental leave does not find themselves in breach of S85(1), Local Government Act 1972 which requires members to attend at least one meeting during a consecutive period of six months.

By introducing a policy for parental leave for members which allows a member to effectively "stop the clock" whilst they are on leave, the Council will improve provision for new parents and increase the diversity of councillors an making public office more accessible.

Background

1. At the Council meeting on the 20 October 2022 Councillor Blumenthal proposed the following motion:

“At present, a Member taking leave to look after their new-born or newly adopted child could find themselves in breach of s85(1), Local Government Act 1972 (“if a member of a Local Authority fails, throughout a period of six consecutive months from the date of their last attendance, to attend any meeting of the Authority they will, unless the failure was due to some good reason approved by the Authority before the expiry of that period, cease to be a member of the Authority”).

It is therefore proposed that this Council agrees the following Motion with the intention of introducing a Leave Policy for Members who become parents. This Council therefore resolves that: The Assistant Director of Governance be commissioned to work with the Head of Legal and the Assistant Director of Human Resources, to draft a Leave Policy for Members who become parents, taking into account guidance issued by the LGA, for approval by Council at the earliest opportunity.”

2. The motion was seconded by Councillor Aktar and following a discussion was agreed by full Council.
3. A small cross-party working group was established to develop the policy. The working group comprised Councillor Bishop-Firth, Councillor Blumenthal, Councillor Burgess, and Councillor Frewin and met on two occasions; 12 December 2022, and 27 February 2023.
4. The proposed Policy sets out Councillors’ entitlement to maternity, paternity, shared parental and adoption leave and relevant allowances. The Policy is shown at Appendix A.

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)	Nil	Yes	Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	Nil	Yes	Revenue
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	Nil	Yes	Revenue

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

If an elected member has a special responsibility allowance (SRA) and is on parental leave there will be a financial implication because the role will be covered by another elected member who will also receive the SRA. However, there is sufficient headroom in the existing budget for Members Allowances to cover this eventuality.

Cross-Council Implications (how does this decision impact on other Council services, including properties and priorities?)

No specific implications.

Public Sector Equality Duty

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed and is provided at Appendix B.

Climate Emergency – *This Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to playing as full a role as possible – leading by example as well as by exhortation – in achieving a carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030*

There are no direct implications from this policy on achieving the Council's carbon neutral objective.

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2

Not applicable

List of Background Papers

Local Government Association (LGA) Guidance

Contact Andrew Moulton	Service Governance
Telephone No Tel: 07747 777298	Email andrew.moulton@wokingham.gov.uk

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Appendix 1

Version 4

DRAFT for Council Agreement

Wokingham Borough Council

Councillor Parental Leave Policy

Introduction & Legal requirements

This policy sets out the entitlement to maternity or adoption leave (together “Qualifying Parental Leave”), and relevant allowances for elected members (“Members”) of Wokingham Borough Council (“the Council”). There is no statutory right to such leave for those in elected public office, hence this policy.

For the purposes of this policy, Qualifying Parental Leave refers to family friendly policies including Maternity, Adoption, Paternity, Shared Parental Leave, Parental Leave and Parental Bereavement Leave and is completely separate to policies in place for employees of Wokingham Borough Council.

In particular, this policy seeks to ensure that Members are able to take appropriate leave at the time of birth or adoption. In addition, this policy seeks to improve provision for new parents, thereby increasing the likelihood that there will be greater diversity of experience, age, and background of Members. This policy may also assist with retaining Members and making public office more accessible to individuals who might otherwise feel excluded from it.

Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972 places a requirement on Councillors to attend a meeting of the Council within a 6 consecutive month period, unless Full Council agrees to an extended leave of absence prior to the expiration of that 6-month period. Thus, in the absence of this policy, a Member not attending a meeting of the Council within the meaning of Section 85 (a “Qualifying Meeting”) for six consecutive months due to maternity, etc, would (unless the Council specially voted to approve the particular absence in accordance with the Section) be ‘timed out’ and cease to be a Member. The Council has therefore resolved that, where a Member takes Qualifying Parental Leave in accordance with this policy, such will be taken as a good reason for absence within the meaning of Section 85 and the six month period relating to that Member (“the Period”) will be extended by up to an additional six months to a maximum of twelve months (“the Extended Period”).

It should be emphasised that there is no obligation on Members to take Qualifying Parental Leave and whether they do so or not they remain entitled to attend Council meetings in accordance with the Council’s constitution.

This Policy has been adopted by Full Council in the knowledge that any leave taken under this Policy that goes beyond 6-months (26 weeks), is an approved reason under section 85 of the Act without further Full Council approval. This is on the understanding that, for a Councillor to take advantage of this Policy, they must comply with the notification/ agreement requirements set out. Failure to do so could mean that a Councillor automatically vacates their elected office.

This policy applies to Members only - employees are covered by a number of policies (available on the HR Hub - intranet). It is the responsibility of each Member to familiarise themselves with and adhere to this policy.

The Council's Personnel Committee is responsible for reviewing the Policy from time to time and the Council's Monitoring Officer is responsible for applying it.

Purpose, Scope, and Background

The policy aims to ensure that, insofar as possible, Councillors can take appropriate leave at the time of birth or adoption; that both parents are able to take leave; and that reasonable and adequate arrangements are in place to provide cover for: Executive portfolios, other posts in receipt of Special Responsibility/ other Allowances and ward responsibilities during any period of leave taken.

Policy

1. Leave Periods

1.1. Councillors giving birth are entitled to up to 6-months (26 weeks) maternity leave from the due date, with the option to extend by up to a further 6 months (26 weeks), by agreement if required. Expectant mothers may also wish to start maternity leave earlier due to health reasons, and such a notification can be dealt with as per 5.1 below.

1.2. In addition, where the birth is premature, the Councillor is entitled to take leave during the period between the date of the birth and the due date in addition to the 6-months' period (26 weeks). In such cases any leave taken to cover prematurity of 28 days or less shall be deducted from any extension beyond the initial 6-months (26 weeks).

1.3. In exceptional circumstances, and only in cases of prematurity of 29 days or more, additional leave may be taken by agreement, and such exceptional leave shall not be deducted from the total 12 month (52-week) entitlement.

1.4. Members giving birth or adopting a child through an approved adoption agency are entitled to a maximum of six months (26 weeks) Qualifying Parental Leave and thus an Extended Period of a maximum of twelve months (52 weeks).

1.5. A Councillor who has made shared parental leave arrangements through their employment, is requested to advise the Council of these at the earliest possible opportunity. Every effort will be made to replicate such arrangements in terms of leave from Council.

1.6. Where both parents are Councillors, leave may be shared up to a maximum of 24 weeks for the first 6 months (26 weeks) and 6 months (26 weeks) for any leave agreed thereafter, up to a maximum of 50 weeks. Special and exceptional arrangements may be made in cases of prematurity.

1.7. A Councillor who adopts a child through an approved adoption agency shall be entitled to take up to 6-months (26 weeks) adoption leave from the date of placement, with the option to extend up to 12 months (52 weeks) by agreement if required. For the purposes of this Policy, surrogacy will fall under the definition of adoption and the Policy shall be applicable if a Councillor has applied for or be intending to apply for a Parental Order in

relation to the child, in which case they shall be entitled to take up to 6-months (26 weeks) leave with the option to extend up to 12 months (52 weeks) by agreement if required.

1.8. Any Councillor intending to take Qualifying Parental Leave will be responsible for ensuring that they comply with the relevant notice requirements of the Council, both in terms of the pre notification requirements for when the leave is to start, to extend their leave beyond 6-months (26 weeks) and the point at which they intend to return.

1.9. The relevant political groups/ the Council will in so far as able, facilitate any arrangements made by relevant Councillors which allow for the case work of a Councillor on Qualifying Parental Leave to be completed by another Ward Councillor, or another Councillor if that is not feasible.

1.10. The Council will ensure that the Councillor on Qualifying Parental Leave continues to have access to email and other IT provision to allow them to work from home and upon returning to their role.

1.11. Absences from Council meetings during any period of Qualifying Parental Leave will be noted as such, rather than being attributed to general absence.

1.12. If a Councillor wishes to have a keeping in touch day or attend a meeting then they should notify their Group Leader (if applicable¹) and Proper Officer as per section 5, although this will not affect any calculation of the leave periods or be taken into account for an extended leave period.

2. Basic Allowance

2.1. All Councillors shall continue to receive their Basic Allowance in full whilst on Qualifying Parental Leave.

3. Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs)/ other payments

3.1. Councillors entitled to a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) shall continue to receive their allowance in full whilst on Qualifying Parental Leave (subject to below). A Councillor in receipt of other payments not typically described as an SRA, such as being the Chair or Vice Chair of Council are also covered under this provision.

3.2. Where a Councillor is appointed to cover the period of absence, that person shall receive an SRA on a pro rata basis for the period of the temporary appointment (subject to 3.3 below).

3.3. The payment of SRAs, whether to the primary SRA holder or a replacement, during a period of maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave shall continue for a period of 6-months, or until the date of the [next Annual Meeting of the Council] or [Leader's decision on Executive appointments as confirmed at the Annual Meeting, or for such position appointed at Annual Council, or until the date when the Councillor taking leave is up for election (whichever is the sooner). At such a point, the position will be reviewed, and will be subject to a possible extension for a further 6-month period.

3.4. Should a Councillor appointed to replace the Councillor on Qualifying Parental Leave already hold an SRA position, the ordinary rules under the Members Allowances Scheme shall apply.

3.5. Unless the Councillor taking leave is removed from an Executive post by the Leader, or at an Annual Council meeting, or the Party to which they belong loses control of the Council during their leave period (and they lose that SRA post), they shall return at the end of their leave period to the same post.

4. Resigning from Office and Elections

4.1. If a Councillor decides not to return at the end of their Qualifying Parental Leave, they must notify the Council at the earliest possible opportunity. All allowances will cease from the effective resignation date.

4.2. If an election is held during the Councillor's Qualifying Parental Leave and they are not re-elected, or decide not to stand for re-election, their allowances will cease from the 4th day after the ordinary day of election when they would legally vacate office (subject to any specific legal provisions relating to a Chair of Council, Vice Chair of Council or Leader of Council).

5. Notification requirements

5.1. The Councillor must notify the Proper Officer³ by email (**to: Democratic.Services@wokingham.gov.uk**) no later than the end of the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth (maternity/ paternity), intended shared parental or adoption leave or as soon as is reasonably practicable and provide:

- (i) the week the baby/ child (in the case of adoption leave - date of placement) is due;
- (ii) the period of leave the Councillor intends to take (or in the case of paternity leave if they wish to take one or two weeks leave); and
- (iii) when they want their leave to start.

5.2 If a Councillor wishes to return from leave earlier than originally planned they should notify the Proper Officer by email (as above), who will provide confirmation that the information has been received and from what date they will resume the responsibilities of any remunerated post.

5.3 If a Councillor taking leave wishes to extend this beyond 6-months (26 weeks) (and set out in this Policy), then no later than 4 weeks before the end of the 6-month period (26 weeks), the Councillor should notify the Proper Officer in writing. The Proper Officer shall then liaise with the relevant Councillor's Group Leader to agree this, or if the Councillor is independent/ not in a group, then the Leader of Council to agree this and confirm that this is acceptable.

Appendix B

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) form: the initial impact assessment

1. Process and guidance

The purpose of an EqIA is to make sure that the council is meeting the needs of all our residents by ensuring we consider how different groups of people may be affected by or experience a proposal in different ways. EqIAs help us to meet our [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) and where applicable the [Armed Forces Duty](#)

The council has a two stage EqIA process:

- Stage 1 - the initial impact assessment
- Stage 2 - the full impact assessment.

This form is for use at Stage 1 of the process. This must be completed when undertaking a project, policy change, or service change. It can form part of a business case for change and must be completed and attached to a Project Initiation Document. The findings of the initial impact assessment will determine whether a full impact assessment is needed.

Guidance and tools for council officers can be accessed on the council's Tackling Inequality Together intranet pages.

Date started:	24 February 2023	
Completed by:	Andrew Moulton	
Service:	Governance	
Project or policy EqIA relates to:	Member Parental Leave Policy	
Date EqIA discussed at service team meeting:	N/A	

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Conclusion (is a full assessment needed?):	No	
Signed off by (AD):	A Moulton	
Sign off date:	14 March 2023	

2. Summary of the policy, project, or service

This section should be used to summarise the project, policy, or service change (the proposal).

What is the purpose of the proposal, what are the aims and expected outcomes, and how does it relate to service plans and the corporate plan?

To consider the implementation of a parental leave policy for councillors. Improved provision for new parents may contribute towards increasing the diversity of experience, age and background of the Council's elected Members alongside retaining experienced – and particularly female – councillors, alongside making public office more accessible to individuals who might otherwise feel excluded from it.

The policy is designed to give Wokingham Borough Councillors formalised access to parental leave in the case of maternity, paternity, shared parental, parental bereavement or adoption leave. It covers both birth and adoptions.

The objective of the policy is to ensure that, insofar as possible, Elected Members are able to take appropriate leave at the time of birth or adoption, that both parents are able to take leave, and that reasonable and adequate arrangements are in place to provide cover for portfolio holder and others in receipt of Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) during a period of leave taken.

How will the proposal be delivered, what governance arrangements are in place and who are the key internal stakeholders?

Full Council will sign off the policy. The Personnel Board will conduct periodic reviews, and the Monitoring Officer will be responsible for its implementation.

Who will be affected by the proposal? Think about who it is aimed at and who will deliver it.

Wokingham Borough councillors.

3. Data & Protected Characteristics

This section should be used to set out what data you have gathered to support the initial impact assessment.

The table below sets out the equality groups that need to be considered in the impact assessment. These comprise the nine protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010 and other priority areas defined by the council.

Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy/Maternity
Religious belief	Race	Sex	Sexual Orientation	Socio-economic disadvantage

The Armed Forces Act 2021 also requires consideration of the [impact on Armed Forces Communities](#) when exercising certain housing, education or healthcare functions (excluding social care). Further guidance can be found [here](#).

What data and information will be used to help assess the impact of the proposal on different groups of people? A list of useful resources is available for officers on the Council's Tackling Inequality Together intranet pages.

4. Assessing & Scoring Impact

This section should be used to assess the likely impact on each equality group, consider how significant any impacts could be and explain how the data gathered supports the conclusions made.

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Scoring impact for equality groups	
Positive impact	The proposal promotes equality of opportunity by meeting needs or addressing existing barriers to participation and/or promotes good community relations
Neutral or no impact	The proposal has no impact or no disproportionate impact.
Low negative	The proposal is likely to negatively impact a small number of people, be of short duration and can easily be resolved.
High negative	The proposal is likely to have a significant negative impact on many people or a severe impact on a smaller number of people.

Referring to the Scoring table above, please give an impact score for each group, explain what the likely impact will be, and briefly set out how the data supports this conclusion.

Equality group	Impact score	Impact and supporting data
Age	Positive impact	Improved provision for new parents may contribute towards increasing the diversity of experience and age of the Councils elected members alongside retaining experienced councillors.
Disability	Neutral	
Gender reassignment	Neutral	
Marriage and Civil Partnership	Neutral	
Pregnancy/Maternity	Positive impact	Improved provision for new parents may contribute towards retaining experienced – and particularly female – councillors
Religious belief	Neutral	
Race	Neutral	
Sex	Positive impact	Improved provision for new parents will contribute towards increasing the diversity of its elected members alongside retaining experienced Councillors, alongside making public office more accessible to individuals who might otherwise feel excluded from it.
Sexual Orientation	Neutral	
Socio-economic disadvantage	Neutral	
Armed Forces Communities	Neutral	

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5. Conclusion and next steps.

Based on your findings from your initial impact assessment, you must complete a full impact assessment if you have identified any groups as having a low or high negative impact.

If no impact, or a positive impact has been identified, you do not need to complete a full assessment. However, you must include reference to the initial assessment in any associated reports, and it must receive formal approval from the Assistant Director responsible for the project, policy, or service change.



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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TITLE	Audit Committee Annual Report 2022-23
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Council on 23 March 2023
WARD	None Specific
LEAD OFFICER	Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

This is the annual report of the Audit Committee and covers the municipal year 2022/23. The format of the report has been developed to enable the reader to form a view about the effectiveness of the Committee's activities during the year and its oversight of the Assurance and Risk Management Frameworks within which Wokingham Borough Council operates.

RECOMMENDATION

Council is asked to note the 2022/23 annual report of the Chair of Audit Committee as agreed by the Committee at its meeting of 13 March 2023.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

In accordance with CIPFA (The Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy) Audit Committee Guidelines for Local Authorities 2018, it is recommended practice for an annual public report to be produced and reported to Council demonstrating how the committee has discharged its responsibilities.

Background to Annual report of Audit Committee

A report of the activities of the committee for the financial year 2022/23 has been prepared and is included within Appendix 1.

Compliance with CIPFA's guidance for Local Authority Audit Committees 2018, demonstrates the committee's commitment to high standards and the production of the annual report demonstrates the role the committee exercises in being a key component of good governance for Wokingham Borough Council.

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

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

None.

Cross-Council Implications

None.

Public Sector Equality Duty

This is an information report – an equalities assessment is not required.

Climate Emergency – This Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to playing as full a role as possible – leading by example as well as by exhortation – in achieving a carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030

There are no direct implications impacting on the Council's carbon neutral objective.

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2

Not applicable.

List of Background Papers

None.

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WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Audit Committee Annual Report 2022/23

Foreword by Councillor Rachel Burgess - Chair of Audit Committee

I am delighted to introduce the annual report of the Audit Committee, summarising the contribution the committee made during the 2022/23 Municipal Year to the achievement of good governance, effective internal control and strong public financial management within the Council.

All Members of the committee bring a balanced, independent and objective approach to business of the committee. The committee is well supported by several officers who regularly attend meetings and offer their expertise, and I would like to thank both members and officers for their contributions this year.

The committee has provided robust challenge and meaningful review of the Council's arrangements for risk, governance and audit, and in particular has:

- Overseen the production of the Annual Governance Statement for 2021/22 and monitored the progress of improvement actions;
- Received and reviewed in detail assurance reports on the key aspects of the Council's internal control arrangements, including risk management, complaints governance and financial governance, providing robust challenge to our arrangements and monitoring for areas in need of improvement;
- Provided oversight to the Council's internal audit function, receiving the annual report and opinion alongside regular updates on progress against the internal audit plan, including follow up in relation to limited assurance reviews.
- Monitored progress of the Council's statutory accounts subject to completion of the external audit; and
- Received regular updates and formal reports from the Council's External Auditor.

The committee continues to work hard with officers to understand and strengthen governance arrangements across the Council, and to ensure that risks are escalated appropriately. During the year the committee has built upon the cycle of internal control approach to officer reporting introduced in the 20/21 municipal year, with a continued focus on ensuring that governance arrangements are robust and that there is appropriate democratic oversight.

The committee seeks to continually improve in its role. Following formal annual evaluation of the committee, a number of improvements have been introduced during the year 2022/23. These include the recruitment and subsequent appointment of an independent member of the committee, closer links and interaction between the committee Chair and the Head of Internal Audit and Investigation, a full revision of the committee's terms of reference in line with CIPFA best practice, and effective training of members, in particular with regard to risk management and the role of an effective audit committee. The appointment of a committee Chair who is not a member of the ruling party is also a positive step towards independence from politically-motivated discussion. Further improvements are planned for the forthcoming year as the committee continues to adopt a varied work programme,

receiving annual assurance reports to provide routine oversight of arrangements, but taking a flexible and agile approach, adapting to emerging issues and concerns.

Councillor Rachel Burgess

Chair Audit Committee

1. INTRODUCTION

This annual report to full council demonstrates the importance the Council places on the authority's governance arrangements. The Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) describes the overall aim of good governance as:

“to ensure that resources are directed in accordance with agreed policy and according to priorities that there is sound and inclusive decision making and that there is clear accountability for the use of those resources in order to achieve desired outcomes for service users and communities”

CIPFA Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016 Edition (the Good Governance Framework)

Good governance is ultimately the responsibility of Full Council as the governing body of Wokingham Borough Council. This report provides assurance as to the way in which the Audit Committee has discharged its role to support Full Council in this responsibility. In addition, the report underpins the Annual Governance Statement, whose production is overseen by the committee, and will be provided to all Members. In particular, the report on the work of the Council's Audit Committee demonstrates how the committee has:-

- Fulfilled its terms of reference;
- Complied with national guidance relating to local government audit committees; and
- Contributed to strengthening risk management, internal control and governance arrangements.

2. COMMITTEE INFORMATION

Role of Audit Committee

The audit committee is appointed by Council to support the discharge of its functions in relation to good governance by providing a high-level focus on audit, assurance and reporting. CIPFA defines the purpose of an audit committee as follows:

1. Audit committees are a key component of an authority's governance framework. Their function is to provide an independent and high-level resource to support good governance and strong public financial management.
2. The purpose of an audit committee is to provide to those charged with governance independent assurance on the adequacy of the risk management framework, the internal control environment and the integrity of the financial reporting and annual governance processes. Audit Committees – Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police (2018)

The Terms of Reference for the Audit Committee are reviewed regularly against current regulations, CIPFA position statement and guidance for audit committees and best practice in comparable authorities.

The latest review of the Committee's effectiveness took place in February 2023 resulting in proposed changes to the Committee's terms of reference which are included in the "Changes to the Constitution" found separately on the 23 March 2023 Council agenda.

The core functions of the committee, reflected in its Terms of Reference, are to:

- Consider the Council's arrangements relating to the Accounts;
- Consider the Council's arrangements relating to external audit requirements;
- Review the adequacy of policies and practices to ensure compliance with statutory and other guidance;
- Review the adequacy of the Council's Corporate Governance arrangements (including matters such as internal control and risk management);
- Consider the Council's arrangements relating to internal audit requirements.

Membership

The committee has seen a significant change in membership for the 2022/23 municipal year, with 6 elected members new to the committee (since 2021/22) along with the independent member appointed with effect from the September 2022 meeting. For the 2022/23 municipal year there were seven elected members and one non-voting independent member appointed to the committee:

- Councillor Rachel Burgess (Chair)
- Councillor Maria Gee (Vice Chair)
- Councillor David Davies
- Councillor Peter Harper
- Councillor John Kaiser
- Councillor Tahir Maher
- Councillor Mike Smith
- Mike Drake (Independent Member)

Independence of the committee

As a Council appointed committee, the Audit Committee is appointed in accordance with the requirements of political balance but, in line with CIPFA guidance and best practice, strives for political neutrality. Michael Drake was appointed in September 2022 as a non-voting Independent Member to the committee. The introduction of an independent member to the committee has enhanced the independence of the committee as it discharges its functions. In addition, the professional experience and knowledge of its independent member, give depth and insight to the robust challenge the committee provides in considering the assurances received.

Knowledge and Skills Framework

Members bring with them a range of knowledge and skills from their working life and elected representative roles to the work of the committee. The skills and knowledge of the committee are further complemented by those of the Independent Member, who has brought with him a wealth of knowledge and experience in an audit setting and applies this knowledge, skill and experience to Wokingham Borough Council. A programme of development has been undertaken during the year to ensure that new members of the committee have the necessary knowledge and skills to discharge the functions of the committee – this has included specific training in Risk Management (November 2022) and more general training from CIPFA on the role and functions of Audit Committees in December 2022.

Further e-briefings have been provided to the committee from, for example CIPFA, to ensure that all Members remain up to date and informed to enable fulfilment of the committee's role.

In addition the Chair attends meetings of the South East Regional Audit Forum, a body set up to share good practice and topical information with expert speakers.

The committee looks forward to participating in further development opportunities over the 2023/24 municipal year which will commence with an introductory session led by CIPFA on 25 May 2023.

Operation of the committee

The committee has met on six occasions during the year with meeting dates structured around the receipt of annual assurance reports, external and internal audit reporting cycles, and the statutory requirements for production of the Accounts and Annual Governance Statement. This frequency of meetings ensures the committee can fulfil its responsibilities in an efficient and effective way.

Following the easing of social distancing restrictions, arrangements were made to return to a full programme of in person meetings in the 2022/23 municipal year. Live streamed webcasts of each meeting allowed members of the press and public to continue accessing meetings remotely.

The committee is supported by several officers who attend regularly and bring expertise in relation to finance, corporate governance, internal audit, legal compliance, and risk management. In addition, during the year the Committee has been attended by the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive (and Chief Finance Officer), and various directors from the Corporate Leadership Team.

The work undertaken by the committee to support their approval of the Annual Governance Statement and Accounts, and in furtherance of the core functions of audit committees identified by CIPFA, is summarised in this section. The Accounts and Annual Governance Statement Council has delegated to the committee the authority to approve the Council's Annual Governance Statement and the audited Statement of Accounts on behalf of the Council.

The committee considered the 2021/22 Annual Governance Statement in July 2022, and went on to monitor implementation of improvement actions at its November 2022 meeting. As part of its review, the committee considered the Local Code of Corporate Governance, reflecting the seven principles of good governance set out in CIPFA Good Governance Framework. The committee noted that a Corporate Governance Framework which articulates the arrangements in place to meet the principles and commitments set out in the Code, will be received together with an assurance map prior to approval of the Annual Governance Statement for 2022/23.

The committee has received regular updates through the year on the auditors' sign off of the 2020/21 Statement of Accounts. During consideration of the accounts the committee sought assurance from officers on matters including the Council's MRP (minimum revenue provision) method for paying debt and received confirmation that the method is recognised in statutory guidance and in line with other authorities. Members also sought and received assurance on changes to the accounting treatment of infrastructure assets.

External Audit

The committee plays a significant role in overseeing the Council's relationship with its external auditors, and takes an active role in reviewing the external audit plan, progress reports and annual report setting out the findings of the value for money review. Ernst & Young (EY) is the Council's current appointed auditor, and will continue to audit the 2022/23 accounts, after which the appointment will come to an end.

Following consideration of other options, the committee concluded that participation in the national audit appointment scheme for appointing the external auditor from 2023/24 would produce the best outcomes for the council. The Council accepted the invitation to opt in to the appointment scheme (in January 2022) and was notified in December 2022 that the appointed external auditors from 2023/24 would be KMPG.

During the year, the committee has received regular reports and verbal updates from the external auditor setting out progress against the external audit plan for the 2021/22 accounts.

Internal Control

The committee has responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of the Council's system of internal control and management of corporate risks. Through robust consideration of annual assurance reports in relation to a wide range of internal controls the committee has obtained assurance that relevant systems and processes are documented and defined; clearly communicated; effectively embedded; meaningfully monitored; and reviewed and refined.

Internal Audit

The committee works closely with the internal audit function, both overseeing the independence and effectiveness of the service, and receiving assurance from the service as to the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's internal control environment.

The committee has received and considered regular reports from the Head of Internal Audit and Investigation throughout the year providing updates on progress against the 2022/23 Internal Audit and Investigation Plan, together with information relating to the wider work of the Internal Audit section. The committee are advised of the outcomes of every internal audit review, with greater depth, and follow up reviews, provided in relation to reviews resulting in limited assurance (category 3 level of assurance).

During the course of the 2022/23 municipal year the committee has considered one review (to date) identifying limited assurance overall:

- Debtors

The committee also receives a wide range of assurance in relation to the soundness of the council's arrangements through the reporting of Internal Audit work in addition to the formal reviews undertaken, for example

- work to support the Council's Covid-19 and other support grant claims, providing assurance that internal controls are in place and good governance is adhered to.

In June 2022, the committee received and considered the Internal Audit & Investigation Annual Report and noted a satisfactory overall opinion for 2021/22. The committee was satisfied that the work undertaken to support the opinion has been conducted in accordance with an established methodology that promotes quality and conformance with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing – what about PSIAS. The committee reviewed and agreed the annual risk based audit plan for the 2022/23 year in March 2022.

LOOKING FORWARD

The committee will approve its work programme for the 2022/23 municipal year at its June 2023 meeting setting out the receipt of regular update reports and annual assurance reports. Through the continuing receipt of regular reports the Audit Committee will provide the usual level of robust challenge to corporate governance and audit practice and procedure across the authority to ensure that our arrangements are up to date and fit for purpose, communicated, embedded and routinely complied with.

TITLE	Overview and Scrutiny Committees – Annual Reports
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Council on 23 March 2023
WARD	None Specific
LEAD OFFICER	Graham Ebers, Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Resources and Assets

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

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 residents of the Borough.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council notes the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Reports for 2022/23.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The role of Overview and Scrutiny is to hold decision makers to account, both inside and outside the Council. The Overview and Scrutiny Committees provide independent “critical friend” challenge to the Council and other public service providers across the Borough.

The Committees also play a role in developing and reviewing policy and ensuring that the Council and its partners are working effectively to improve services for residents, businesses and visitors. Effective scrutiny is an important element of the successful functioning of local democracy.

The Council’s Constitution requires each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees to submit an Annual Report. The Annual Reports are appended to this report. The Annual Reports give details of the issues considered during the year and the impact of the Scrutiny process on the Council and the wider community.

Background

The Council's Constitution requires the Overview and Scrutiny Committees to submit Annual Reports setting out a summary of activity during the previous year and analysis of the impact of Scrutiny on the Borough.

The Annual Reports for 2022/23 are attached. The reports highlight some of the key challenges facing the Council, the issues considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees during the year and Scrutiny's impact on the Council and the wider community.

During 2022/23, the Council commissioned an external review of the Overview and Scrutiny function. The review concluded that the Council had in place the foundations for an effective Scrutiny function. Members and officers will continue to make positive changes to ensure that Overview and Scrutiny adds value to the democratic process at Wokingham Borough Council.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe funding pressures, particularly in the face of the COVID-19 crisis. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.

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

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

None.

Cross-Council Implications

The work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees impacts on all areas of the Council's operations along with other public service providers.

Public Sector Equality Duty

The Council's Equality Plan is scrutinised each year by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee. The Overview and Scrutiny Committees also examine Equality Impact Assessments relating to service and policy changes.

Climate Emergency – ***This Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to playing as full a role as possible – leading by example as well as by exhortation – in achieving a carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030***

During 2022, a Climate Emergency Overview and Scrutiny Committee was established. The Committee will scrutinise progress against the targets in the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan.

List of Background Papers
None

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WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Committees

Annual Reports 2022/23

Produced: February 2023
Received by Council: March 2023

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**Foreword by Councillor Jim Frewin,
Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny
Management Committee**

Welcome to the Annual Reports of Wokingham Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees for 2022/23.

The role of Overview and Scrutiny is to hold decision makers to account, both inside and outside the Council. The Committees provide independent "critical friend" challenge to the Council and other public service providers across the Borough. The Committees also play a role in developing and reviewing policy and ensuring that the Council and its partners are working effectively to improve services for residents, businesses and visitors. Effective scrutiny is an important element of the successful functioning of local democracy.

In addition to the usual scrutiny of key services and new policy initiatives, an important aspect of the past year has been a thorough review of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny function. At the core of this work was an external review by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny, a nationally recognised team of experts. The review found that the Council had the foundations for an effective scrutiny function with a number of areas that could be strengthened. These included closer working with the Council's Executive and management team and a more focused approach – fewer issues scrutinised in greater detail. Following the review we have implemented a number of changes and are confident that, moving forwards, Overview and Scrutiny will provide more effective challenge and support to the decision making process at the Council.

As we move into 2023/24, we can all see the serious challenges facing the Council and the Borough. The cost of living crisis, high inflation, increasing demand for key services, recruitment and retention of key staff, climate emergency and pressure for new development have created significant challenges for the organisation. It is vital, therefore, that Overview and Scrutiny provides constructive challenge to ensure that public money is spent wisely, the Council continues to innovate and work in effective partnerships and our most vulnerable residents receive the services they need.

The Annual Reports for 2022/23 demonstrate the wide range of issues considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees. They reflect the hard work and commitment of residents, community groups, Members and officers who contributed during the year.

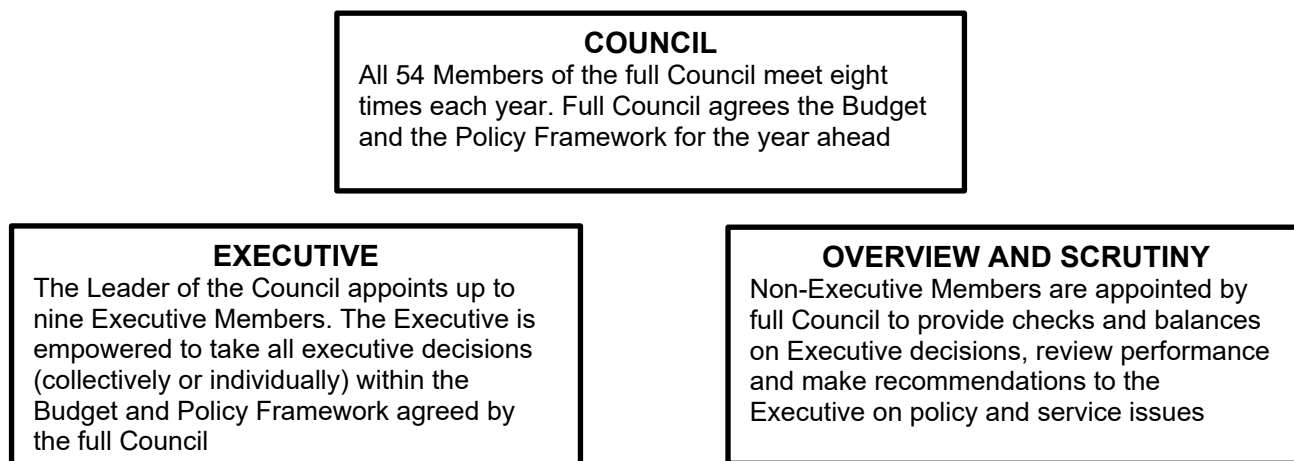
Jim Frewin

SECTION 1 – WHAT IS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY?

Wokingham Borough Council is a large, complex organisation with over a thousand employees and an annual budget of £154m. The Borough’s Community Vision (February 2020) is to make the Borough “a great place to live, learn, work and grow and a great place to do business”. The Council makes major strategic decisions which affect the long-term future of the area and its communities. It also makes decisions on a daily basis which affect the lives of some of the Borough’s most vulnerable residents. Other public service providers such as the NHS, Thames Valley Police and the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service also make key decisions which affect the residents of the Borough. In order to ensure that the Council and other service providers spend public money wisely and make well informed decisions about key services, it is essential that an effective system of checks and balances is in place.

A distinction is drawn between “Overview” which focuses on the development of policy and “Scrutiny” which looks at decisions that have been made, or are about to be made, to ensure that they are fit for purpose. In this document “Scrutiny” refers to both Overview and Scrutiny. Scrutiny is based on the Parliamentary select committee model of governance where MPs, who are not part of the Government, hold inquiries into issues of public interest and make recommendations for change. In the Council model, the Scrutiny Committees make recommendations for change to the Executive. Scrutiny meetings are held in public. Residents and community groups are encouraged to participate by asking questions and raising issues of community interest for investigation and debate.

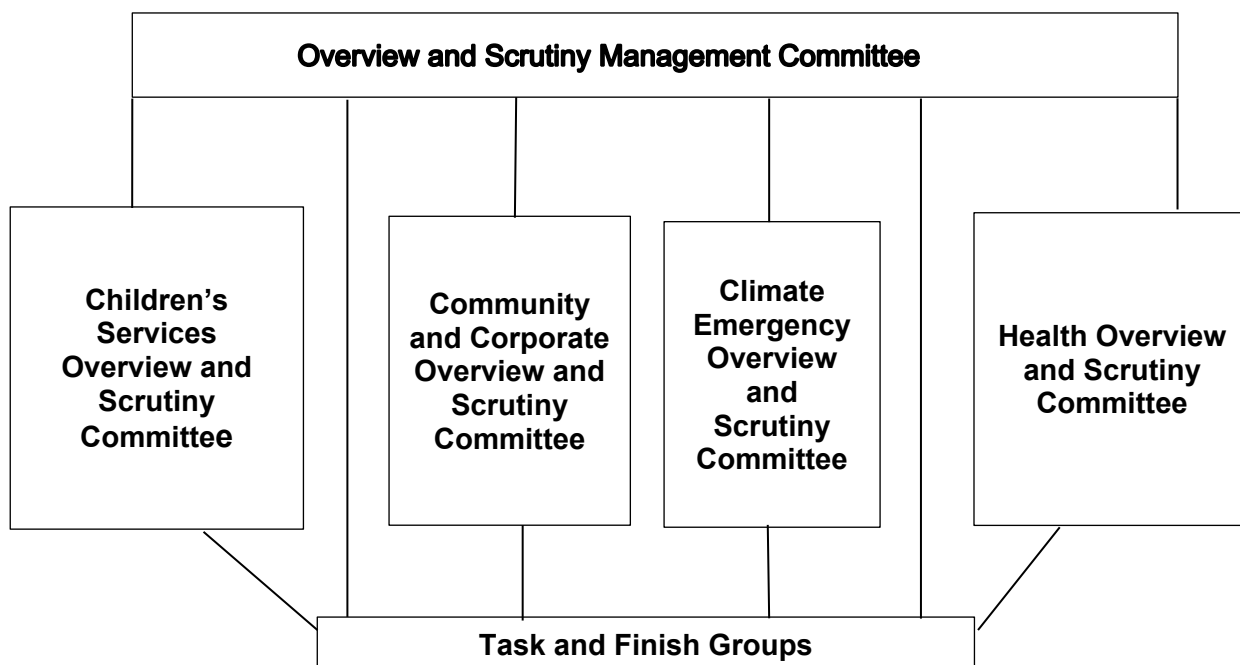
The Council’s Executive takes decisions within the financial and policy framework set by the full Council. Non-Executive Members of the Council (representing each of the political groups) are appointed to the Council’s Overview and Scrutiny Committees to review those decisions and the performance of key services. The relationship between Council, Executive and Overview and Scrutiny is illustrated in the diagram below:



In order to deliver the Overview and Scrutiny function the Council has established the following Committees:

- Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee – responsible for overseeing the Scrutiny function and developing an annual work programme for each of the Committees.
- Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee – responsible for scrutiny of services relating to schools, safeguarding and child protection, looked after children and children with special educational needs and disabilities.
- Climate Emergency Overview and Scrutiny Committee – responsible for scrutiny of the Council’s Climate Emergency Action Plan and the ambition to achieve “net zero” by 2030.
- Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee - responsible for scrutiny of Council services, crime reduction and community safety and flood risk management.
- Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee – responsible for scrutiny of local NHS bodies, public health arrangements and the work of the Local Healthwatch service.

The Committees consider issues at their regular meetings or by setting up time-limited Task and Finish Groups. The Council’s Overview and Scrutiny structure is illustrated below:



Four Principles of Effective Scrutiny

- Constructive “critical friend” challenge to the Executive and external service providers;
- Channelling the “voice” of the public and representing all the Borough’s residents;
- Members reaching bipartisan conclusions based on the weight of evidence;
- Driving continuous improvement which promotes community wellbeing and quality of life.

Limitations

Scrutiny is not about the investigation of minor matters or individual complaints. The Council has a separate corporate complaints procedure which is used to investigate individual complaints about services. Similarly, Scrutiny does not look at quasi-judicial matters such as planning or licensing issues. Finally, Overview and Scrutiny is not used for raising issues of a party political nature. These matters can be addressed through debate at full Council meetings.

SECTION 2

REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE



**Jim Frewin, Chair of the
Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee**

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee has three important roles. Firstly, to develop, oversee and monitor the annual work programmes of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees. Secondly to investigate specific issues within its own work programme. Thirdly, to ensure that Scrutiny Members have the relevant skills, training and support.

During 2022/23, the Committee scrutinised a number of important issues affecting residents of the Borough. The Committee met with the Council Leader and Chief Executive to discuss priorities over the year ahead and considered a number of other issues including the quarterly performance management report on key services, the Council's approach to business change and customer excellence, the proposed Barkham Solar Farm, changes to the waste service, consultation and engagement and the implementation of Motions approved by Council.

The Committee held two "Call-In" meetings in October 2022, to review decisions relating to the removal of green food waste caddy liners and the proposed changes to off-street car park charges. These meetings provided robust challenge to decision makers and included the consideration of evidence provided by residents and local groups.

The Committee also established a new Overview and Scrutiny Committee relating to Climate Emergency. The Committee met for the first time in January 2023. It will scrutinise the implementation of the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan and progress towards the achievement of "net zero".

Looking ahead, the Management Committee will continue to focus on initiatives to strengthen the Overview and Scrutiny process. This will build on the outcomes of the review carried out by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny, including further emphasis on pre-decision scrutiny and policy development, additional training and support for Members, greater involvement from residents and community groups and closer liaison with the Council's Executive. In relation to the latter, regular informal meetings have been diarised with the Chair, Vice-Chair, Leader and Chief Executive in order to ensure that the Executive and Overview and Scrutiny are working together effectively.

Further initiatives to strengthen the Overview and Scrutiny function include:

- Seeking to gain earlier sight of strategic initiatives and issues to better enable early Scrutiny.
- Initiating a review of how to improve Overview opportunities to all Members.
- Seeking to better align forward plans to strategic initiatives and issues.
- Undertaking a review of the culture of meetings to better meet the four principles of effective Scrutiny.
- Actively seeking review and feedback across multiple internal and external sources to assist improved Overview and Scrutiny.

Finally, I would like to thank the Members, officers, residents and community groups who contributed their time, effort and insights during the year.

Jim Frewin

Remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee oversees the Council's Scrutiny function and is responsible for developing and co-ordinating the work programmes and support for the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Membership

Councillor Jim Frewin (Chair).

Councillors Andrew Mickleburgh (Vice-Chair), David Cornish, Andy Croy, Peter Dennis, Graham Howe, Norman Jorgensen, Pauline Jorgensen, Adrian Mather, Stuart Munro and Alison Swaddle.

Substitute Members: Gary Cowan, Michael Firmager, Chris Johnson, Morag Malvern, Charles Margetts, Alistair Neal, Beth Rowland, Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey and Wayne Smith.

Officer contact: Neil Carr neil.carr@wokingham.gov.uk

Highlights from the Year

Scrutiny Improvement Review

The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny carried out a review of the Council's Scrutiny function in the summer of 2022. This involved observation of Scrutiny meetings together with on-site interviews with Members and officers. The review concluded that "the conditions for successful Scrutiny are clearly present at Wokingham BC. There is a shared understanding from Members and officers that good governance involves Scrutiny and, when used effectively, Scrutiny can add value to decision making".

Leader and Chief Executive

It was agreed that the Council Leader and Chief Executive would attend the meeting every six months in order to provide an update on the challenges facing the Council, service and cross-cutting priorities. The challenges identified included increasing budget pressures, ongoing recovery from the Covid pandemic, inflation and the cost of living crisis and the impact of increasing demand for services, often with an increased level of complexity and cost. Members sought details on issues such as the number of new houses being built in the Borough, transparency relating to financial decisions and the impact of potential changes to the delivery and funding of Adult Social Care.

Performance Management

The Committee received quarterly Performance Management reports setting out details of the Council's performance against a number of financial and operational indicators. Members used the quarterly data to probe on areas of underperformance and select issues for more in-depth scrutiny. The importance of genuinely SMART targets (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timely) was stressed. Executive Members were invited to attend the meetings in order to provide evidence on recent service issues based on the most up-to-date information.

Barkham Solar Farm

The Committee scrutinised the business case for the proposed Barkham Solar Farm which was a specific project within the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan. Members examined the latest forecasts of income and expenditure for the 25 year life of the project and reviewed the process for procuring a contractor to construct the solar farm. The Committee supported the proposal in principle whilst raising a number of detailed issues with the Executive. These included a recommendation that the Council lobby the Government and energy companies over the cost of grid connection, in order to ensure that charges were realistic and viable.

Consultation and Engagement

The Committee scrutinised the Council's approach to consultation and engagement with residents and stakeholders. Consultation took place in order to inform effective decision making. There were issues on which the Council was statutorily required to consult and issues upon which the Council could choose to consult. Members emphasised the importance of a consistent approach and supported the development of a Consultation Protocol setting out key principles and procedures in order to ensure transparency and better decisions.

Customer Excellence

The Committee received updates on the Council's Customer Excellence Programme. The Council had agreed and reported on Key Performance Indicators, but there were few indicators which measured how residents received services and how they felt about the quality of services. The Customer Excellence Programme had been established to address these issues and was working on issues such as language and clarity of written communications. The Committee highlighted the need for measurement of the resident experience to supplement existing financial and operational performance indicators. This has resulted in an initiative to deliver such measures across all services during 2023/24.

Member Training

The Committee recognises the importance of ongoing training and development to ensure that Members' skills and knowledge are constantly upgraded. Training sessions were held during the year on key elements of effective Overview and Scrutiny including preparing for meetings, whilst a specific session was held on Budget Scrutiny which assisted Members involved in Scrutiny of the Council's Budget process and procedures. Specific training and development was also provided for Scrutiny Chairs.

Scrutiny Impacts

Effective Scrutiny should have a defined impact on the ground, with the Committees making recommendations that make a tangible difference to the work of the Council and other public service providers. Over the past year the following impacts are highlighted:

- Leader and Chief Executive – regular attendance at the Committee (supported by increased informal contact) in order to identify opportunities and threats facing the Borough and to ensure that the Executive and Scrutiny are working in a complementary way.
- Climate Emergency – establishing a new Overview and Scrutiny Committee which will provide detailed Scrutiny of progress towards the achievement of “net zero”, including communication and engagement with residents and local stakeholders.

SECTION 3

REPORT OF THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



Andrew Mickleburgh, Chair of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Committee's work is split almost equally between children's social work and educational attainment. As well as monitoring all the recommendations put in place by earlier Committees, the new work that has been carried out is outlined below. This keeps the Committee in touch with how the Service and schools are performing.

This year the Service has had to deal with significant financial pressure due to the rise in demand for services and inflation. The Committee was keen to monitor and support the Council's efforts to help the community during the current cost of living crisis.

I would like to thank all members of the Committee and the substitutes for their commitment to and interest in the work that we do, and for all the positive and genuinely useful contributions that they have made.

Andrew Mickleburgh

Remit of the Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee is responsible for scrutiny and policy development in relation to services for children and young people. This includes schools, early years’ settings and children’s centres, safeguarding and child protection, children in care, and services for children with special educational needs and disabilities.

Membership:

Councillors: Andrew Mickleburgh (Chairman), Shirley Boyt (Vice-Chairman), Morag Malvern, Beth Rowland, Anne Chadwick, Graham Howe and Pauline Helliard-Symons

Substitute Members:

Councillors: Alistair Neal, Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey, Gary Cowan, Chris Johnson, Alison Swaddle, Laura Blumenthal and Rebecca Margetts

Church of England Representative

Fr Richard Lamey

Community Representative

Sarah Clarke – Wokingham SEND Voices

Roman Catholic Representative – one vacancy

Parent Governor - two vacancies

Officer contact: Luciane Bowker

luciane.bowker@wokingham.gov.uk

Highlights from the Year

Co-opted Members

The Committee was pleased to welcome two new members to join its membership: Fr Richard Lamey joined representing the Church of England Diocese and Sarah Clarke joined as a community representative from Wokingham SEND Voices.

Key Performance Indicators

The Committee received reports outlining the KPI’s for the Service and regularly monitored their performance. Wokingham has high aspirations and Members have challenged the Service to achieve a high level of performance in all areas of work. Where improvement was needed, the Committee sought to monitor the implementation and development of improvement plans.

Education Updates

The Committee continued to closely monitor the performance of schools and children’s educational attainment. The new Borough Education Partnership (BEP) is a welcome development. The BEP aims to provide a place for strategic leaders from the education sector, the local authority and others involved in the delivery of education, to get together to develop strategic plans for the future of education in the Borough.

The Committee is keen to support the Council in its participation in the Safety Valve Programme. It is positive that action is being undertaken to find a solution to the deficit in the DSG. The Committee was informed of the many strands of work being developed to deliver savings and efficiencies through the SEND Innovation and Improvement Plan (IIP) and the new SEND Strategy.

The Committee re-established the Part 2 Schools Causing Concern standing item. The purpose of this item is to inform local ward Members, at an early stage, of schools within their ward that are at the risk of underperforming, Local ward Members are invited to attend this session and take part in the discussions about improvement plans.

The Committee received a comprehensive Education Update, outlining all the key strands of work which fall within the remit of Children's Services.

Updates from the Executive Member for Children's Services

The Executive Members for Children's Services, Councillor Prue Bray, was invited and in attendance at most meetings. This gave the Committee an opportunity to be informed of the new trends of work and current priorities. The Committee was therefore able to express its views, early on, in the development of strategies and policies.

Update on Children's Strategy Delivery

The progress in delivering the strategy was welcomed. Some challenges were highlighted, such as the growing demand for services, increased complexity of cases and ongoing issues related to staff retention.

Impact of the Cost of Living Crisis

The Committee welcomed a presentation from members of the Hardship Alliance, outlining the work which was being undertaken to help children and families in the borough who were struggling with the increased cost of living. The Committee developed a set of recommendations to strengthen the local authority's bid to lobby the government for more funding to help those people in the community who were struggling in this difficult time.

Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Annual Report, Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) Annual Report and Child Protection Annual Report

The Committee received with much interest the reports listed above in relation to children's social care. Although Wokingham has one of the lowest levels of Children in Care, it remains vital that the performance of services relating to children's social care is monitored closely; high performance in this area of work is expected.

Accommodation Issues Linked to Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

The number of UASC has been increasing, therefore more accommodation is needed. The Committee will continue to monitor the plans to continue to provide suitable accommodation within the Borough.

Youth Council

The Committee received the Youth MP and was keen to learn the priorities and aspirations of the Youth Council. It was agreed that the work of the Youth Council would be promoted at Council meetings.

Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership

The Committee received the chairman of the BWSCP and was very interested in the work that has been carried out by the partnership. The Committee will continue to support and promote its work.

Surveys by Wokingham SEND Voices

The Committee held robust discussions about the results of surveys undertaken by Wokingham SEND Voices, namely the annual survey and the travel survey. The Committee challenged the service to continue the improvement of services to SEND children in the Borough.

Scrutiny Impacts

- Improved transparency and accountability across all services.
- Strengthened the Council's lobbying efforts to bid for better funding.
- Supported the Council in its efforts to help the community during the current cost of living crisis.
- Challenge and support the service to continue improving the outcomes for children and young people in the Borough.

SECTION 4

REPORT OF THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



Andy Croy, Chair of the Climate Emergency Overview and Scrutiny Committee

In July 2019, Wokingham Borough Council declared a Climate Emergency. The Council committed to “playing as full a role as possible in achieving a net carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030”. The Council pledged to develop a Climate Emergency Action Plan and to submit annual updates showing progress on individual carbon reduction targets.

The Climate Emergency Action Plan (published in January 2020) focussed on eight priority areas for carbon emission reductions, including transport, homes, businesses and waste. The Action Plan also set out proposals to generate renewable energy, increase carbon sequestration and strengthen the planning process to deliver carbon neutral construction and infrastructure. Finally, the Action Plan set out proposals for engagement with residents, schools, businesses and local stakeholders as well as ideas to promote positive behaviour changes.

In February 2020, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee established the Climate Emergency Task and Finish Group to scrutinise the Council’s Climate Emergency Action Plan and to assess the level of carbon reduction to be delivered by the Action Plan in light of the Council’s 2030 “net zero” target. The Task and Finish Group delivered two reports (2020 and 2021) with a number of recommendations, the majority of which were accepted by the Executive.

In recognition of the ongoing importance of achieving the targets in the Climate Emergency Action Plan, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee decided to establish a stand-alone Climate Emergency Overview and Scrutiny Committee which met for the first time in January 2023. The aim of the Committee is to act as a “critical friend” to scrutinise and support the delivery of the Climate Emergency Action Plan. In so doing, the Committee will draw upon the knowledge and experience of Members, officers and external experts in order to develop recommendations which strengthen the Council’s response to the climate emergency and ensure progress towards the “net zero” ambition.

Andy Croy

Remit of the Climate Emergency Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The role of the Climate Emergency Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to scrutinise and assist with policy development relating to the Council's commitment to play as full a role as possible to reduce the Borough's carbon footprint to be Net Zero by 2030. This involves monitoring the implementation of the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan including the examples of Climate Emergency "best practice" from other public or private sector organisations.

Membership

Councillor Andy Croy (Chair).

Councillors Chris Johnson (Vice-Chair), David Cornish, Michael Firmager, Norman Jorgensen, Gregor Murray and Rachelle Shepherd-Dubey.

Substitute Members: Councillors Peter Dennis, Graham Howe, Pauline Jorgensen, Andrew Mickleburgh, Alistair Neal and Beth Rowland.

Officer contact: Neil Carr neil.carr@wokingham.gov.uk

Priorities for 2023/24

As the Committee only met for the first time in January 2023, this section highlights some of the areas of the Climate Emergency Action Plan to be scrutinised in the year ahead:

- Ensuring that the Borough Tree Strategy and tree planting projects are progressing;
- Scrutinising plans to manage traffic, congestion, and car emissions within the Borough;
- Exploring what local electricity providers are doing to improve the local network;
- Scrutinising the home decarbonisation service;
- Monitoring the delivery and operation of WBC's solar farms;
- Ensuring that updated planning guidance made provisions for suitable environmentally friendly requirements, which were enforceable wherever possible;
- Reviewing recommendations from the 'Let's talk Climate' event;
- Understanding the impacts of behavioural change programmes;
- Understanding how WBC could work better in partnership with the business community in order to achieve the net-zero ambition;
- Reviewing the need for and delivery of an energy strategy;
- Reviewing what changes have been made to the CEAP following the recommendations from the two Climate Emergency Task and Finish Group reports.

SECTION 5

REPORT OF THE COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



**Peter Dennis, Chair of the
Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

During the past year, the Committee has continued its focus on the delivery of Council services to ensure that they provide value for money for the Borough's Council Taxpayers. Executive Members and officers were invited to attend meetings of the Committee to give evidence and answer questions on priorities and performance. Conducting Committee meetings in a hybrid format has allowed greater access and convenience for the public to engage with the Overview and Scrutiny process.

This year marked the fourth consecutive year that Overview and Scrutiny have looked at the proposed Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) in detail, prior to its journey through the February 2023 Executive and Budget Council meetings. This exercise has continued to add value to the Budget setting process by challenging Executive Members and Directors to explain the rationale for spending proposals in a clear and understandable way. Due to unprecedented pressure on Council finances, the Scrutiny input has been more critical than ever this year.

The Committee considered a range of other issues during the year including receiving the annual update from the Community Safety Partnership, consideration of the draft Bus Service Improvement Plan, and receiving details of the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy. The Committee successfully established two Task and Finish Groups, and produced two sets of Recommendations to the Executive. The first Task and Finish Group considered how WBC worked with our preferred registered partners (social housing providers), whilst the second reviewed the draft Local Cycling, Walking and Infrastructure Plan document.

In developing its work programme the Committee is keen to ensure that the "voice" of local residents and community groups plays a bigger part in its deliberations. The Committee recognises that involving residents, community groups and local "experts" in Overview and Scrutiny reduces the risk of a partisan approach as Members are able to hear directly from those stakeholders whose interests they are representing. The Committee will continue to promote greater public involvement in Overview and Scrutiny over the coming year and will share any relevant learning with the other Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

I thank the Members of the Committee, officers, residents and other stakeholders who took part in our meetings for their valuable contributions during the year.

Peter Dennis

Remit of the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee is responsible for the scrutiny of internal Council operations and partnership working across the Borough. It also has responsibilities under the Police and Justice Act 2006 which involves oversight of the operation of the Borough's Community Safety Partnership. The Committee is also responsible for the scrutiny of flood risk management.

Membership

Councillor Peter Dennis (Chair).

Councillors David Cornish (Vice-Chair), Laura Blumenthal, Shirley Boyt, Chris Johnson, Norman Jorgensen, Pauline Jorgensen, Gregor Murray and Alistair Neal

Substitute Members: Councillors Chris Bowring, Anne Chadwick, Gary Cowan, Andy Croy, Michael Firmager, Abdul Loyes, Adrian Mather, Beth Rowland and Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey

Officer contact: Callum Wernham: callum.wernham@wokingham.gov.uk

Highlights from the Year

Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2023-26

The Committee undertook a detailed overview of the proposed 2023-26 MTFP. Executive Members and Directors were invited to attend the meetings to present their bids and explain in detail how the requested funding would be used to deliver key services. Members welcomed the continued inclusion of 'plain English' detailed bid sheets which provided key figures and descriptive narratives in a format that Members and members of the public could understand and interpret. The Committee probed bids within key service areas, including a demand management strategy within Children's Services, a new dementia care home within Adult's Social Care, income generation projects within Resources and Assets, substantial capital bids for example highways infrastructure within Place and Growth, and the delivery of a new website for WBC. The role of the Committee was to challenge assumptions within the budget setting process and to encourage key decision makers to think about their proposals from a different perspective. The Committee appreciated this continued level of transparency on the proposed MTFP and budget setting process, and looked forward to this process continuing and improving in future years.

Preferred Registered Providers Task and Finish Group

The Committee established a Task and Finish Group to review how tenants of housing associations on WBC's preferred list (preferred registered providers (PRPs)) might see improvements in the services they received in future. The selection process for WBC's new list of PRPs was underway, which would require them to enter into an agreement with WBC about how, as partners, services would be delivered for tenants. The Task and Finish Group sought evidence from a range of stakeholders, including tenants and professional bodies, and provided a set of Recommendations for improvement for consideration by the Executive. The Committee hopes that this will improve tenant engagement, ensure that tenants had a voice, and provided tenants with maintained contact details of local housing officers employed by their PRP.

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

The Committee established a Task and Finish Group to review the draft LCWIP document, prior to consideration at the Executive. The Group made a number of Recommendations for improvement to the Executive, including questioning the age and validity of some of the datasets referenced within the report, and suggesting additions including information relating to safe cycle storage. The Committee hopes to continue this Task and Finish Group going forwards, to review the LCWIP document on a 6-monthly basis and to review schemes, alongside relevant Ward Councillors and Town and Parish Council representatives, prior to public consultation as they progressed through to the detailed design stage

Cost of Living Crisis Response

An update was provided on the joint response between WBC and the Hardship Alliance to the ongoing cost of living crisis. The Committee considered representations from Citizens Advice Wokingham and First Days on the ongoing partnership working between the Alliance and WBC. The Committee requested that officers continued to explore any opportunities for additional grant funding from Central Government, and recommended that a cross-party letter be written (including a policy statement from Citizens Advice) which raised concern about how defaulting customers were being treated, including by being placed on prepayment meters.

Scrutiny Impacts

- Budget and budget setting process transparency – information regarding the budget and the budget setting process has been thoroughly reviewed by the Committee, and made publicly available in an easy to read ‘plain English’ format. Transparency around crucial issues such as the Budget forms an essential part of the checks and balances that Overview and Scrutiny provides. A number of suggestions for savings were provided by the Committee, including the review of self-insurance opportunities exploration of increased advertisement revenue.
- The Committee will review the detail regarding the approximate £100m held in earmarked reserves during the next municipal year. The Committee felt it important for Members to have a better understanding of the different reserves maintained by WBC, their purpose, the risks they mitigated against, and the potential to utilise them if necessary.
- Two sets of recommendations have been submitted to the Executive for consideration. These recommendations seek to improve how WBC works with our Preferred Registered Providers, and improve the core LCWIP document and provide ongoing Overview and Scrutiny of the document and individual schemes as they developed.
- Close working relationship with Executive Members and Directors – Executive Members and Directors were invited to, and attended, a number of Committee meetings. Answers to Member queries were frank and detailed, providing a solid foundation for transparent Overview and Scrutiny.
- Oversight of delivery of key Council Services – continued monitoring of key Council Services to ensure that they are delivering value for money for residents. Probing Services to think about service delivery and value for money is key in delivering cost effective services for residents. Services demonstrated continued resilience in delivering vital services during periods of national restrictions due to the ongoing pandemic.

SECTION 6

REPORT OF THE HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



**Adrian Mather, Chair of the
Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

This year, significant change in the healthcare setup and delivery has started. The joining together of Berkshire West, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire into a much larger Integrated Care System (ICS), with its board (ICB) and partners (ICP). The Wokingham Borough Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee is reaching out to all parties to understand the changes and the effects on the delivery of health services to our residents in Wokingham Borough.

During the year we have focused on our primary responsibility of scrutinising local health service delivery, including the delivery of social care to our residents, NHS Dental provision, GP practices and GP services.

In addition, the Committee wants to be forward looking. We are engaging with our Health scrutiny colleagues in Berkshire West, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire to initiate scrutiny at the larger Integrated Care System (ICS) and all associated responsible partners. We also want to engage and where possible, support the initiatives from the ICS with its objectives, e.g. to improve outcomes in the population health, tackle inequalities in health outcomes, experience and patient access.

We continue to work well with Healthwatch Wokingham Borough, the independent consumer champion created to gather and represent the views of residents and have been kept informed of their work and issues of resident concern, at most meetings.

All members of the Committee and their substitutes are invited to attend training to keep up to date with any new legislation and service developments. Training is also arranged during the year should a specific need arise.

I would like to thank the members of the Committee, substitutes, Officers, and other partners who took part in meetings for their contribution throughout the year.

Adrian Mather

Remit of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) scrutinises matters relating to the planning, provision and operation of health and wellbeing services in the Borough. This includes acute and community health services, adult social care services, family and public health services and health related services commissioned jointly by the Council, health bodies and the voluntary sector. HOSC exercises powers conferred to it through the Health and Social Care Act 2012 and the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013.

Membership

Councillor Adrian Mather (Chairman).

Councillors Beth Rowland (Vice-Chairman), Andy Croy, Phil Cunnington, Rebecca Margetts, Alistair Neal, Jackie Rance, Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey and Alison Swaddle

Substitute Members: Sam Akhtar, David Cornish, Michael Firmager, Jim Frewin, Chris Johnson, Pauline Jorgensen, Morag Malvern, Andrew Mickleburgh and Shahid Younis

All attendees at HOSC meetings, including members of the public, may ask questions after each report or presentation is presented.

Officer contact: Madeleine Shopland madeleine.shopland@wokingham.gov.uk

Highlights from the Year

Adult Social Care Priorities

In July 2022 the Committee was briefed on one of the main current Adult Social Care priorities, the possible impact of the Adult Social Care Reforms. Members questioned how the Council could think outside of the box to lessen the impact and referred in particular to the recruitment and retention of social workers.

Adult Social Care Key Performance Indicators

The Committee continued to monitor performance against the Adult Social Care Key Performance Indicators, seeking further information on any areas of underperformance.

Response to Covid – Vaccination Plan September-December

The Committee reviewed the Covid Vaccination Plan September-December, at its September meeting. Members sought information around take up in various age groups and communities. The Committee also highlighted issues around using the national booking website, the location of vaccination sites and the difficulties that health and social care workers had experienced in booking a booster.

Primary Care Networks

Access to GP services has remained an area of resident concern. Members invited representatives from the Primary Care Networks to their November meeting, to discuss challenges that the different areas and surgeries faced, and how the Council could assist. The Committee were informed of difficulties with recruitment and retention, high caseloads, the impact of Covid on wait lists and new ways of working. The Committee was advised of

the importance of encouraging patients to embrace new ways of working, and the promotion of the self-care message to increase resilience in the system.

Dental Services

Access to dental services has remained a key issue of national and local concern. The Committee held an extraordinary meeting in January 2023 to examine this topic in detail. The Committee asked questions on accessibility, potential for increased provision as the population increased, service recovery following Covid and workforce. Information was also provided on action that was being taken to improve access.

Healthwatch

The Committee works well with Healthwatch Wokingham Borough and receive updates on their work. Issues on their 'local watch list' include * Asylum seekers' physical and mental health * Accessing GP and NHS dentist appointments; * Maternal mental health; and * Cost of living crisis.

MIND in Berkshire and an Overview of Community Mental Health Services

The pandemic had seen a decrease in many people's mental health and wellbeing. Members invited MIND in Berkshire to their September meeting to hear of the specific service it provided to residents with a particular level of mental health need. Members were pleased to hear of the service's success. In November, the Committee received a presentation on the different community mental health services provided in order to further their knowledge of the available provision for residents requiring community mental health services.

NHS Continuing Healthcare (CHC)

In January 2023, the Members were updated on the Transformation Programme - All Age NHS Continuing Healthcare. A Local Government Association review across BOB in July 2022 had identified many areas for improvement particularly in Berkshire West. Members noted the action being taken to make improvements, and sought a further update in 2023.

Integrated Care Partnership Strategy

At its November meeting, the Committee considered an update on the developing ICP Strategy and commented on the key emerging themes that had been identified for the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire West (BOB) footprint. Members questioned what the Strategy would mean for the priorities of Wokingham and the other areas.

Optalis

David Birch, Chief Executive Officer Optalis, provided a presentation on the performance of Optalis to the Committee's July meeting. Members sought information on how recruitment and retention were being addressed, and new services that would be offered.

Scrutiny Impacts

- Gaining an overview of key health and social care services that serve the Borough.
- Ensuring that residents' needs are considered as part of the commissioning and delivery of local health services and continuing to work with Healthwatch Wokingham Borough to raise the profile of matters raised by residents.

SECTION 7

GETTING INVOLVED IN OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

The Council is committed to making Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings accessible to all residents of the Borough. A key aim is to increase public involvement in the process and to remove barriers to participation.

Residents can get involved in Overview and Scrutiny by attending meetings - all Overview and Scrutiny meetings are open to the public and are held in the early evening to make attendance easier. In addition, copies of Agendas including reports to be considered are published five working days before each meeting and can be accessed on the Council's website:

www.wokingham.gov.uk/council-and-meetings

During the Covid-19 pandemic, meetings were held virtually using Microsoft Teams. These meetings are accessed via a You Tube link set out on the meeting Agenda. Residents are now able to attend in person or view the meetings on line.

Residents can also elect to receive automatic notification when new Overview and Scrutiny Agenda and Minutes are published.

Each Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting includes a Public Question Time session which allows residents to raise issues of general interest and/or specific issues relating to the items under consideration.

Members of the public are also able to contribute to Scrutiny reviews by giving evidence either as an individual or as part of a community group. Residents can also request that a specific item is considered by Overview and Scrutiny as a review item. Residents can complete an online Scrutiny review suggestion form at:

www.wokingham.gov.uk/council-and-meetings/decisions/ask-for-a-scrutiny-review

During 2023/24 the Council will continue to use local and social media to raise awareness of issues coming before the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and to allow residents to provide comments and feedback.

The Council's Twitter feed is accessible here: [WokinghamBorough@WokinghamBC](https://twitter.com/WokinghamBC)

If you want to learn more about Overview and Scrutiny or want to discuss a specific issue, please contact Neil Carr, the Council's Scrutiny Officer:

- by telephone: 0118 974 6000, or
- by email: neil.carr@wokingham.gov.uk or by post:

Democratic Services, Wokingham Borough Council, Shute End, Wokingham, RG40 1BN.

TITLE **Outside Bodies Reports - 2022/23**

FOR CONSIDERATION BY Council on 23 March 2023

WARD None Specific;

LEAD OFFICER Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

Councillor representation on Outside Bodies provides insight into the workings of the Council's partner organisations. Representation offers opportunities for additional collaboration, partnership working and facilitates oversight of any funding paid by Wokingham Borough Council to our partners.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council note the reports on Outside Body representation for the 2022/23 municipal year, set out as Annex A to this report.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

Annex A provides submissions from Member representatives on their involvement with Outside Bodies for the 2022/23 municipal year.

Background

Wokingham Borough Council appoints Member representatives to a range of Outside Bodies on an annual basis at its Annual Council meeting. Representatives are appointed to Outside Bodies based on the structure of each individual organisation, such as an observer or a Board Member. Representation on Outside Bodies provides oversight of any funding arrangements between WBC and partner organisations and facilitates additional opportunities for partnership working.

Analysis of Issues

Each Member representative is asked to provide a report outlining the work carried out by each Outside Body during the municipal year and a short explanation as to why, in the Member's opinion, representation should continue or not in the future.

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

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

None

Cross-Council Implications

None

Public Sector Equality Duty

Due regard had been given to WBC's duties under the Equality Act.

Climate Emergency – This Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to playing as full a role as possible – leading by example as well as by exhortation – in achieving a carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030

Member representation on Outside Bodies does not impact WBC's climate emergency declaration or associated ambitions.

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2

N/A

List of Background Papers
None

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

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NAME OF ORGANISATION	REP(s)	PAGE NO.
Age Concern Twyford & District	Lindsay Ferris	3
Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust	Tahir Maher	4-5
Berkshire Maestros	Sarah Kerr	6
Berkshire Pension Fund Advisory Panel	Maria Gee	7-9
Citizens Advice Wokingham	Rachel Bishop-Firth	10
Finchampstead Baptist Church Advisory Board	David Cornish	11
Local Government Association General Assembly	Clive Jones, Stephen Conway, Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey and Pauline Jorgensen	12-13
Police and Crime Panel for Thames Valley	Maria Gee	14-15
Readibus Management Committee	Mike Smith	16-17
Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey, Mike Smith, Morag Malvern and Pauline Helliars-Symons	18-19
Sonning & District Welfare and Educational Trust	Michael Firmager	20
South East Employers	Clive Jones, David Cornish, Imogen Shepherd-DuBey (Sub) and Ian Shenton (Sub)	21-22
Standing Conference on Archives	Stephen Conway	23
Thames Basin Heaths Joint Strategic Partnership	David Cornish and Ian Shenton (Sub)	24
The Piggott Trust	Lindsay Ferris	25
The Polehampton Charity	Stephen Conway	26
The Poors Land Charity	Abdul Loyes	27-28
Wokingham and District Association for the Elderly (WADE)	Beth Rowland	29
Wokingham Borough Sports Council	Ian Shenton	30
Wokingham Borough Sports Sponsorship Fund	Ian Shenton	30
Wokingham Volunteer Centre	Rachel Burgess	31-32
Wokingham Waterside Centre	Shirley Boyt	33-34

Wokingham Youth Counselling and Information Service (ARC)	Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey	35
Woodley Town Centre Management Initiative	Shirley Boyt, Andy Croy and Beth Rowland (Sub)	36
Woodley Volunteer Centre	Beth Rowland	37

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM

MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2022-2023

Name of Organisation	Age Concern (Twyford)	
Name of Member	Lindsay Ferris	
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Observer	
Number of meetings called to attend	10 meetings	
Number of Meetings attended	6 meetings	
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate	Clash with WBC meetings	
Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year.		
Age Concern Twyford provides facilities for older people to attend during the day. Many activities are arranged during the days including singing, flower arrangements, quiz's etc, as well as providing lunch.		
What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role?		
Yes, I was provided with the appropriate documentation and took part in detailed discussions with the Trustees.		
Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply?		
AGE Concern Twyford is a very effective organisation. Residents become members and make a payment for the services. WBC also sponsor a growing number of residents. They are an increasing partner in providing Adult Social Care functions.		
Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?	Yes	
Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative		
There is a close working relationship between WBC & Age Concern Twyford.		

Councillor: L T H Ferris

Dated: 28 Feb 2023

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM

MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2022-2023

Name of Organisation	Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
Name of Member	Tahir Maher
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Observer
Number of meetings called to attend	Effectively every 10 days
Number of Meetings attended	Most
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate	Clash with WBC meetings
<p>Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year.</p> <p>As a Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust representative, the meetings with other Governors are regular and rewarding. Effectively, we meet every ten days or so. Primarily, they deal with Mental health and well-being, Physical and community healthcare, and Children's healthcare. They are in Bracknell and Wokingham, Reading, Slough, West Berkshire, Windsor, Ascot and Maidenhead.</p> <p>There are a number of councillor representatives, as Governors, and the rest are elected members, 26 in all. As Governors, we contribute to a strategic vision for the Trust. As Governors, we also get to meet and question the Board members regularly. We have access to detailed KPIs relating to the Trust's activities and question them on their delivery.</p> <p>The activities of the Governors are well managed by the Trust, I found the Trust to be very open, and forthcoming in what they do and they actively listened to the Governors.</p> <p>Martin Earwicker is the Chairman of the Non-Executive Directors and is very engaged with us as Governors. He will make sure that other Non-Executive and Executive Directors are available for any Governors to engage with.</p>	
<p>What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role?</p> <p>I have visited a site based at Reading University (Erlegh House). I was impressed with the service they offer for Children and adolescents' mental health: Trauma, Talking therapy, and anorexia, for example. One thing I noted was that there were</p>	

a number of examples given where they supported individuals in Reading, and I impressed on them to be more active in Wokingham.

Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply?

I have found it a pleasure to represent Wokingham as a Governor; I have been impressed with their work to support residents with mental health issues. As a Governor, I have the freedom to be involved in as many of the Trust's activities as I want; I felt that they listened to my concerns and took in suggestions about supporting communities (especially ethnic minorities) and my comments made on their audit committee.

Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?

Yes

Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative

This is a worthwhile Trust for Wokingham Council to be involved in. I would suggest that Councillors who are involved with this Trust in the future work with Council Officers to develop an active longer-term programme of support they want, for Wokingham (not that the support we have at the moment, is bad in any way – but a more focused approach would benefit us even better).

Councillor: Tahir Maher

Dated: 7 March 2023

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM

MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2022-2023

Name of Organisation	Berkshire Maestros
Name of Member	Sarah Kerr
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Observer
Number of meetings called to attend	9
Number of Meetings attended	7
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate	Clash of meetings
Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year.	
Berkshire Maestros continues to provide music lessons to children in Berkshire. Berkshire Maestros is expanding its offering beyond traditional peripatetic music tuition and music ensembles into projects for social value such as dementia choirs, children in care choirs and other projects and teaching for adults as well as children.	
What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role?	
We receive detailed agendas and reports prior to each meeting. The organisation is also in the process of re-looking at its aims and objectives and I have been involved in this process and able to contribute.	
Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply?	
Berkshire Maestros is an integral part of providing music tuition in the borough and across the county. It provides a range of services including first access teaching to children in primary schools, and seeks to provide opportunities to children from a diverse range of backgrounds. As outlined above, it is further expanding its reach which coincides with the Council's vision and priorities, and we are forming an excellent partnership with the organisation.	
Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?	<u>Yes/No</u>
Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative	
It's important that we work in a joined-up manner and Berkshire Maestros will be integral in helping WBC deliver on its arts and culture strategy.	

Councillor: Sarah Kerr

Dated: 20th February 2023

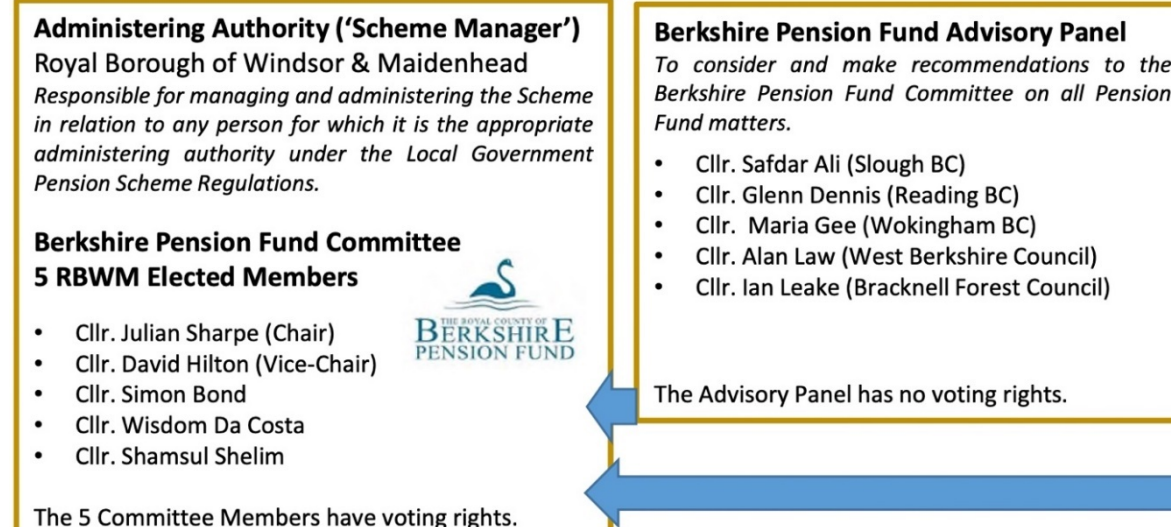
WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM

MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2022-2023

Name of Organisation	Berkshire Pension Fund Advisory Panel
Name of Member	Maria Gee
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Member of advisory panel
Number of meetings called to attend	4
Number of Meetings attended	3 (by Teams as non-voting member)
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate	1 meeting advisory panel members were not required
<p>Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year.</p> <p>In part 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note and approve risk register (standing item) and risk management policy • Approve statutory policies update (standing item) • Approve a report regarding good governance • Acknowledges the report on responsible investing (standing item) • Notes the administration report (standing item) • Approval of pension fund draft annual report (still not final) <p>In part 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LPPI performance, risk overview and management update • Appointment of Custodian • LPPI advisory and management agreement • Currency hedging 	
<p>What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role?</p> <p>The information provided is very comprehensive. It is also understandable if you have an advanced knowledge of corporate finance and complex financial instruments (I do not, and I doubt whether most councillors do). In any case, the governance structure means that, as a representative of WBC, I have little or no say, as I cannot vote. For reasons explained below, this is not acceptable as a way forward.</p>	

This is the governance structure of the Berkshire Pension Fund:



This is a description of the role of the Advisory Panel:

The Berkshire Pension Fund Advisory Panel (“the Advisory Panel”) consists of 5 Elected Members (Councillors), one from each of the other 5 Unitary Authorities in Berkshire, Bracknell Forest Council; Reading Borough Council, Slough Borough Council, West Berkshire Council and Wokingham District Council. The main purpose of the Advisory Panel is to support the Committee in achieving its statutory duties and to provide guidance and advice as appropriate.

Members of the Advisory Panel do not have voting rights but both the Committee and the Advisory Panel meet jointly and so review and discuss all agenda items at the same time.

As you can see, the panel has no separate meetings and attends the meetings of the Berkshire Fund Committee, all of whose members are from Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.

Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council’s Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply?

Difficult to see the intercept between these two, essentially independent, organisations, with their own strategic vision and aims. Indeed, one might go so far as saying that there cannot be an intercept. Furthermore, a lot of relevant information is covered under Part 2, which I am not allowed to disclose, even to officers of WBC and members. This also puts representative members into an untenable position.

Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?

Yes, but as voting members
 There needs to be more clarity disclosure of about part 2 items to officers and members.

Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative

The investments and liabilities that WBC has in this body is material to the accounts of the Council. Indeed, the accounts of WBC are held up because the Pension Fund has not signed off its accounts. This is because, it appears, RBWM

has not signed off its accounts either. I am informed that the governance structure is what it is, and that is how the Pension Fund was set up. This is not a sensible governance structure when there are major investors with no formal say. It needs to change and WBC needs to find a way to make it change.

Please provide any additional information that fellow Members might find useful

See above. Irrespective of what we may be told, ways of improving governance to benefit of the employees, former employees and WBC as a contributor must be found.

Councillor: Maria Gee

Dated: 7 March 2023

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM

MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2022-2023

Name of Organisation	Citizens Advice Wokingham	
Name of Member	Rachel Bishop-Firth	
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Outside bodies representative	
Number of meetings called to attend	2	
Number of Meetings attended	2	
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate	N/A	
Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year. The Citizens Advice Bureau are a member of the Hardship Alliance, run the 'One Front Door' Advice service for residents, and provide key targeted support in a number of areas such as debt advice to residents who are in arrears on council tax.		
What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role? The CAB have provided full information on its operations, and provide detailed relevant reports on services provided.		
Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply? The CAB has been key in the Hardship Alliance and the Cost of Living Crisis response. This includes acting as a partner in distribution of the central grant of Household Support Fund money.		
Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?	Yes	
Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative We aim to continue to work closely with the CAB and a close dialogue is essential.		

Councillor:
R Bishop-Firth

Dated:
9th March 2023

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM

MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2022-2023

Name of Organisation	Finchampstead Baptist Church Advisory Board	
Name of Member	David Cornish	
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Advisory Board Member	
Number of meetings called to attend	3	
Number of Meetings attended	2 (third meeting is on 10/3/23)	
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate	N/A	
<p>Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year.</p> <p>Re-establishing community activities in the Finchampstead Baptist Centre (FBC) post Covid. Focus on managing FBC running costs. Working alongside Gorse Ride redevelopment. Establishment of new Community Centre in Arborfield Green. Advice to Bohunt School on reaching out to youth groups in Arborfield.</p>		
<p>What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role?</p> <p>Good initial conversation with the principal.</p>		
<p>Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply? The FBC works closely with young people but also the wider community in the north part of Finchampstead and Arborfield. It has played a key role in visioning the community centre for Arborfield Green.</p>		
Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?	Yes/No YES	
<p>Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative</p> <p>Excellent forum for being in touch with the community grassroots.</p>		

Councillor: David Cornish

Dated: 8/3/23

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM

MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2022-2023

Name of Organisation	Local Government Association
Name of Member	Clive Jones (Other WBC reps - Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey, Stephen Conway, Pauline Jorgensen)
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Observer
Number of meetings called to attend	1
Number of Meetings attended	1
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate	N/A
<p>Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year.</p> <p>It was very good to meet with other senior councillors from around the country from all political parties and to meet with other council leaders. It provided the opportunity to talk to the boundary commission about the proposed changes to boundary changes to Ward Boundaries, and to talk to people about planning issues and the local plan process.</p>	
<p>What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role?</p> <p>There was a full agenda for the AGM and meetings/exhibitions around it.</p>	
<p>Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply?</p> <p>I was able attend the AGM and whilst there met with the Secretary of State for levelling Up. This was an informal meeting with other council leaders and senior councillors. I invited the SOS to visit Wokingham to discuss ideas for reforming the way housing numbers were considered. He accepted the invitation and was keen to visit Wokingham. Unfortunately, he lost his job the following week when he fell out with the prime minister, Boris Johnson. Several months later and with two other SOSs in the intervening period he returned to DLUHC. His housing minister Liz Frazer agreed to invite me to a roundtable discussion, she then moved onto another role in government. We are waiting for her successor to meet with me.</p>	

Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?	Yes/No YES
Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative	
We need to have the information and knowledge to do a better job for our residents and to cope with upcoming changes and strategic challenges.	

Councillor: Clive Jones

Dated: 7th March 2023

**WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL
APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM
MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2022-2023**

Name of Organisation	Police and Crime Panel for the Thames Valley
Name of Member	Maria Gee
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Member of panel
Number of meetings called to attend	5
Number of Meetings attended	3
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate	1 meeting cancelled and 1 meeting rearranged at short notice and I was on holiday.
<p>Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PCC's annual report and the annual report of the Panel • Annual Assurance Report • Budget Task and Finish Group report • Setting of Precept • Report on Arrest Data by Ethnicity, including Stop and Search and the Police Race Action Plan • Confirmation hearing for the Chief Constable • Reports from the Complaints Committee • Consideration of report on Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs • Review of the PREVENT programme effectiveness • Considering topical issues (standing item) 	
<p>What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role?</p> <p>There were easy links to the website information. There were also briefings by the Clerk to the panel before each meeting, which was very helpful. The agendas and minutes were very comprehensive.</p>	
<p>Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply?</p> <p>It is difficult to see the intersect between the panel and the council other than agreeing the precept. However, in its main duty to scrutinise the actions, decisions and performance of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), that duty is discharged at each meeting. This is an important role given the political nature of the appointment.</p>	
<p>Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body? Yes</p>	
<p>Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative</p> <p>Because it is important to hold a political appointee to account.</p>	

Please provide any additional information that fellow Members might find useful

I am not convinced that a PCC should be a political appointment because police should not be directed by political interests.

Councillor: Maria Gee

Dated: 6 March 2023

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM

MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2022-2023

Name of Organisation	Readibus
Name of Member	Mike Smith
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Director
Number of meetings called to attend	5
Number of Meetings attended	2
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate	Dates clashed with WBC full council meetings – requested change of dates but wasn't possible.
<p>Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retendering of Reading Council arrangement was a key issue for Readibus – fortunately they won the contract which secures the bulk of their funding. • An ongoing dispute with West Berkshire District Council over their withholding of funds related to Readibus refusing to sign a contract with a gagging clause. This relates to a decision by WBDC to drastically reduce their contribution to Readibus that was taken without public consultation; it occupies a huge amount of time including Readibus winning a case with the Local Authority Ombudsman. • Return of services to per-Covid coverage with 70% approx. usage – but many passengers have not returned. • Two new vehicles purchased and a new lease on their headquarters has been obtained. 	
<p>What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role?</p> <p>Materials provided were sufficient and consisted of:</p> <p>Previous Board minutes Articles and Memorandum of Association Various guides on Charity and Director responsibilities. Personal briefing on visit to HQ Well attended AGM or awards presentation</p>	

Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply?

Very effective in providing bespoke journey bus services to residents with limited mobility. Anywhere to anywhere; good branding.

Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?

Yes

Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative

Readibus provides a very valuable service to Wokingham Residents that have mobility issues on a very cost effective basis using the Bus Pass system for charging on a per journey basis. Very good value for money

Councillor: Mike Smith

Dated: 23 Feb 2023

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM

MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2022-2023

Name of Organisation	Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service
Name of Member	Mike Smith (Other WBC reps – Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey, Morag Malvern and Pauline Helliard-Symons)
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Member of the Fire Authority; Member of the Audit and Governance Committee; Champion for Health Safety and Welfare combined with Member Development
Number of meetings called to attend	8
Number of Meetings attended	8
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate	N/A
<p>Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year.</p> <p>Fire and Rescue services across the whole of Berkshire.</p> <p>Dealing with the Annual Budget, the HMI Inspection, the proposed Firefighter strike, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion changes for the fire service.</p>	
<p>What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role?</p> <p>Very comprehensive handbook comprising 12 separate sections including a code of conduct for members, constitution, financial regulations and clearly defined responsibilities plus much other useful information.</p> <p>Leadership training, Training about the budget, EDI training.</p>	
<p>Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply?</p> <p>This is complicated to answer as the Governance is delivered by the Fire Authority comprising 20 Councillors across the six unitary authorities. It has its own vision and priorities that are unique to the service being provided, much dictated by statute. It is not really related to WBC's vision and priorities other than providing excellent service and VFM – which it does as indicated in the annual and quarterly reports and inspections by HMICFRS who found RBFPS “is performing to a high standard, receiving three ‘good’ judgments across the three areas (effectiveness, efficiency and people) inspected.”</p>	

EDI changes are changing the Fire Service, and RBFRS are providing safe and well visits for adults.	
Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?	Yes
<p>Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative Residents pay for the RBFRS through a precept collected via Council Tax – it is appropriate that Borough Councillors sit on the Fire Authority which sets strategic directions and agrees budgets etc.</p> <p>WBC needs the ability to speak about coverage of the Borough by the Fire Service and any new building and fire regulations.</p>	
<p>Please provide any additional information that fellow Members might find useful</p> <p>RBFRS is extremely well run and all major decisions are supported by excellent paperwork for such a relatively small organisations – there are lessons that could be learnt in large organisations.</p>	

Councillor: Mike Smith

Dated: March 2023

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM

MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2022-2023

Name of Organisation	Sonning & District Welfare and Educational Trust	
Name of Member	Michael Firmager	
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Member	
Number of meetings called to attend	2	
Number of Meetings attended	1	
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate	Clash with a Wokingham Borough Council meeting	
Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year.		
The Trust provides welfare support for individuals in need or distress over the area of the old Parish of Sonning by means of grants.		
What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role?		
None.		
Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply?		
It is effective in what it does, especially during these hard economic times.		
Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?	Yes/No	
Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative		
This should continue because the Trust provides an effective and necessary function.		

Councillor: Michael Firmager

Dated: 26 February 2023

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM

MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2022-2023

Name of Organisation	South East Employers
Name of Member	Clive Jones & David Cornish
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Observer
Number of meetings called to attend	4
Number of Meetings attended	2
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate	Holiday
Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year.	
SEE covers many important areas. There are regular updates on changes in government and Ministers responsibilities. Agenda items have included updates on pay negotiations, Adult social care demands, Integrated care systems, Ukrainian refugees, presentations from the chief planner from DLUHC, discussions on investment zones.	
What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role?	
All necessary information has been forthcoming, and they are very helpful.	
Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply?	
The information received from them has been very useful.	
Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?	Yes/No YES
Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative	
Information from the body is very useful and its good to meet with other council leaders across the south east.	

Councillor: Clive Jones

Dated: 7th March 2023

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM

MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2022-2023

Name of Organisation	South East Employers	
Name of Member	David Cornish (With Clive Jones)	
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Executive member	
Number of meetings called to attend	1 x AGM, 2 x Exec	
Number of Meetings attended	1	
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate	One due to miscommunication of notice, one due to holiday (Cllr Jones attended AGM)	
Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year.		
SEE has facilitated a number of online Pay Briefings for Councils during the most recent round of local government pay negotiations. Developed services and products so that they can be delivered in a variety of new ways which respond to the demands of a changing operating environment, especially hybrid working.		
What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role?		
Very little – I picked up most of what I now know from the AGM.		
Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply?		
I find it difficult to assess. This may be more appropriately answered by council officers, as I have no clear view on how much WBC uses the services provided by SEE.		
Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?	Yes/No TBC	
Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative		
I think this would benefit from a proper review by relevant officers and members.		

Councillor: David Cornish

Dated: 10/3/23

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM

MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2022-2023

Name of Organisation	Standing Conference on Archives	
Name of Member	Stephen Conway	
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Observer	
Number of meetings called to attend	3	
Number of Meetings attended	2	
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate	Clash with other meetings	
Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year.		
<p>The Standing Conference's meetings take place in the Record Office. The head archivist and his staff report on acquisitions (new collections) and work on maintaining existing collections. They also keep us updated on plans for the extension of the Record Office and the archive service's outreach activities.</p>		
What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role?		
As above.		
Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply?		
<p>I have attended all but one of the meetings, and have reported back to our senior management team on progress on the jointly-funded extension, to which all the Berkshire unitary authorities are committed.</p>		
Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?	Yes	
Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative		
<p>The Berkshire unitary authorities share the costs of the archive service, based at the Berkshire Record Office in Reading.</p>		

Councillor: Stephen Conway

Dated: 25 March 2023

**WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL
APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM
MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2022-2023**

Name of Organisation	Thames Basin Heaths Joint Strategic Partnership Board	
Name of Member	David Cornish (With Ian Shenton)	
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Observer / WBC representative	
Number of meetings called to attend	2	
Number of Meetings attended	1	
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate	Holiday (Meeting attended by Cllr Shenton)	
Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year.		
<p>Monitoring of areas of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANGS) in the Thames Basin Heath area.</p> <p>Between December 2021 and March 2022 in person visitor surveys were completed at all 75 SANGS that were open at that time. In total 262 survey sessions were completed with 836 people being counted across all sites.</p> <p>To improve the robustness of visitor number data, agreement was sought for the installation of six additional visitor counters at locations across the TBH area.</p> <p>Bird monitoring surveys continued to be run by a third-party provider.</p> <p>A primary focus continued to be education and engagement.</p> <p>Staff worked in partnership with local police forces to raise awareness of nesting birds and responsible dog ownership.</p>		
What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role?		
Very little direct from the organisation but a good briefing from WBC officers		
Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply?		
Within our borough, the organisation is focussed primarily on SANGS. They have run pop-up session, especially at Rooks Nest Country Park, which helps to support our countryside team.		
Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?		Yes/No YES
Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative		
SANGS are important to our countryside and to the enjoyment of residents and help to mitigate the impact of development. Therefore, working alongside the Thames Basin Heaths Joint Strategic Partnership adds to our knowledge in this area.		

Councillor: David Cornish

Dated: 8th March 2023

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM

MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2022-2023

Name of Organisation	Piggott Trust	
Name of Member	Lindsay Ferris	
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Observer	
Number of meetings called to attend	One	
Number of Meetings attended	One	
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate	N/A	
Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year.		
I attended the annual meeting of the Piggott Trust, it deals primarily with schools and support for school children who come from the Wargrave area.		
What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role?		
I received paperwork both before and during the meeting.		
Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply?		
It is very effective at supporting Wargrave children with grants to assist with their studying.		
Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?	Yes	
Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative		
It provides a good link between WBC and Wargrave		

Councillor: L T H Ferris

Dated: 28 Feb 2023

**WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL
APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM
MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2022-2023**

Name of Organisation	Polehampton Charity	
Name of Member	Stephen Conway	
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Observer	
Number of meetings called to attend	4	
Number of Meetings attended	3	
Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year.		
<p>The Polehampton Charity was established in 1722 and last autumn I attended an event to commemorate the founding of the charity and to celebrate the council's commitment to delivering Twyford's new library on the old Polehampton Boys' School site.</p> <p>The charity was set up to help support the poor of Twyford and neighbouring Ruscombe, especially with educational provision. Since 1722, its geographical remit has been broadened to include the parish of Charvil.</p>		
What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role?		
<p>The Charity provides information to members on a range of issues. The charity receives regular requests for support from local schools and, recently, an increasing number of applications for hardship funding. The charity now has good connections with Citizens Advice Wokingham, and receives referrals from them.</p>		
Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply?		
<p>The Polehampton Charity is associated with the local Hardship Alliance and the charity's financial resources help extend the money, person-power and information available to help us (the Council working with the its partners in the Hardship Alliance) to tackle the local manifestations of the cost-of-living crisis. The charity's new chair is particularly keen to recalibrate its funding strategy, to lay more emphasis on the relief of hardship, and less on supporting local schools, all of which are now academies with less of a link to the local community than in the past.</p>		
Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?	Yes	
Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative		
<p>I have attended all the meetings of the charity during the municipal year 2022/23, acting as a link point on discussions between the council and the charity on the new library and helping make decisions on grant applications.</p>		

Councillor: Stephen Conway

Dated: March 2023

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM

MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2022-2023

Name of Organisation	The Poores Land Charity	
Name of Member	Abdul Loyes	
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Trustee	
Number of meetings called to attend	10	
Number of Meetings attended	3	
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate	Working as an NHS appointed ambulance care assistant. I had irregular shift patterns which prevented me attending more meetings than I hoped.	
Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year.		
Providing housing in almshouses and to make grants by way of Relief in Need to poor people within the area of benefit within Wokingham.		
What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role?		
The second aim of the Charity is to make small grants to local persons in need by way of Relief in Need for essential items, such as washing machines, beds, ovens, carpets, etc. and even short holidays by way of respite. The area of benefit for relief in need grants was extended to include the adjacent parishes to Woodley and Charvil, which extends to Earley, Winnersh, Hurst, Wargrave, Sonning and Twyford. The budget for these grants is £1,000 each month. The Charity still retains investments in multi asset charitable funds.		
Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply?		
I believe the Charity has contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities as last year the organisation helped 13 people with a total of £7,795.29 being spent.		
Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?	Yes	
Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative		
This Charity is continuing to help vulnerable residents in need and allocating their resources appropriately.		
Please provide any additional information that fellow Members might find useful		
The Poores Land Charity was originally served by 9 Trustees – Three of whom were Co-opted and 6 were nominated. Four being nominated from Woodley Town		

Council, one from Wokingham and one from Charvil. In 2014 another Co-opted Trustee was appointed and another in 2019 making the total of Trustees up to 11 each bringing different skills and areas of expertise to the Trustee body. My own 4 year term of office is due to terminate at the end of May 2023.

The Charity has two branches – to provide housing in almshouses and to make grants by way of Relief in Need to poor people within the area of benefit.

The almshouse building was funded by investments from the sale of land in Woodley from when the charity was formally known as The Fuel Allotment Charity where the poor could gather firewood. Land was purchased in Loddon Bridge Road and turned into blocks of flats. The units were completed and the building called Cedar Place was opened in 1979. As the Charity had obtained a loan from Wokingham they had the nomination rights to five of these flats with the Trustees being able to appoint residents to the other five. In 1993 extra land was obtained and four extra flats built with the addition of 4 linked bungalows at the rear and a common area and laundry. In 2000 the bungalow next to Cedar Place was purchased as a commercial let and for the future development of the almshouse units. The Charity still retains investments in multi asset charitable funds.

The second aim of the Charity is to make small grants to local persons in need by way of Relief in Need for essential items, such as washing machines, beds, ovens, carpets, etc. and even short holidays by way of respite. The area of benefit for relief in need grants was extended to include the adjacent parishes to Woodley and Charvil, which extends to Earley, Winnersh, Hurst, Wargrave, Sonning and Twyford. The budget for these grants is £1,000 each month. Last year the Charity helped 13 people with a total of £7,795.29 being spent.

The Charity normally holds 10 meetings a year and last year ten meetings were held of which I attended two. They are held monthly but not usually in August or December when a Christmas Party is held on the premises for the residents instead. Occasionally extra events are held by way of a fish and chip lunch, afternoon tea or garden party. Recently one of the Trustees has been arranging regular Coffee Mornings which have proved quite popular with certain residents.

Councillor: Abdul Loyes

Dated: 28/02/2023

**WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL
APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM
MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2022-2023**

Name of Organisation	Wokingham and District Association for the Elderly (WADE)	
Name of Member	Beth Rowland	
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Observer	
Number of meetings called to attend	Nil (See below)	
Number of Meetings attended	Nil (See below)	
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate	N/A	
Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year.		
<p>WADE is a local charity offering support to anyone over sixty in Wokingham and the surrounding areas.</p> <p>WADE provide a warm and friendly environment for their members to mix and socialise. Some simply come along for lunch and a change of scene from their own home and the opportunity to see friends. Others have the early stages of dementia, and a day out in safe, caring and stimulating surroundings allows their caregivers some much-needed respite.</p>		
What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role?		
I have not been formally contacted by WADE, however I have visited their facilities on several occasions as Deputy Mayor. I was impressed by the care and support offered by WADE to their members.		
Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply?		
WADE provide a vital service for residents over 60 in the Borough, offering a change of scenery and a community atmosphere.		
Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?	Yes	
Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative		
It is important to have Member representation on community focussed services, such as WADE.		

Councillor: Beth Rowland

Dated: 10 March 2023

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM

MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2022-2023

Name of Organisation	Wokingham Borough Sports Council (WBSC) Wokingham Borough Sports Sponsorship Fund (WBSSF)	
Name of Member	Ian Shenton	
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Committee Member	
Number of meetings called to attend	One joint meeting of WBSC & WBSSF	
Number of Meetings attended	One	
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate	N/A	
Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year.		
It was agreed that the need for new volunteers would have to be addressed. Continued deliverable outcomes in training courses and sponsorship awards were flagged as essential to support future grant funding, and a synopsis was supplied to WBC Head of Sport & Leisure team. It was agreed to consider possible new ventures that supported diversity and encouraged disability sport.		
What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role?		
Copy of the constitution and verbal briefing proved sufficient.		
Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply?		
The organisation's effectiveness is constrained by its reliance on a limited cohort of volunteers, but the awards that it makes promote aspirational participation in sport and community involvement, aligning with the Council's partnership agenda.		
Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?	Yes	
Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative		
The Council can act as a facilitator of this community-led initiative.		

Councillor: I C Shenton

Dated: 03/03/23

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM

MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2022-2023

Name of Organisation	Wokingham Volunteer Centre
Name of Member	Rachel Burgess
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Observer
Number of meetings called to attend	0
Number of Meetings attended	2 – initial briefing meeting (June 2022) plus the WVC annual meeting (October 2022), plus attendance at two ‘Green n Tidy’ sessions
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate	NB this role does not sit on the board of trustees so there was no <i>requirement</i> to attend any meetings
Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year.	
<p>Wokingham Volunteer Centre works with over 100 local charities to promote and recruit to volunteering roles.</p> <p>They run a gardening service, Green ‘n’ Tidy, which provides basic gardening help to older or more vulnerable residents.</p> <p>They also run a community transport scheme to help, for example, to transport people to medical appointments.</p>	
What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role?	
<p>I met with the Chair, Julian Thompson, and the Chief Officer, Nick Fellowes, for a briefing on the work of the organisation on 29 June 2022.</p>	
Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council’s Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply?	
<p>The organisation has contributed to the Council’s vision and priorities, in particular with regard to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supporting residents to lead happy, healthy lives - Nurturing communities and enabling them to thrive 	

- Supporting people to live independently in their own homes
- Working effectively with partners

This has been achieved through its three main activities:

Volunteering

The charity works effectively to promote and recruit volunteers for local charities, through its volunteering portal, a matching service and by holding regular recruitment fairs.

Green 'n' Tidy

I was glad to join in with volunteers for two sessions of Green 'n' Tidy in Norreys ward. Green 'n' Tidy provides a basic gardening service for elderly, disabled or vulnerable residents of Wokingham Borough who cannot maintain their own properties.

I was extremely impressed by the operation – I joined a well-motivated team of volunteers who were valued by residents not just for their gardening skills but also for their friendly interactions with residents, some of whom may experience loneliness and social isolation. This is an excellent team that provides a valuable service for residents.

Community Transport

The Community Transport schemes provides a personal service to support to older and vulnerable residents, helping them get to medical appointments or other activities. This also contributes to improvements in mental and physical health through reducing loneliness and isolation, in particular now the service has been extended to cover social activities.

I attended the Wokingham Volunteer Centre Annual Meeting on 3 October 2022 and was impressed with the reports of the charity's activities.

Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?	Yes/No
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Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative

The charity provides some valuable services in our community, and it is important for the Council to have this link into the charity and its activities, to ensure partnership working continues to be effective.

Councillor: Rachel Burgess

Dated: 2 March 2023

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM

MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2022-2023

Name of Organisation	Wokingham Waterside Centre
Name of Member	Shirley Boyt
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Trustee/Board member
Number of meetings called to attend	4 per annum
Number of Meetings attended	4
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate	N/A
<p>Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year.</p> <p>WWC provides water activities – canoeing, kayaking, stand-up paddle boarding and dragon boating to both children and adults. Local schools, scout and guides, and Duke of Edinburgh’s Awards are all catered for. Sessions for those with physical and learning disabilities are also a core activity of the centre. Improvements have been made to the interior – replacement of worn safety flooring in showers, toilets and lobby. Replacement of carpeting in function room and meeting room.</p> <p>The tenant of the retail unit has recently vacated the premises and WWC has taken over this space to be used for a variety of activities – dedicated staff rest area, boat repair bay and a small kiosk which will sell hot and cold drinks, snacks and ice creams during the summer months.</p> <p>In the area surrounding the centre – trees have been trimmed and shrubs planted. Safety equipment and boats have been replaced as required.</p>	
<p>What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role?</p> <p>As I have previously been a board member a briefing was not needed.</p>	
<p>Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council’s Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply?</p> <p>Activities provided are suitable for all age groups. The activities are beneficial to both physical and mental well-being. Participants are encouraged to develop their skills in a safe environment with highly qualified instructors.</p> <p>Those with disabilities are welcomed. The Additional Needs Group is mainly students from Addington School and many former students are still visiting the centre, continuing to paddle as adults.</p>	

Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?	Definitely
<p>Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative</p> <p>I believe it is important that a councillor representative continues to sit on the board. The building is leased by WBC to the board of WWC and a named person who can liaise with council officers quickly and efficiently when problems arise is vital.</p> <p>Two issues in particular spring to mind:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anti-social behaviour in the P & R car park which is adjacent to the centre. This takes the form of illegal car meets and littering, both of which are ongoing but communication channels are open. 2. When I became a trustee, the hot water system was in need of replacement at a cost of c.£28,000. As the building belongs to WBC, I called in Wokingham Energy to assess the building for renewables, and as a result the building is set to become carbon neutral by the end of the year. So far, all the lighting has been replaced with LED, a solar array has been installed with battery storage and heat pumps to follow. The board members had no idea the building could be upgraded as part of the Climate Emergency Action Plan. This will be a win, win situation for the centre. It has not only saved the cost of a new LPG hot water system but going forward, the centre's energy costs will be zero and they will become a supplier when the system is connected to the grid. 	

Councillor: Shirley Boyt

Dated: 16 February 2023

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM

MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2022-2023

Name of Organisation	Wokingham Youth Counselling	
Name of Member	Rachelle Shepherd-Dubey	
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Member of the Management committee	
Number of meetings called to attend	5	
Number of Meetings attended	2	
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate	Conflicting Council meetings	
Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year		
Working with young people are dealing with mental health issues that aren't covered by CAMHS and normal issues that young people have to deal with.		
What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed roll?		
I was a trained councillor and Psychotherapist.		
Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply?		
Young people need help dealing with mental health issues.		
Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?	Yes	
Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative		
We need to have input into a service that helps young people deal with the pressure of Post Pandemic Britain		

Councillor: Rachelle Shepherd-Dubey Dated: 12 Feb 2023

**WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL
APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM
MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2022-2023**

Name of Organisation	Woodley Town Centre Management Partnership	
Name of Member	Shirley Boyt (Other WBC reps – Andy Croy and Beth Rowland (Sub))	
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Representative	
Number of meetings called to attend	3	
Number of Meetings attended	3	
Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year. Ideas for increasing footfall; concerns about anti-social behaviour; increasing the involvement of local businesses; events; social media presence; financial aspects.		
What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role? None needed as I had previously been a member of the partnership.		
Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply? The partnership hosted a number of events during the year. These are popular with residents and bring people into the town centre which benefits local businesses and also fosters a sense of community. The Winter Extravaganza and the carol service are two good examples of this.		
Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?	Yes / No	
Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative The TCMP is jointly funded by Woodley TC and WBC. It is important that each has representatives sitting on the group to understand the problems. There are currently two Members attending the Partnership. I think one of those should always be a ward member of the ward in which the town centre is located (currently Bulmershe and Whitegates). It is sometimes overlooked that there are residents living above the shops and they also have a stake in the precinct along with businesses and shoppers.		
Please provide any additional information that fellow Members might find useful The town centre manager and I have been engaged in discussions with the Leader of the Council and Senior Officers to look at opportunities for maximising income; improving engagement with businesses; and for upgrading and improving the appearance of the centre, which is looking somewhat tired and dated.		

Councillor: Shirley Boyt

Dated: 01/03/23

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM

MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2022-2023

Name of Organisation	Woodley Volunteer Centre	
Name of Member	Beth Rowland	
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Observer	
Number of meetings called to attend	1	
Number of Meetings attended	1	
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate	N/A	
Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year.		
I was invited and attended the AGM - the centre is working as much as ever now that things have returned to just about normal after Covid. Taking residents to hospitals and other appointments when they are unable to get there under their own steam is so needed.		
What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role?		
The AGM provided me with relevant information about the organisation.		
Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply?		
I would like to acknowledge all the hard work and hours that they volunteer. They do need more - younger people to sign up to help - if you know anyone, please either contact the directly or through me.		
Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?	Yes	
Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative		
Without this organisation our residents would be poorer.		

Councillor: Beth Rowland

Dated: 13 March 2023

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