



# WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

A Meeting of the **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY  
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE** will be held in David Hicks 1  
- Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham RG40 1BN on  
**WEDNESDAY 4 OCTOBER 2023 AT 7.00 PM**

Susan Parsonage  
Chief Executive  
Published on 26 September 2023

The role of Overview and Scrutiny is to provide independent “critical friend” challenge and to work with the Council’s Executive and other public service providers for the benefit of the public. The Committee considers submissions from a range of sources and reaches conclusions based on the weight of evidence – not on party political grounds.

Note: Non-Committee Members and members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting or participate in the meeting virtually, in line with the Council’s Constitution. If you wish to participate either in person or virtually via Microsoft Teams, please contact Democratic Services. The meeting can also be viewed using the following link:

<https://youtube.com/live/ih1jgf57LP4?feature=share>

This meeting may be filmed for inclusion on the Council’s website. Please note that other people may film, record, tweet or blog from this meeting. The use of these images or recordings is not under the Council’s control.

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

## MEMBERSHIP OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

### Councillors

Alistair Neal (Chair)	Andrew Mickleburgh (Vice-Chair)	Andy Croy
Norman Jorgensen	Pauline Jorgensen	Adrian Mather
Stuart Munro	Alison Swaddle	Chris Johnson
Catherine Glover	Caroline Smith	

### Substitutes

Charles Margetts	Graham Howe	Peter Dennis
David Cornish	Morag Malvern	Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey
Bill Soane	Jane Ainslie	Ian Pittock
Phil Cunningham	Marie-Louise Weighill	

ITEM NO.	WARD	SUBJECT	PAGE NO.
35.		<b>APOLOGIES</b> To receive any apologies for absence.	
36.		<b>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING</b> To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on 11 September 2023.	5 - 14
37.		<b>DECLARATION OF INTEREST</b> To receive any declarations of interest.	
38.		<b>PUBLIC QUESTION TIME</b> To answer any public questions. A period of 30 minutes will be allowed for members of the public to ask questions submitted under notice. The Council welcomes questions from members of the public about the work of this Committee.  Subject to meeting certain timescales, questions can relate to general issues concerned with the work of the Committee or an item which is on the Agenda for this meeting. For full details of the procedure for submitting questions please contact the Democratic Services Section on the numbers given below or go to <a href="http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/publicquestions">www.wokingham.gov.uk/publicquestions</a>	
39.		<b>MEMBER QUESTION TIME</b> To answer any Member questions.	
40.	None Specific	<b>A VISION FOR OUR BOROUGH</b> To scrutinise progress in developing the new Borough Vision and Council Plan.	15 - 32

<b>41.</b>	None Specific	<b>WBC FUTURE OFFICE PROVISION</b> To consider the implications of an Executive report on options for future office accommodation for the Council.	<b>33 - 48</b>
<b>42.</b>	None Specific	<b>UNAUTHORISED ENCAMPMENTS UPDATE</b> To consider an update on unauthorised encampments in the Borough.	<b>49 - 60</b>
<b>43.</b>	None Specific	<b>COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMMES</b> To review the work programme of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.	<b>61 - 82</b>
<b>44.</b>	None Specific	<b>ACTION TRACKER</b> To consider the regular Action Tracker report.	<b>83 - 86</b>

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

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

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## MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 11 SEPTEMBER 2023 FROM 7.00 PM TO 10.00 PM

### Committee Members Present

Councillors: Alistair Neal (Chair), Andrew Mickleburgh (Vice-Chair), Andy Croy, Norman Jorgensen, Pauline Jorgensen, Stuart Munro, Alison Swaddle, Chris Johnson, Caroline Smith, David Cornish and Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey

### Other Councillors Present

Councillors: Prue Bray

### Officers Present

Neil Carr, Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist  
Chris Easton, Assistant Director, Highways & Transport  
Giorgio Framalico, Director, Place & Growth  
Andy Glencross, Head of Environmental Services  
Emily Higson, Head of Insight, Strategy & Inclusion  
Louise Livingston, Assistant Director, HR  
Will Roper, Customer Insight Analyst & Performance Manager  
Sally Watkins, Chief Operating Officer

### 24. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Catherine Glover and Adrian Mather.

David Cornish and Rachelle Shepherd-Dubey attended the meeting as substitutes.

### 25. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 18 July 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to Minute 18 (Leader of the Council) being amended as follows:

Para 2 (Page 7) to read:

What were the other impacts of soaring inflation, e.g. on the health and wellbeing of families and recruitment and retention challenges facing the Council and its suppliers/contractors? Councillor Conway noted the impact of the cost of living crisis on the demand for services. The £11m figure discussed earlier was much higher when the impact of additional service demands was factored in. **Graham Ebers confirmed that a balanced budget for 2023/24 was set in February 2023 and included £11m for inflation. The average inflation used to reach that figure was 8.7%. Graham Ebers also confirmed that the budget was challenging, but achievable. Around £500k of staff salary increases, which happened, were not included in the £11m, but the £11m would be adequate....**

### 26. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

Andy Croy noted that he had chaired the Estate Infrastructure Task & Finish Group which featured in Agenda item 30.

### 27. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

## **28. MEMBER QUESTION TIME**

In accordance with the agreed procedure the Chair invited Members to submit questions.

### **28.1 Councillor Gary Cowan asked the Chair the following question:**

As the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee is responsible for co-ordinating the Council's arrangements for holding the Executive to account which includes undertaking policy development and review performance monitoring and external Scrutiny.

Apparently, the Council's accounts have not been signed off for two years.

My question is does the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Management Committee consider that the Borough Council's audit committee is a good enough safeguard for the Borough Council's finances.

### **Answer**

Thank you for your question. In short, my answer is yes. Let me explain why.

The Audit Committee is a sub-committee of Council with its members appointed by Council each year. The Audit Committee works assiduously to ensure its remit and processes reflect best practice.

Earlier this year, the Committee undertook a review against the latest (2022) CIPFA guidance which showed good levels of compliance but also identified further areas where practices could be improved. One of these was to update the terms of reference for the Committee which were brought to full Council in March 2023.

Full Council also receives a comprehensive annual report from the Audit Committee which offers the opportunity for any member to raise concerns. I note that this year's annual report was considered at the March 2023 meeting of full Council at which you were present.

You will have noted that the annual report covered the issue of the Council's accounts and the reasons for the delay in sign-off. However, I am pleased to note that the Council's Statement of Accounts for 2020/21 were signed off in July 2023 and work is proceeding on the 2021/22 accounts. If you read the minutes of the Audit Committee you will see that at each meeting of the Committee, members are appraised of the latest position including the opportunity to seek assurances from officers and our external auditors.

The current delays in the signing off of accounts are in the main beyond Wokingham's control and are problems being experienced nationally. To give context the National Audit Office (NAO) published a report earlier this year found that just 12% of 2021-22 local authority audits were completed at that time.

As well as national matters such as the recent technical issues around infrastructure which required the accounting body to work up "clarifications" to the accounting code, locally whilst our own accounts were complete, we had not been able to close 2020/21 until the Pensions body's accounts had been audited (The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead are the administering body for the fund and these delays affect all Berkshire authorities), which as stated previously is now resolved for that year.

Work on 2021/22 Accounts continues in tandem with our External Auditors and progress will be reported to the Audit Committee in the same way as previous years Accounts.

### **Supplementary Question**

As the number of Councils going bankrupt has increased, the LGA and CIPFA have raised serious concerns about the management of Council finances. This is over and above the usual routines we carry out. They point out that not enough attention is paid to the complexity of commercial plans and the risks surrounding them. They also add that the skills and professional capabilities of officers must be balanced by the skills of elected Members who must be engaged and financially literate in order to understand the financial aspects of the issues that come before them. How can that be achieved if, when elected Members challenge decisions, they can be denied the information requested? One example is the Dementia Care Home which has been cancelled, costing the Council £1.14m to date. These costs may or may not be recovered as the project is now cancelled.

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee must have a view on the cultural secrecy written into the Council's Constitution which allows quite large financial decisions to be made without consultation. For example, write-offs up to £25k can be agreed by specific officers. Virements can be £150k to £300k depending on the officer involved. The list of these obscure numbers is endless. With the Constitution written in a manner that encourages secrecy in finance, my question is: beside the £1.14m spent to date at Toutley, what other sums of money has the Council paid out which Members have not been aware of?

### **Supplementary Answer**

Firstly, I can assure you the Council's finances are under constant review and monitoring and whilst it faces significant challenges the position is robust and the medium term financial plans are deliverable. Effective monitoring is in place through the Executive and further challenge and assurance is undertaken through the Audit Committee. The Council's commercial investment performance is reported regularly, along with performance against key prudential indicators, as part of the Treasury Management reports through to Council and these remain positive.

The Council's Constitution is set and agreed by Members and balances ensuring the appropriate governance and transparency with providing officers with the opportunity to run services effectively and, where appropriately or required, flexibly. A number of controls are in place to ensure the Constitution is adhered to and Members have sight of key decisions. You will be aware there is currently a process to review the Constitution to ensure it remains fit for purpose and meets the organisation's needs. Members will play a key role in reviewing and agreeing any changes.

You have quoted the example of the care home. However, I understand that this scheme is not "cancelled", but is rightly undergoing further financial and market analysis to ensure the right decision both financially but also in providing key facilities to the community. The spend to date was critical to understand the right approach and, in fact, has already added value in increasing the value of the land should a care home provision not be decided as the best future approach and investment.

## **29. Q1 2023/24 PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT**

The Committee considered the Quarter 1 Performance Monitoring Report (April to June 2023) as set out at Agenda pages 13 to 64.

Councillor Prue Bray (Executive Member for Children's Services) attended the meeting, supported by officers, to present the report and answer Member questions in the absence of Councillor Sarah Kerr (Executive Member for Climate Emergency and Resident Services).

The report stated that Quarter 1 showed good overall performance in the face of significant challenges to service delivery, including high inflation and interest rates and increasing demand for key services. The current projected revenue monitoring position for the end of 2023/24 was an overspend of approximately £2.9m.

As part of the annual performance cycle, Directors had met with Executive Members to review KPIs and targets to ensure that they focussed on performance in the key areas of the Council's activity. Some new KPIs had been introduced whilst others had been retired. In line with the discussions at the previous meeting, charts in the report had been reviewed and leisure centre KPIs had been developed.

The report stated that four KPIs had reported as Red in Quarter 1, as follows:

- PG8 – Total household tonnes (waste);
- PG11 – All recorded crime in Wokingham Borough (excluding fraud);
- AS1 – Social work assessments allocated to commence within 28 days of the request;
- AS4 – New permanent admissions to residential or nursing care homes (65+).

The report gave details of the background to the KPIs reported as Red in Quarter 1 and the corrective action being taken to bring them back on track.

In the ensuing discussion. Members raised the following points and questions.

In relation to the projected £2.9m overspend, what steps were being taken to bring the Budget back on track? It was confirmed that work was ongoing to identify savings and potential increases in revenue. The annual Budget Scrutiny round was due to start in October via the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Measures included a focus on recruitment and retention of staff, thereby reducing spend on agency and interim staff. The process for removing the latter, once permanent staff were in place, to be discussed outside the meeting.

RA 7 – Return on investment portfolio – Property Investment Fund - It was noted that the activities linked to this KPI (including the properties invested in) would be reviewed as part of the Budget scrutiny process, commencing in October 2023.

PG6 and PG8 – Percentage of waste, composted and reused/Total household tonnes – It was noted that more data was required in order to assess the performance of the service. Government guidance was awaited on future recycling measures – this would inform discussions on additional items to be included in the recycling process.

PG6 – Percentage of waste recycled, composted and reused – Was the target for this KPI consistent with the target included in the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP)? The target in the CEAP was 70% compared to 52% for PG6. It was confirmed that the move to alternate weekly collection was estimated to deliver a 10% increase in recycling which would be a big step towards the 70% target in the CEAP. Officers agreed to review the target in the CEAP compared to the current KPI target.



PG8 – Total household tonnes – how many new households were there and what was their impact on the increase in total household waste? Officers undertook to provide further information on the number of new households contributing to the waste stream.

RA3 – Completion to time and budget of regeneration projects (Residential works – What was the current situation with the flats adjacent to the Carnival Hub? It was confirmed that a new contractor would be appointed shortly to complete the works. A date for occupancy would be confirmed in due course.

RA4 – Occupancy rate of WBC-owned Regeneration units – what proportion of the units were currently rent bearing? It was confirmed that this information would be checked and provided for Members.

CEX9 – Proportion of Wokingham resident pupils eligible for Free School Meals in Wokingham Borough schools – Would this indicator be more useful if it set out the number of pupils eligible for FSM and the percentage who actually received them? It was confirmed that officers would look at the presentation of this KPI. However, it may be difficult to determine the actual number of eligible pupils who were eligible for FSM.

RA2 – Participation in leisure activities to support those who may be experiencing social isolation – The service narrative referred to increasing levels of demand, but the target for Q3 and Q4 was decreasing. What were the reasons for the reducing target? Officers undertook to investigate this issue and provide further information for Members.

AS4 – New, permanent admissions to residential or nursing care homes (65+) – This KPI was reported as Red, yet the service narrative indicated that the Council was performing well compared to other local authorities. It was suggested that officers and the Executive Member consider the presentation of this indicator. KPIs which were Red over a sustained period should include contextual narrative which explains the background, actions undertaken and impacts for residents.

CEX6 – Channel shift – The report referred to an actual of 87.3%. What did this 87.3% refer to? Officers agreed to look at the service narrative to provide more clarity and to consider the relationship between channel shift and improved satisfaction.

PG9 – All recorded crime in Wokingham Borough (excluding fraud) – It was noted that the majority of crime categories had seen an increase in Quarter 1. Recent news stories about shoplifting were worrying. It was confirmed that officers were working with local businesses to discuss measures to prevent shoplifting. Although the KPI reflected activities outside WBC's control, it was felt to be a useful KPI as the data helped the Council in discussions with partners through the Community Safety Partnership.

**RESOLVED** That:

- 1) Prue Bray and supporting officers be thanked for attending the meeting to present the report and answer Member questions;
- 2) performance against the KPIs relevant to the Committee be noted;
- 3) further information/clarification be provided to Members, as set out above;

4) officers be thanked for the improved content and clarity of the performance monitoring report.

### **30. ESTATE INFRASTRUCTURE TASK & FINISH GROUP**

The Committee considered a report, set out at Agenda pages 65 to 134, which gave details of progress against the recommendations made by the Estate Infrastructure Task & Finish Group, which reported in 2020.

The Task & Finish Group had been set up to investigate complaints from residents about delays and frustrations in the adoption of new roads, drainage and open space linked to new housing developments.

Chris Easton (Assistant Director, Highways and Transport), Andy Glencross (Head of Environmental Services) and Alan Lewis (Highways Development Manager) attended the meeting to present the report and answer Member questions.

The report reminded Members that, as developers built new homes, they were required to build supporting infrastructure to support new communities. Each type of infrastructure (roads, open space, play areas, etc.) was controlled by different legal and contractual frameworks, and local or national standards. Housing development usually took place on private land and, as developers were private organisations, there was no obligation for them to seek that the Council adopt new roads and open spaces. If, for example, a new road was not adopted, the Council had no powers to undertake works on that road. That obligation fell to the relevant management company or individual property owners.

Appended to the report was a Local Government Ombudsman report into alleged maladministration by Teignbridge District Council and Devon County Council. The Ombudsman investigation and report referred to the alleged failure of the two councils to secure the completion and adoption of a new estate road. The Ombudsman report highlighted a number of issues addressed in the Task & Finish Group's recommendations.

The 12 recommendations made by the Task and Finish Group were set out in the report along with a summary of progress. The recommendations included increasing public awareness of the infrastructure adoption process, improved maps on the Council website, improved information and briefings for Town and Parish Councils, improved S106 agreements, training for Members and retention of key staff involved in the process.

In the ensuing discussion, Members raised the following points and questions.

In relation to the Task & Finish Group's first recommendation – the Council considers measures to increase public awareness about the adoption of new infrastructure – It was noted that the Frequently Asked Questions did not appear on the "New Residents" section of the website. Housebuyers needed to be aware that, on occasions, estate infrastructure was not adopted and, as a result, there could be financial consequences. It was noted that, frequently, house buyers were not aware of the type of questions to ask. The Council could not force the adoption process to take place. Officers agreed to review the information provided for residents on the relevant website pages. Officers also agreed to consider the potential for including information on the adoption process in the new residents' packs circulated to people moving into the Borough.

In relation to recommendation 2 – the Council considers measures to improve and expand the current interactive maps on its website – The maps did not indicate the roads which

were not adopted and the reasons why they were not adopted. If this information could not be included in the interactive maps, Members suggested that there should, at least, be a list of affected roads. Officers agreed to look at ways to incorporate these suggestions on to the interactive maps on the website.

In relation to recommendation 3 – more regular briefings for Town and Parish Councils – Members noted that Town and Parish Councils were often the first point of contact for residents, so it was essential that they received accurate, up-to-date information to assist them. This would then assist Borough Members in their roles.

**RESOLVED** That:

- 1) Chris Easton, Andy Glencross and Alan Lewis be thanked for attending the meeting to present the report and answer Member questions;
- 2) the original 12 Task & Finish Group recommendations be reaffirmed and progressed, as enhanced by the points raised by Members at the meeting;
- 3) a further update report be submitted to the Committee in 2024/25.

**31. SCRUTINY IMPROVEMENT REVIEW ACTION PLAN**

The Committee considered a report, set out at Agenda pages 135 to 140, which gave details of progress following the Scrutiny Improvement Review (SIR), carried out by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny in 2022.

The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny concluded that conditions for successful scrutiny were clearly present at Wokingham; there was a shared understanding from Members and officers that good governance involved scrutiny and, when used effectively, scrutiny could add value to decision-making.

All of those interviewed as part of the SIR believed that improvements could be made to make scrutiny more effective and to add greater value. Members recognised the benefits of change and improvement, and this presented a good opportunity for the Council to further develop the way in which scrutiny operated. Strengthening the role of Overview and Scrutiny could also aim to elevate the status of scrutiny, so that it was recognised as a strategic function and was fully utilised as a resource to support continuous improvement.

Following the review a SIR Action Plan was developed in order to ensure that key recommendations were implemented and reported back to Members. The Action Plan was appended to the report for Member discussion and comment.

The report stated that the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny would be arranging a feedback session later in the year (probably at the end of 2023) in order to explore Member views about progress following the SIR and opportunities for further development of Overview and Scrutiny at WBC.

In the ensuing discussion, Members raised the following points and questions.

It was noted that opportunities for improving the Overview aspect of Overview and Scrutiny had been discussed with the Leader of the Council at the previous meeting. This could be supported by early sight of the strategic forward plan, currently being developed by officers. The five Scrutiny Chairs should seek regular discussions with the relevant

Executive Members and Directors to “horizon scan” and identify items for early consideration by the relevant Committees.

Members highlighted the need for more effective/streamlined reports to Members. Reports should aim to describe the issue under consideration, the options considered, the proposal, risks and financial implications, timeline, proposed outcomes/benefits for the community and measures of success. It was agreed that the Overview and Scrutiny Committees should also consider feedback reports on the actions taken and any outcomes from previous recommendations.

The importance of Member training was emphasised. This would be important in 2024, when the all-out elections may result in a larger than usual intake of new Members. Budget Scrutiny training was especially important in the current climate. It was noted that a Budget Scrutiny training session was scheduled for 10 October 2023. Members were asked to submit comments on any specific issues they wished to cover in the Budget Scrutiny training session. The training should include analysis of the different roles of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Audit Committee.

**RESOLVED** That:

- 1) the Scrutiny Improvement Review Action Plan be noted and amended to reflect the points raised by Members at the meeting;
- 2) officers be requested to produce reports to Overview and Scrutiny in line with the requirements agreed by the Committee;
- 3) Members submit suggestions for topics to be covered at the Budget Scrutiny training session on 10 October 2023;
- 4) the proposed SIR feedback session with the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny be noted.

### **32. CONSIDERATION OF THE CURRENT EXECUTIVE AND IEMD FORWARD PROGRAMMES**

The Committee considered a copy of the Executive Forward Programme and Individual Executive Member Decision (IEMD) Forward Programme, as set out on Agenda pages 141 to 152.

Members referred to the item on WBC Future Office Provision, due to be considered at the Executive on 28 September 2023. It was agreed that a report on this issue be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee on 4 October 2023.

**RESOLVED** That:

- 1) the Executive and IEMD Forward Programmes be noted;
- 2) a report on the proposed Executive item - WBC Future Office Provision, be requested for the Committee’s next meeting.

### **33. O&S COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMMES**

The Committee considered its forward work programme and that of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees as set out on Agenda pages 153 to 172.

In the ensuing discussion, Members raised the following points.

- An item on the Borough-wide Sports Pitch Strategy be added to the Committee's work programme;
- An item on WBC Future Office Provision be added to the Agenda for the Committee's next meeting on 4 October 2023;
- Representatives from Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks be invited to a future meeting of the Committee;
- Items on SEND Strategy and SEND Voices be added to the work programme for the Children's Services O&S meeting on 1 November 2023;
- A special meeting of the Community and Corporate O&S Committee be held on 9 October 2023 to consider Local Transport Plan 4;
- A Budget Scrutiny Member training session be held on 10 October 2023.

**RESOLVED:** That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programmes, as amended, be approved.

#### **34. ACTION TRACKER**

The Committee considered the regular Action Tracker report, as set out on Agenda pages 173 to 174.

In the ensuing discussion, Members raised the following points.

- Officers be requested to provide an all-Member briefing on the Children's Services Safety Valve project;
- Follow-up information on progress relating to the Committee's recommendations on the Bus Enhanced Partnership, be circulated to the Committee.

**RESOLVED:** That the Action Tracker, as amended, be approved.

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# A Vision For Our Borough

## Overview and Scrutiny update – 4<sup>th</sup> October '23



**We want our Borough to be a place that people can call home;  
a place where they feel safe, happy and healthy.**

**A home, where they feel a true sense of belonging and are  
part of a strong community.**

16





## Why | Community vision aims

We want to improve our links with communities and develop stronger partnership working to transform the way we work and shape a community vision. We want to do this by:



**Listening** to the voice of residents, communities, and partners to involve people in shaping the vision and creating solutions.



Developing strategic partnerships that enable and **empower** partners to work with us and develop effective and sustainable solutions to local challenges.



Unlocking **community power**, creating a different and better way of working with residents, that focuses on true partnerships to deliver better outcomes for local communities.

## How | A vision that is shaped collaboratively

Over the past 4 months, we have worked with a consultancy, New Local, to start development of a Vision for Wokingham Borough.

We worked with partners to:

- ✓ Identify key themes / priorities for the borough's future that inform the vision
- ✓ Gauge stakeholder appetite for involvement in co-development of the vision
- ∞ ✓ Explore potential governance and processes to develop the vision

One of the key principles that emerged from the sessions with New Local is that the vision **must be co-produced and not led just by the borough council.**

# How | New Local Vision sessions with partners



Three workshops held between  
19 January to March 2023



With c. 150 attendances  
across the workshops



With community representation from  
50+ organisations e.g. Town and Parish  
Councils, NHS Royal Berkshire, CLASP,  
Age UK and TVP

## During these workshops, six key engagement themes were identified:

Health and  
well-being

Equality,  
inclusion and  
opportunity

Environment  
and  
Sustainability

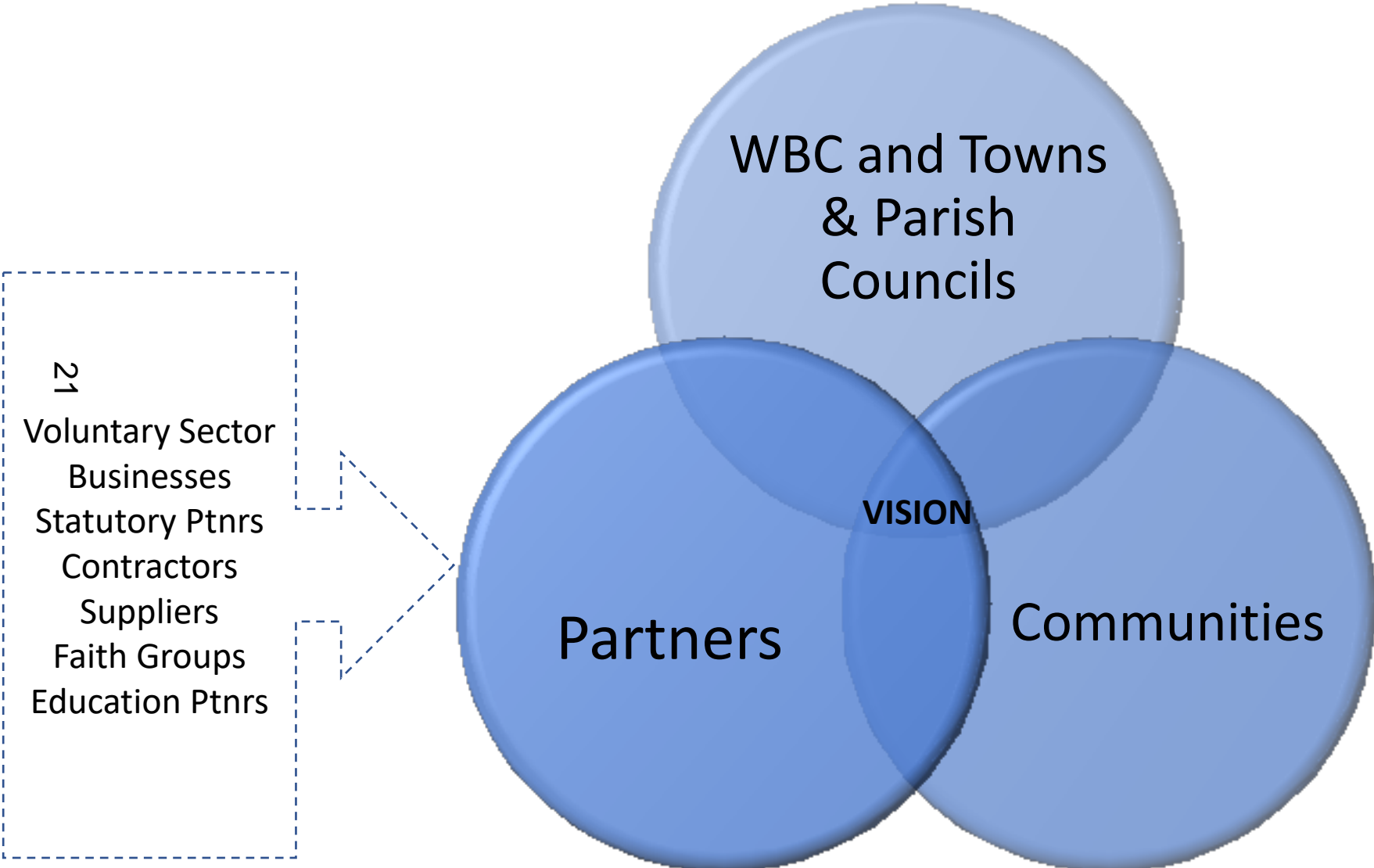
Community,  
engagement,  
action and  
empowerment

Engaging with  
young people

Engaging with  
businesses



# How | Developing a collaborative partnership working culture

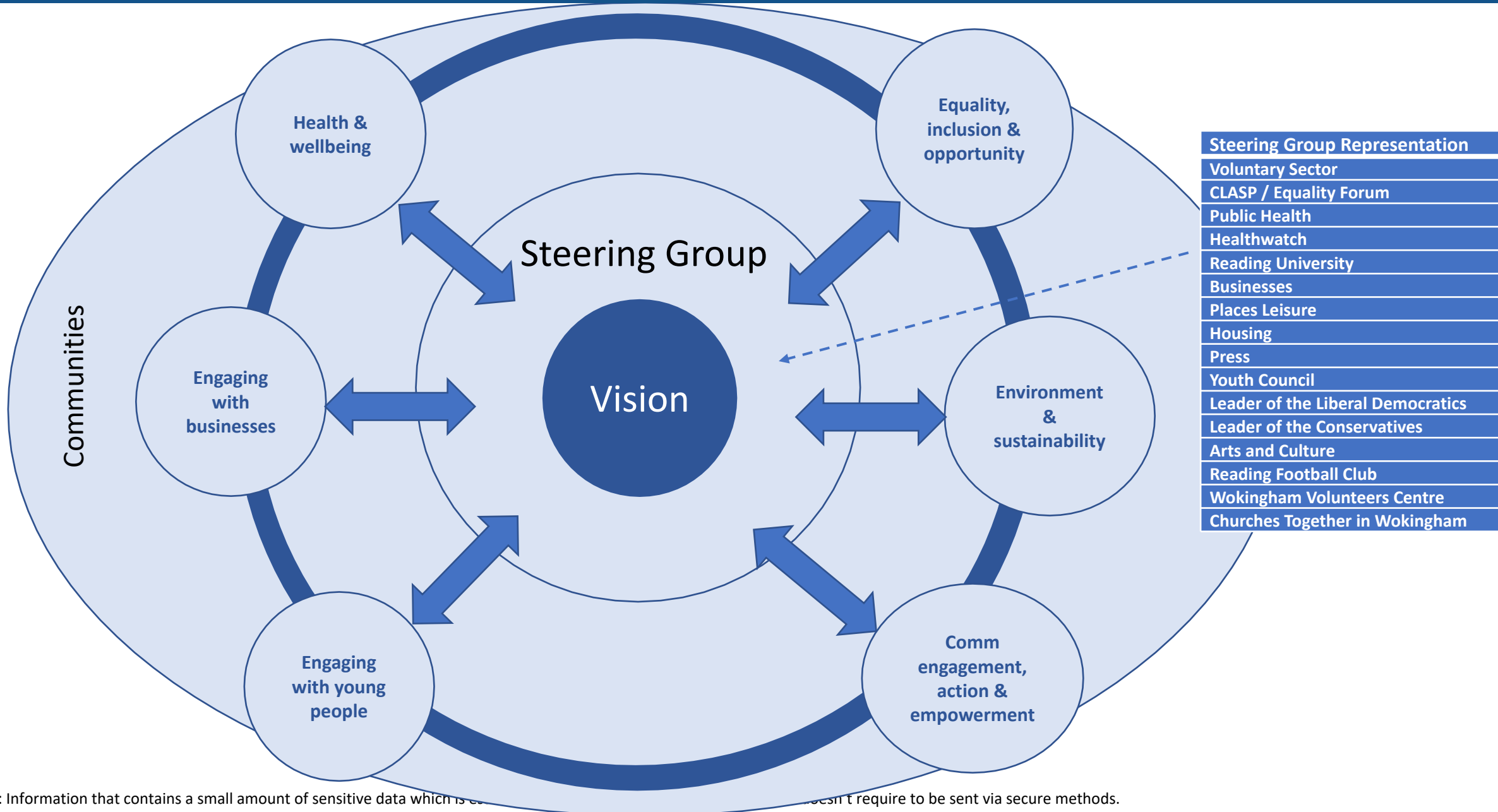


# How | Shaping the vision together



# How | Governance, steering and involvement groups

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- Representation from the Youth Council and Reading university on the external steering group
- The Youth Council working on a 'logo' and branding for the vision work
- Emmbrook school volunteered to support the gathering of feedback directly from their students
- Bradbury centre volunteers supporting in the gathering of feedback from young people that they work with
- Various voluntary sector charities feeding in the voice of families/young people

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# How | Benchmarking and case studies

- We have reached out to other LA's to gather feedback and learn from their experiences
- We attended New Local Conference where we heard from leaders – 'The Wigan Deal'
- Heard from other LA's around how they help to facilitate 'community power'



## Camden 2025

Camden has a proud, rebellious spirit that throughout its history has seen communities come together to tackle problems, and to bring about real social change.

Camden 2025 sets out our vision for the borough in 2025, a place where everyone contributes to our shared goal of achieving a safe, fair, creative and active community.

We want to make Camden a better borough – a place where everyone has a chance to succeed and where nobody gets left behind.

Together, we will create a place that works for everyone, and where everybody has a voice.

## Barking and Dagenham Together – Borough Manifesto

We are London's growth opportunity. And over the next 20 years we will join forces to embrace and harness this change so it benefits everyone. We will ensure every resident has a fair opportunity to succeed in a rapidly changing world. And we will collaborate so that by 2037 Barking and Dagenham will be...

a place where every resident has access to lifelong learning, employment and opportunity.	a place with high-quality education and sustained attainment for all residents.	a place which supports residents to achieve independent, healthy, safe and fulfilling lives.
a place with sufficient, accessible and varied housing.	<b>"a place people are proud of and want to live, work, study and stay"</b>	a place where businesses and communities grow and thrive.
a friendly and welcoming Borough with strong community spirit.		a place with great arts and culture for everyone, leading change in the Borough.
a place where everyone feels safe and is safe.	a place where everyone is valued and has the opportunity to succeed.	a clean, green and sustainable Borough.

2



Together, we will create a place that works for everyone, and where everybody has a voice

## Introduction



In 2015, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of our borough and our community. Together we looked back to the start of Barking and Dagenham, reflecting on our proud history of ambition, achievement and change. We are a borough of change. Over the centuries we have transitioned time and time again, adapting to local and national changes. Whether fishing, manufacturing or otherwise, industries have come and gone. And as we become better connected to the rest of the region and the wider world, our community grows and becomes more diverse. However, if our history and heritage have taught us anything, it is that we are one borough, one community. No matter what change we face, we must face it together.

These targets aim to be long-term in nature, ambitious but realistic and need to be stuck to from today and for the next 20 years.

Nearly 3,000 residents have helped us create our vision, this document. We must look forward, together, and aspire to build a better Barking and Dagenham, where no-one is left behind.

Whilst our 50th anniversary celebrated the history of our community, we now look to the future and to the vision for Barking and Dagenham. In 2015 an Independent Growth Commission set out a blueprint for the future of the Borough. This highlighted our proud heritage, history of re-invention and untapped potential. It also, however, illustrated just how far the borough has to go to reach that potential.

One of the Growth Commission's recommendations was the development of a long-term vision for Barking and Dagenham that could harness the energy, creativity and ambition of it's residents. The development of the vision, aspirations and a series of stretching targets should be used to both engage residents but also help build a strong partnership between key stakeholders.

One of the Growth Commission's recommendations was the development of a long-term vision for Barking and Dagenham that could harness the energy, creativity and ambition of it's residents. The development of the vision, aspirations and a series of stretching targets should be used to both engage residents but also help build a strong partnership between key stakeholders.

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# Community vision | Strategy alignment



**Community Vision co-produced by partner organisations stakeholders and community**, sets out both **the long-term vision** and the ambitions or **shared strategic priorities** for Wokingham borough.

**Council Plan** sets out what WBC wants to achieve for each strategic priority in the vision, what we will do to get there and what success looks like – the outcomes we are working towards. **Medium Term Financial Plan** is the three-year plan to deliver the services within the available resources. It enables the Council to allocate its financial resources to achieve its priority outcomes.

**Strategies and Change Plans** describe the direction of travel or change we want to make to our services, and the broad steps on the journey in support of delivering our strategic priorities.

**Directorate, and Service Plans** describe what actions will be taken and the contribution of each Council team to the delivery of our Council Plan strategic priorities. through service delivery and implementing strategies and change plans.

**Individual work plans** and targets set out the specific actions for each individual. These link the work of everyone to the service, and directorate plans so that everyone can identify how they are contributing to the delivery of the Council Plan priorities and improving outcomes.

# Council Plan Update

27 **Overview & Scrutiny 4th October 2023**



**WOKINGHAM  
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

# Why | Council Plan Aims

- The Council Plan aims to deliver a one-year interim plan, and a new five-year council plan that prioritises activity for council services, is aligned to the outcomes in the Community Vision and Strategy and the Medium-Term Financial Plan and provides a framework by which the priorities will be measured for success.
- The current council plan ends in 2024 and will be refreshed to extend to 2025. A new plan is then required to set the direction and priorities for council activity in the next five years, covering the period 2025-2030.
- A new council plan gives the opportunity to align council priorities better with a longer-term community vision, the financial planning cycle and an improved strategic planning cycle, including service plans, team plans and appraisals. The short-term delivery of an interim plan will enable the new five-year plan to be driven by the community vision, with opportunity for an extended period of discovery and stakeholder engagement.

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# What | Council Plan Objectives



To develop a new council plan that is aligned to the Community Vision and Medium-Term Financial Plan and sets out 'how' they will be delivered and a refreshed one-year interim plan.



To engage with a range of stakeholders to set the council's direction and priorities for the next five years

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Create a performance framework for tracking and reporting on our delivery of the council plan



Inform delivery of the Community Vision & Council Plan at a service level



- Research and benchmark what other local authorities have developed for their Council Plan



- Develop a wire frame demonstrating the layout and the content for the Council Plan

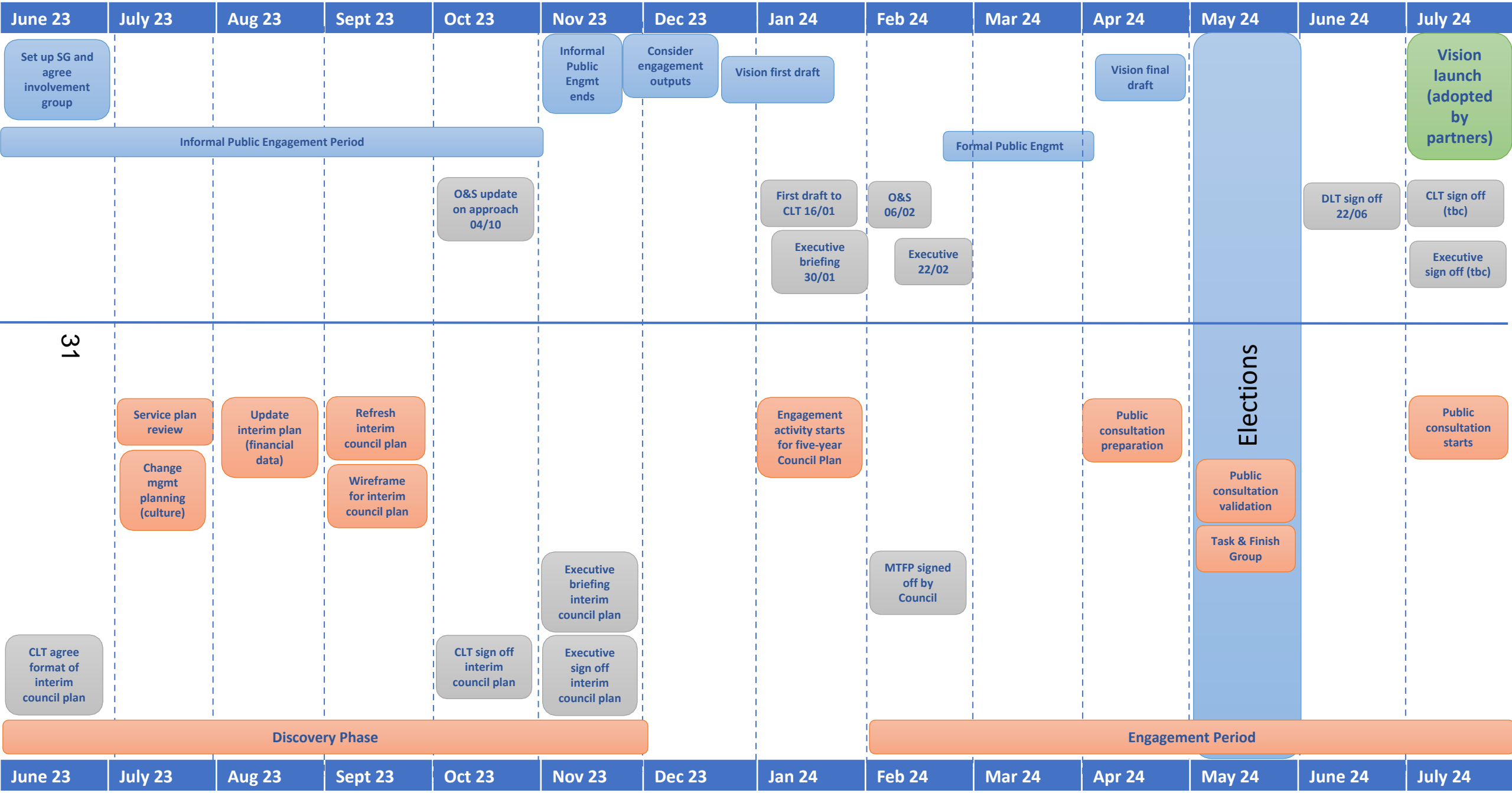


- Review the Community Vision, Medium Term Financial Strategy and Service Plans to identify the key deliverables for the Council Plan

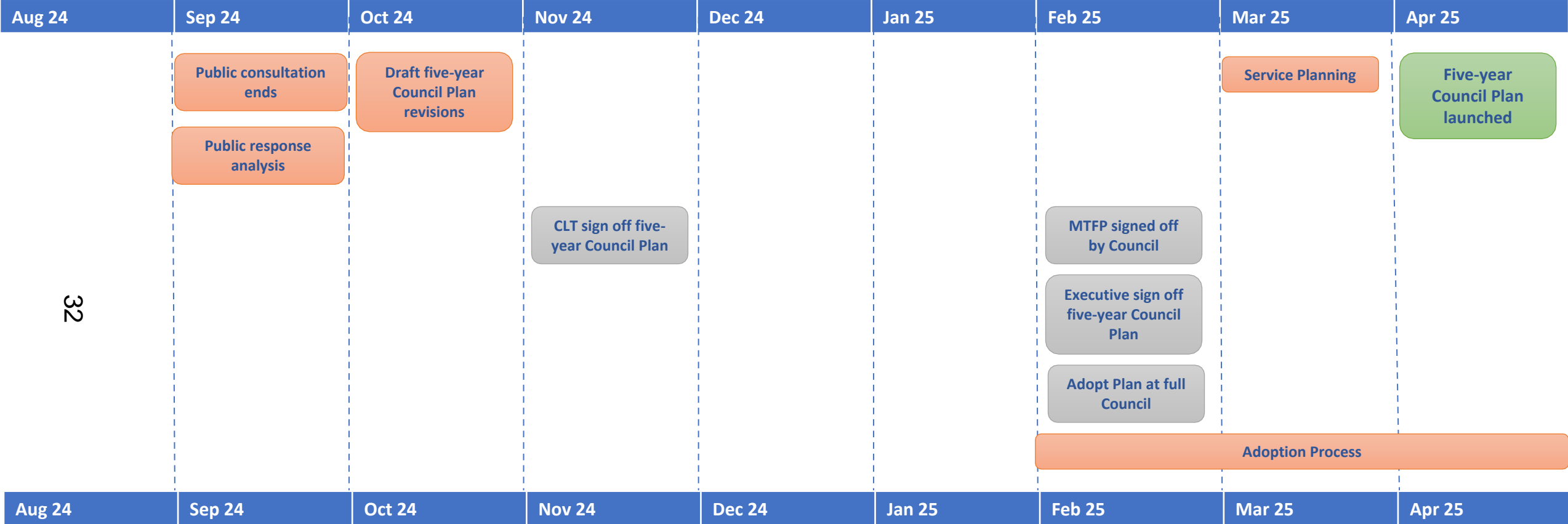


- Prepare an engagement plan ensuring that stakeholders both internally and externally are included, learn from the work undertaken on engagement for the vision, share progress.

# Community Vision and Council Plan timeline



# Community Vision and Council Plan timeline



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<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Wokingham Borough Council, Future Office Provision</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee on 4 October 2023
<b>WARD</b>	(All Wards);
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	Neil Carr, Scrutiny Officer

## **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

At its meeting on 11 September 2023, the Committee considered the Executive Forward Programme and noted that the Executive was due to consider a report on the Council's future office accommodation provision at its meeting on 28 September 2023.

Members requested that this item be brought to the next meeting of the Management Committee for discussion and consideration of potential recommendations to the Executive.

The 28 September Executive report is appended to this report.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Committee:

1. considers the attached Executive report on future WBC office accommodation provision;
2. makes recommendations, as appropriate, to the Executive.

## **Background**

The purpose of the Executive report is to consider the Council's current office provision and identify opportunities for a change in approach and provision which could bring financial and social-environmental benefits.

The issue is considered in the context of the current and future financial pressures on the authority and a review of how best to use its own assets to help address these pressures.

Any decisions made by the Executive at its meeting on 28 September will be reported to the Management Committee at its meeting on 4 October 2023.

## 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)	Set out in attached Executive report		
Next Financial Year (Year 2)			
Following Financial Year (Year 3)			

<b>Other Financial Information</b>
Set out in attached Executive report

<b>Public Sector Equality Duty</b>
Set out in attached Executive report

<b>Climate Emergency</b>
Set out in attached Executive report

<b>Reasons for considering the report in Closed Session</b>
None

<b>List of Background Papers</b>
None

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<b>Telephone</b> Tel: 0118 974 6000	<b>Email</b> neil.carr@wokingham.gov.uk

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Wokingham Borough Council, Future Office Provision</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	The Executive on Thursday, 28 September 2023
<b>WARD</b>	(All Wards);
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Housing - Stephen Conway

#### **PURPOSE OF REPORT (INC STRATEGIC OUTCOMES)**

The purpose of this report is to consider the Council's current office provision and identify opportunities for a change in approach and provision which could bring financial and social-environmental benefits. The issue is considered in the context of the current and future financial pressures on the authority and a review of how best to use its own assets to help address these pressures.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Executive:

1. Agree in principle that the Council should review its office accommodation provision, including the opportunities for the relocation of its headquarters out of Shute End, to a more appropriately sized and more energy efficient building(s)
2. Agree that 28-38 Peach Street, Wokingham is the preferred alternative headquarters location and, subject to the approval of resources, will be the focus of more detailed feasibility and planning work
3. Approve a Supplementary Estimate of £175,000 within this financial year to fund feasibility, detailed design work and programme and project costs, including external consultancy support and expertise, for the alternative headquarter location
4. Note that updates and outputs from the next stage of feasibility work will be reported back to the Executive.

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Through the efficient use of its own property assets, the Council can drive financial efficiencies by reducing the financial burden of maintaining its property portfolio and ensure that the assets it does hold work as hard and as flexibly as possible. This can provide opportunities to both reduce current ongoing revenue costs and provide capital from the disposal of unrequired assets. The Council's own office accommodation is one of the largest elements of its property holdings. Accommodation ranges in size from the headquarters at Shute End in Wokingham town to smaller satellite offices throughout the Borough and locations where WBC staff co-locate with partner organisations. Changes in working practices during and post the Covid-19 pandemic has meant that the demand for traditional office provision (fixed desks) has reduced significantly. This has given the

authority the opportunity to review the provision in terms of type, quantity and location of office and workspace for the Council's staff. The initial primary focus of this review has been on the Council's existing headquarters at Shute End in Wokingham town. Shute End is the authority's largest and most costly office asset, and subsequently, where the biggest opportunity to generate savings has been identified.

The office accommodation at Shute End extends to a gross internal area of circa 10,600m<sup>2</sup>, is arranged over 4 floors and provides for 800 desk spaces and supporting office functions. Daily surveys of occupancy have been carried out following the cessation of Covid 19 lockdown restrictions. The survey data shows that attendance levels at Shute End are not consistent throughout the week but that the highest daily average desk occupation is 219. This demonstrates that the current desk capacity of the building of 800 represents a significant overprovision, whilst the on-going and future investment costs of the current office represent a significant capital and revenue cost to the Council.

Adapting and changing our own office accommodation is a significant opportunity for the Council to lead by example and demonstrate how it is responsibly responding to the current financial challenges and the changes in modern ways of working by amending its own working practices to meet these challenges. Executive is therefore asked to agree in principle that the Council should review its office accommodation provision, including the opportunities for the relocation of its headquarters out of Shute End, to a more appropriately sized and energy efficient building(s).

A review of the opportunities and feasibility of the relocation of the Council HQ from Shute End to more appropriately sized accommodation has been undertaken to inform this Executive decision. Three opportunities for future headquarters provision have been identified and this report sets out the financial and non-financial appraisal of these options. This appraisal concludes that 28-38 Peach Street, Wokingham (the former Marks & Spencer's building) performs the best and subsequently Executive are asked to note that 28-38 Peach Street is the preferred new headquarters location and, subject to the approval of resource, will be the subject of more detailed feasibility and planning work.

Subject to the approval of Executive, more detailed feasibility and implementation work will be required to fully understand and design and plan for the relocation of the Council's Headquarters from Shute End, to 28-38 Peach Street. Executive are recommended to approve a Supplementary Estimate of £175,000 for within this year 2023-24 to enable the start of the next stage of feasibility work and the appointment of external consultancy support, including a programme manager and planning, design and valuation teams.

Executive are asked to note that updates on and the outputs of feasibility work, including planning and design, will be reported back to the Corporate Leadership Team and Executive on agreed milestones and for decision making when required.

## **BACKGROUND**

In light of the continued significant budgetary pressures the Council faces, and in order to ensure the continued focus of investment towards front line services it is imperative that the authority is as efficient as possible in other areas of the organisation, including the use of its property portfolio. Through the efficient use of its property assets, the Council can drive both financial efficiencies by reducing the financial burden of maintaining its property portfolio and ensure that it has a multi-functional portfolio of assets aligned to future business need and which meets the needs of our communities and residents.

The Council's office accommodation where its workforce is based is one of the largest elements of the Council's property holdings. Accommodation ranges in size from the large headquarters at Shute End in Wokingham town to smaller satellite offices throughout the Borough and locations where WBC staff co-locate with partner organisations.

In line with national trends, our working practices have changed during and post the Covid-19 pandemic, with a significant proportion of staff working a greater proportion of their time from home and/or remotely from the office and significantly reducing the demand for traditional office provision (fixed desks). This has given the authority the opportunity to review the provision in terms of type, quantity and location of office and workspace for the Council's staff in order to ensure that it enables front line services to be delivered in our communities and contributes towards financial efficiencies.

The initial primary focus of this review has been on the council's existing headquarters and primary office base at Shute End in Wokingham town, where the majority of staff are based. It is the authority's largest and most costly office asset, and subsequently, where the biggest opportunity to generate savings has been identified.

The work to date has also preliminarily identified other opportunities for further satellite workspaces, potentially with partner organisations, that would all contribute to the efficient and localised based provision of services, utilising both the existing property portfolio and new and expanded opportunities. These opportunities and the outcomes of feasibility work will be reported back to Executive in due course.

## **BUSINESS CASE**

### **Existing office accommodation at Shute End Headquarters**

The office accommodation at Shute End extends to a gross internal area of circa 10,600m<sup>2</sup>, is arranged over 4 floors and includes:

- 800 Desk Spaces
- Meeting rooms.
- Council Chamber and committee rooms
- Reception and back-office functions
- Political Offices
- Registrars Service

Desk space and meeting rooms equate for the majority (90%) of the useable floor area within the offices.

Current demand for desk space in Shute End is driven by business need and staff choice on how to work, following the cessation of any restrictions to working practices in the offices in March 2022. For the majority of officers, the Council operates a SMART working policy, with SMART working defined as “does not require a fixed desk, will use any combination of working from home, using a hot desk in the office, using a touchdown point in the office, and/or being “out and about” in various locations.” Where driven by business need, including the nature of the work undertaken, some staff and teams are required to locate themselves in the office during working hours and/or for a minimum period of hours or days per week.

Daily surveys of occupancy have been carried out following the cessation of Covid 19 lockdown restrictions. The survey data shows that attendance levels at Shute End are not consistent throughout the week but that the highest daily average desk occupation is 219. This demonstrates that the current desk capacity of the building of 800 represents a significant overprovision.

The current provision of office accommodation at Shute End, represents a significant capital and revenue cost to the Council.

In the 2022-23 financial year the property costs for the operation of Shute End (revenue) were circa £1.1m. This comprised the cost of utilities, business rates, insurance, security and planned and reactive maintenance, but excludes staffing costs.

As a way of part mitigating these operational costs, in December 2022, the office accommodation at Shute End was consolidated down into two floors, with significant areas of the building closed down and available desk numbers reduced from 800 to 405. This consolidation has reduced annual running costs (heating, lighting, cleaning etc.) by £63,000 per annum and has achieved a one-off business rates reduction of £17,000.

The Shute End offices require on-going investment to ensure they continue to meet legislative health and safety requirements and provide an appropriate quality workspace. A key area where future investment will be required at Shute End is to ensure compliance with the Modern Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES). The Shute End offices currently has an EPC rating of D. The Government confirmed in the Energy White Paper (2020) that by 2030 non-residential properties will be required to achieve an EPC rating of B. Improving the energy efficiency of Shute End to meet the necessary MEES would incur a very significant capital cost.

Despite the recent savings achieved, the ongoing revenue cost of the overprovision of office accommodation, together with future capital costs to meet legislative energy efficiency standards, indicates that the continued occupation of Shute End in its current configuration represents a significant financial burden on the authority. Occupying a more appropriately sized and more efficient accommodation could substantially reduce these costs in future years.

Adapting and changing our own office accommodation is a significant opportunity for the Council to lead by example and demonstrate how it is responsibly responding to the current financial challenges and the changes in modern ways of working by amending its own working practices to meet these challenges. The opportunity also presents an opportunity to demonstrate how the authority is utilising its own property portfolio to

ensure it occupies and uses its assets in the most energy efficient way, in line with the aspirations of our own Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP).

Therefore, for the reasons set out above the Executive is asked to agree in principle that the Council should review its office accommodation provision, including the opportunities for the relocation of its headquarters out of Shute End, to a more appropriately sized and more energy efficient building(s).

### **Criteria for future headquarters accommodation**

When considering suitable alternative headquarters, a number of criteria have been applied.

#### **1. Appropriate capacity and size**

In view of the functions currently provided for within Shute End and an understanding of the approach to service delivery, future headquarters accommodation will be required to provide:

- 225 desk capacity (based on data from current occupancy surveys and approaches to SMART working)
- A range of work, collaboration and meeting spaces
- Provision of offices for political leadership and Corporate Leadership Team
- Reception
- Back of House support facilities
- Dedicated space for Registrar's statutory functions and safe storage of legal documents
- Appropriate provision for staff, councillor and visitor car parking

#### **2. Availability**

In order to deliver service and financial efficiencies as quickly as possible alternative premises should be available in the short-term and not encumbered by lengthy leases or potentially lengthy acquisition processes.

This has led to a focus on options already within the Council's ownership, as this minimises the time risk to the council associated with completing a new property transaction. Utilising of our own existing properties would also ensures the authority is making more efficient use of its existing assets in line with the objectives set out above.

However, options of buildings not within the Council's ownership but which could be available in the short-term to be rented by the authority will be considered in a future assessment.

#### **3. Environmental Credentials**

All options considered should be able to achieve as a minimum the requirement for Display Energy Certificate (DEC) Level B by 2030, but preferably could achieve as close as feasibly possible to CEAP ambitions of Net Zero Carbon performance.

The capital cost of investment in the building required to bring it up to these standards would be considered in the financial appraisal of the option.

#### *4. Location*

The Council's headquarters is currently located in Wokingham town, which is the largest area of population within the Borough and an accessible location for the majority of Borough residents and Council staff. Council staff also contribute to the Wokingham town centre economy and support the regeneration programme in the town, increasing footfall and spending money through purchases made in the town on lunch breaks or at the beginning and end of the working day.

Accessibility to Council services for our residents is important and therefore sites not accessible and outside of development limits (e.g in the countryside) have not been considered.

Given the criteria set out above, especially relating to size and capacity, the options for an alternative headquarters have all been identified within Wokingham town to date. However when considering opportunities for any leasing options, suitable properties outside of Wokingham town may be identified and will be assessed accordingly.

#### *Options for re-provision of additional functions*

There are two key functions currently undertaken at Shute End which need to be re-provided for and which may need to be and/or could benefit from being re-provided separately to a new Council HQ.

- *Complex and/or sensitive customer interactions.*

There are a number of customer interactions that currently occur at Shute End which are sensitive due to the nature of the issues being addressed and to individual customers. These include the 'Front Doors' for Housing enquiries, and Childrens and Adults Services clients, and Children's Services Conferencing Facility. In discussions with the relevant services, it is considered these interactions would be better served from an alternative setting to the formal and public office setting of a new HQ. Alternative options, within the council's existing portfolio and including through the development of Community Hubs in locations across the borough, have been identified to meet the requirements of these functions and the next phase of this project will review these options in greater detail.

- *Civic meeting space, including the Council Chamber*

Meeting space is required to support and enable the Council's democratic processes including committee and other statutory meetings. Currently the main meeting rooms used for these purposes are:

- The Council Chamber comprising of a fixed seating area for councillors with a capacity of 55, as well as desks and seating for officers and a viewing gallery. The core function of this space is to accommodate Full Council meetings which



- occur 10 to 11 times a year in the evenings. Although this is the core function of the Chamber, it is also used regularly for meetings with a large capacity requirement, including Planning Appeals and internal departmental meetings
- David Hicks 1 and 2 committee rooms which have capacity to accommodate meetings for up to 22 and 16 people (seated) respectively. The rooms host a variety of committee and statutory meetings including the council’s Executive, Planning Committee, and various Overview and Scrutiny meetings. Most of these meetings occur outside of normal office hours in the evening

Given the need to ensure our assets work as efficiently and as flexibly as they can, a like for like replacement of the current Council Chamber, with fixed furniture and IT provision for use at full capacity 10/11 times a year, does not fit this ethos. In addition, the alternative headquarters buildings (see below) will not be able to accommodate a dedicated Council Chamber of a similar size. A number of other similar local authorities have approached the provision of a Council Chamber in a flexible and at times innovative way and we have used these as examples of how else the Council Chamber could be provided for. Alternative options to meet this accommodation need have been identified, including the use of other buildings currently owned by WBC, and will be considered in further detail as part of the next phase of this project.

Given that the majority of the committee meetings held in David Hicks 1 and 2 are held outside of normal office hours, it is considered that meeting rooms within a new HQ could accommodate this requirement whilst still being available for use during normal working hours.

### Potential Alternative Accommodation Options

Based on the specification set out above, the options identified for a future HQ within the Council’s existing property portfolio were:

1. Shute End but with consolidated floorspace
2. 28-38 Peach Street (Former Marks and Spencers store)
3. Rubra 2, Mulberry Business Park.

A fourth option was considered comprising a ‘campus’ arrangement including the former Wokingham Library, Resource House and Seymour House on Denmark Street, Wokingham. However, an opportunity was identified to secure a letting of Resource House to the NHS in partnership with our own Adults Services team, that letting has now progressed and the residual properties are not of sufficient size to meet the needs of a headquarters provision.

Option 1, Remain at Shute End, is based on the existing layouts and desk capacities currently in place on the Lower Ground and Ground floor levels at Shute End. Options 2 and 3 were reviewed by external consultants Arup to give an indicative view of capacity and understanding of how far they could meet the design specification.

The estimated capacity of each of the options is shown in the table below.

Property	Gross Internal Area (m2)	Estimated Capacity
Shute End – Consolidated to lower and ground floors only	5714	348 (existing desk numbers at lower & ground floor)

28-38 Peach Street	2557	253
Rubra 2, Mulberry Business Park	1901	177

Rubra 2 does not have sufficient capacity to meet the required 225 desk capacity plus other floorspace requirements. However, it has been retained as an option for consideration in case its performance in the financial and non-financial assessments warrant its further consideration if capacity requirements can be reduced.

### **Assessment of Options.**

The three options were assessed and scored from both a financial and non-financial perspective.

### **Financial Assessment.**

A financial analysis has been undertaken reviewing the revenue and capital costs and incomes and values associated with each of the options.

#### *Capital works cost*

Costs to convert and/or refurbish the building that would become the new headquarters have been estimated, on a build cost /m2 with reference to BCIS tender price indices, inclusion of an assumption that the new headquarters will achieve a DEC rating of B as a minimum under the MEES legislation, and the required re-provision of Information Management Technology systems and infrastructure.

#### *Capital receipts from surplus assets*

For each of the three options it has been assumed that the competing/alternate properties are surplus to the Councils requirements and would be disposed of to generate a capital receipt (based on residential land value). Valuations of the assets were undertaken by an external consultant in January 2023.

Executive will note that, subject to the approval of Executive of this paper, the Shute End site is included in the WBC Sites Promotion paper to be considered later in this agenda for residential development.

#### *Net Capital Position*

The Net Capital Position outlined below therefore assumes the generation of a capital receipt from the disposal of the alternate options, minus the estimated capital works for the refurbishment of the new HQ building.

#### *Operating costs (revenue)*

Costs of operating the building as the headquarters have been estimated including utilities (assuming DEC rating of B), business rates, maintenance, cleaning and insurance.

### *Potential for income generation*

Specific to the Shute End Consolidation option, the estimated revenue costs assume the letting of the unused floors of Shute End following consolidation of Council office accommodation down to Lower Ground and Ground Floors of the building.

Prevailing market conditions at the time will determine whether this is viable. However, an external review undertaken in early 2023 indicated that the office market in the town is somewhat depressed, with most agents citing a substantial amount of vacant office space available at the time. Failure to let the empty 'surplus' space at Shute End would result in the Council continuing to incur the running costs of the whole building.

In the event surplus space is let to a third party the costs could be mitigated (and potentially an income generated) for the duration of the letting only. This option therefore represents a significant and ongoing financial risk.

The above considerations have been incorporated into a full financial analysis, with an option appraisal based on a ten-year cashflow and net present value. A financial summary of the options is set out in the table below with a financial analysis based on cost per desk. All assumptions are relevant as at the date of the valuations (July 2023).

<b>Property</b>	<b>Capacity</b>	<b>Net Capital Released (£,000)</b>	<b>Net Revenue Costs (£,000) pa</b>	<b>Cost per desk (£)</b>	<b>Cost of oversupply* (£,000)</b>
Shute End Consolidated	348	1,090	450	1,292	159
28-38 Peach Street	253	5,470	245	970	27
Rubra 2	177	8,240	178	1005	<b>UNDERSUPPLY</b>

\* Cost of oversupply assumes demand of 225 desk provision.

This analysis shows that Rubra 2 offers the best net capital position, due to the more limited capital costs of refurbishing the building for Council use compared to the other options, and the two alternative assets (Shute End and 28-38 Peach Street) having higher capital values and the ability to generate larger capital receipt upon disposal. Shute End offers the lowest net capital position as the Shute End site has the highest capital value and that value is foregone if the site remains in office use and is not developed.

This analysis shows that the total running costs of Shute End are by far the highest of all options even if one assumes the unlikely scenario of income being generated from unused floors. And even in this case, on a unit (per desk) basis it is the highest. The other two options have a lower on-going revenue cost.

### **NON-FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT (PESTLE ASSESSMENT)**

Each of the 3 options has been subject to a non-financial assessment (PESTLE review – political, economic social, technology, legal, environmental), assessing how far the options deliver against the Council's key objectives in the Council Plan. The table below summarises this scoring (1 poor to 5 good).

Corporate Objective	Measure	Shute End	28-38 Peach Street	Rubra 2
Being the best we can be	“Fitness for purpose of office” - how suited is the building to providing a more modern office?	3	4	4
Being the best we can be	Split site “inefficiency” - logically better to operate from a single site than from two separate locations	5	5	2
Delivering the right homes in the right places	Release of housing land/units to the market - ability of the option to release land for housing	2	5	5
Provide safe and strong communities	Town centre regeneration – organisation at the centre of the town - opportunity to enhance the town centre and keep spending power in the town centre	2	4	1
Enjoying a clean and green borough	Carbon / net zero impact - ability to contribute to carbon reduction	3	3	3
Being the best we can be	Value for money - deliverable cost:benefit	2	4	5
Enriching lives	Staff wellbeing – most suitable working environment for staff	4	4	3
Being the best we can be	Civic decision making in the community – potential for a more distributed workforce and Council meetings	2	5	5
Changing the way we work for you	Driving organisational change – helping support the wider transformation of the Council	2	5	4
		<b>2.78</b>	<b>4.33</b>	<b>3.56</b>

The PESTLE review demonstrates that alternative headquarter sites can deliver an improved office environment, potential housing units from a released site, better value for money, good staff wellbeing and help drive organisational change

### Overall performance

The table below takes the above two sections (financial and non-financial assessments) and combines them into one table to give an overall “cost benefit” assessment. It shows the key metrics used in the assessment, financial and non-financial, and ranks the three options against each other using a Red, Amber, Green (RAG) rating. Green is the best option in each category and red the worst option.

### Financial summary with PESTLE scores

Property	Capacity	Net Capital Released (£,000)	Running Costs (£,000) pa	Cost per desk (£)	PESTLE Score
Shute End Consolidated	348	1,090	-450	1,292	2.78
28-38 Peach Street	253	5,470	-245	970	4.33
Rubra 2	177	8,240	-178	1005	3.56

Shute End with four red ratings suggests that it is not fit for purpose into the future. Whilst Rubra 2 has a similar RAG rating to the 28-38 Peach Street it is a much smaller and an under-capacity building. 28-38 Peach Street comes out as the best option when considering the overall PESTLE and per desk cost.

Based on the above assessment, Executive are asked to note that 28-38 Peach Street is the preferred new headquarters location and, subject to the approval of resources, will be the subject of more detailed feasibility and planning work.

### Next Steps

Subject to the approval of Executive, more detailed feasibility and implementation work is now required to fully understand and design and plan for the relocation of the Council’s Headquarters from Shute End, to 28-38 Peach Street, Wokingham.

Further assessment will also be undertaken of any opportunities for the leasing of a property in third party ownership and a cost-benefit analysis of these opportunities will be undertaken to enable a comparison with the current preferred option of relocation to 28-38 Peach Street.

This work will require the establishment of a dedicated cross-departmental project team, supported by external consultancy support. An indicative project plan has been drafted which shows the duration of this project over the next three years, with a new headquarters opening in January 2027.

An initial bid has been made to the Medium-Term Financial Plan for capital budget for this project for years 2024-25 and 2025-26, but this will not be confirmed until the budget setting process concludes in February 2024. In the interim, Executive are recommended to approve a Supplementary Estimate of £175,000 for within this year 2023-24 to enable the start of the next stage of feasibility work and the appointment of external consultancy support, including a programme manager and planning, design and valuation teams.

Executive are asked to note that updates on and the outputs of feasibility work, including planning and design, will be reported back to the Corporate Leadership Team and Executive on agreed milestones and for decision making when required.

### 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)	£175,000	Funding sought though Supplementary Estimate (part of this decision being taken)	Capital

Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£3,075,000	Funding bid has been made to MTFP (to be confirmed)	Capital
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£3,000,000	Funding bid has been made to MTFP (to be confirmed)	Capital

#### **Other Financial Information**

The financial implications of the Council's current headquarters provision and future alternatives are set out in the main body of the report.

Ensuring best value for money from the councils property assets is an important element towards being able to set a balanced budget as the Council continues to face significant budgetary pressures. The realignment of the current provision potentially provides opportunities to significantly reduce ongoing revenue costs and release scarce capital funds.

Monies spent on feasibility and planning and design work are spent at risk until the financial savings are realised on completion of the project. If the project does not complete, then monies spent in the interim will be a non-recoverable revenue cost

#### **Legal Implications arising from the Recommendation(s)**

Agreed that this is within Executive's power and that no Part 2 papers are needed. Otherwise Legal implications are contained within the Report.

#### **Stakeholder Considerations and Consultation**

Key stakeholders in this project include staff, councillors and residents, particularly those who access WBC services face to face. Appropriate opportunities for consultation with stakeholders will be identified through the planning and implementation process. A Staff Change Group will be established to feed into the programme and feasibility and design work.

#### **Public Sector Equality Duty**

An initial assessment has been undertaken. Further assessment and appropriate mitigation measures will be identified throughout the project.

#### **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***

All development will need, as minimum, to meet the Council's relevant planning policies as at the date of the grant of any planning permission and national Building Control legislation. In addition to this, the development of the Council's office accommodation, gives the authority the opportunity to demonstrate how the authority is utilising its own property portfolio to ensure it occupies and uses its assets in the most energy efficient way, in line with the aspirations of our own Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP).

#### **Reasons for considering the report in Closed Session**

None

<b>List of Background Papers</b>
None

<b>Contact</b> Sarah Morgan	<b>Service</b> Commercial Property
<b>Telephone</b> Tel: 0118 908 8371	<b>Email</b> sarah.morgan@wokingham.gov.uk

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<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Unauthorised Encampments Update</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup> October 2023
<b>WARD</b>	None Specific;
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	Director Place and Growth George Framallicco

**OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY**

To provide an update on unauthorised encampments and site provision for 2022-2023 as requested by the committee.

**RECOMMENDATION**

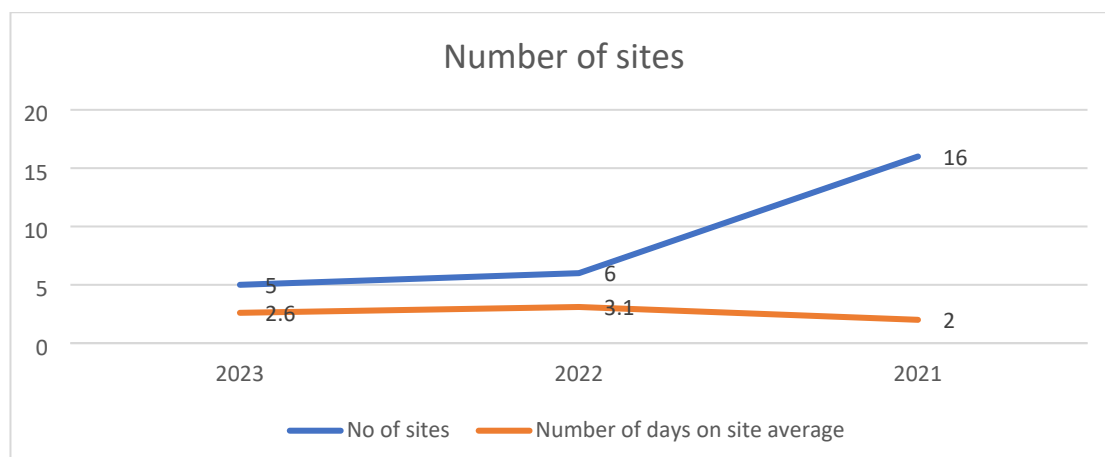
To provide comment and note the report.

**SUMMARY OF REPORT**

This report details how the Council is working to prevent and reduce impact caused by unauthorised encampments, as well as to provide information to the committee about the Council's powers, policies and procedures concerning unauthorised encampments.

**Analysis of the Issue**

For the period 2022 -2023 there was 5 unauthorised encampments in total across the borough, of these 2 were on private land, 2 on town council land and 1 on WBC land. 4 of the 5 encampments were in Woodley and 1 was in Earley. The total cost so far associated with dealing with legal encampments in 2023 (with still 3 of the year remaining) is approximately £8,800 to date. This is a reduction compared with 2021 where there was a total of 16 legal encampments in the borough.



Average Days on Site	2023	2022	2021
Private	4	20.8	3.4
WBC/WTC	2.25	6	2.8

One notable site in Woodley on private land resulted in a lengthy stay of 92 days late in 2022 by a large group. It is believed that this encampment was also linked to an increase reporting of ASB issues in Woodley. As a result, TVP in conjunction with the landowners issued a S61 notice to deal with increase of Anti-social behaviour.

The delay in eviction and Police action was due to the time of year (28<sup>th</sup> Nov 22 – Jan 23) and court / bailiff availability. There were also welfare concerns surrounding 2 pregnant females who were very near to full term.



### Breakdown of Unauthorised Encampments by Wards and Costs

The table below shows the areas of the borough where unauthorised encampments have taken place looking at the most regularly effected wards.

Locations	2023	2022	2021
Woodley	4	2	2
Wokingham	0	0	2
Earley	1	3	4
Shinfield	0	1	1
Crowthorne	0	0	1
Winnersh	0	0	1

	2023	2022	2021
Costs	£8,834.13	£3,995.00	£13,410.00

### Operational Management

In April 2022, the management of responding to unauthorised encampments was transferred into the Anti-Social Behaviour Team (Enforcement and Safety Service) out from the Council's Housing Services department. Due to the use of multi-skilled officers and the out of hours rota, the capacity for responding to unauthorised encampments was increased from 1xFTE cross to a function based in a team of 8

officers trained to attend and act in respect of unauthorised encampments. This has resulted in the Councils ability to respond swiftly and effectively 7 days a week.

Unauthorised encampments is also otherwise known as activity, where persons are camped on land that they do not own and where they do not have permission to reside. This can be in vans, trailers, tents or other temporary structures.

Wokingham Borough Council deals with all unauthorised encampments utilising a joint protocol approach to unauthorised encampments between Thames Valley Police (TVP) and Local Authorities in the Borough.

Once a report has been received ASB Officers attend the site as soon as possible to undertake a welfare check, notes are made of the number of caravans, vehicles, children, adult animals. Information is shared with partners and any welfare concerns are noted and passed to the relevant department if action is required.

A notice to leave is served on the incursion requesting that the encampment leave the land that is being occupied. The Council will make contact made with the Bailiffs to arrange removal if required and currently uses common law powers as described below:

### **Common Law Powers**

- Can only be used by landowner
- Used to regain possession of land (tort of trespass)
- Does not require involvement of the Courts
- Enforced by landowner and/or private bailiffs
- No sanction if trespassers return
- Trespasser who entered land peaceably should be asked to leave and given opportunity to leave prior to force being used
- May use no more force than is reasonable to evict
- If considering use landowner should notify Police
- Police may wish to be present to prevent a Breach of Peace
- If Police believe it is inappropriate to attempt eviction in the circumstances action should be delayed until Police believe safe to continue

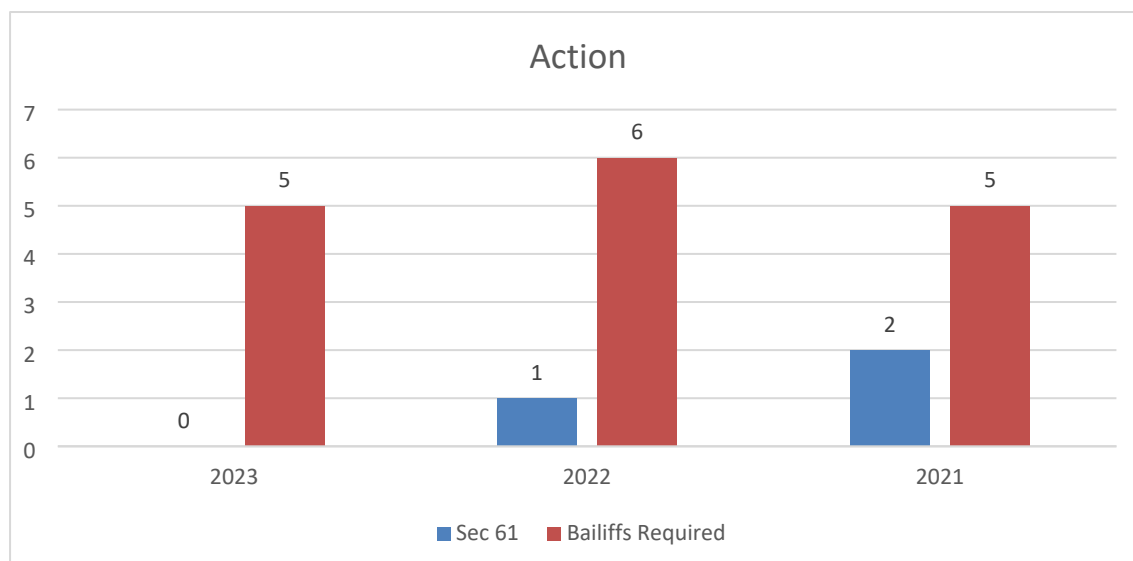
### **Police Powers (Discretionary)**

S61-62 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994

- Can only be used by Police. (Discretionary Power)
- Can be used on any land except the highway
- Used to remove identified individuals from land
- Criteria must be met e.g. 2 or more persons trespassing and either caused damage, been threatening to landowner or agent, have six or more vehicles with them. Landowner must have taken reasonable steps to require persons to leave
- Does not require involvement of Courts
- Enforced by Police
- Return to location within three months carries criminal sanctions

## Use of Bailiff's

In 2019 the Council implemented an approach of using bailiffs to respond to unauthorised encampments, as opposed to using a County Court process that can in some cases take up to a week to get a hearing date and between ten to fifteen days in total to move an encampment from the land. The benefit of using a direct bailiff is the speed by which a response can be delivered. Utilising this approach results in the unauthorised encampments being dealt with quickly, and in turn may also act as a deterrent.



## Welfare Checks

A welfare check is undertaken for each and every unauthorised encampment within the borough. In 2021, six welfare concerns were recorded across the unauthorised encampments. All these concerns were associated with pregnant females. In 2022 only 2 concerns relating to pregnant females was documented.

## Sharing Best Practice

Council Officers are in regular communication with neighbouring communities and other agencies including the police and parish and town councils to share best practice, knowledge and support where needed. This allows for effective working relationships and intelligence sharing across borders and communities.

## Case Example

In August 2023, there was a large unauthorised encampment on Parish and Town Council land in Woodley, there were no Town Council officers available to arrange the removal of the unauthorised encampment, in this case, the ASB team jointly in conjunction with the Town Council Secretary served a Notice to vacate the land and arranged for the Bailiffs to undertake the eviction. The process was completed swiftly and managed to be completed in 1 day.

Moving forward, this now forms ongoing good practice which will remain in place for Towns and Parish Councils to ensure improvements in response times are

maintained. Landowners often rely on council officers for advice on how to deal with an unauthorised encampment on their land and this support and advice will continue.

Council officers keep an updated database of all incursions and details of private landowners' to easily contact the relevant private landowner in the event there is an unauthorised encampment on their land. Alerts will continue to be sent out when an unauthorised encampment appears reminding landowners to make sure land is secure.

Public Information about Unauthorised Encampments: A leaflet has been created by the Council in conjunction with Thames Valley Police and the information is on our main council website

<https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/community-and-safety/communitysafety/unauthorised-encampments/>

A copy of the leaflet is presented in Appendix 2

### Meeting the Future Needs of the GRT Community:

A Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessment or Wokingham (GTAA) was published in September 2017. It found:

- Need for twenty-six to ninety permanent pitches for Gypsies and Travellers 2017/18 – 2035/36. 26 pitches would facilitate households leading a nomadic lifestyle, where as 90 pitches would address both this need and the needs of households which did not travel but wished to live on a caravan site as opposed to bricks and mortar housing.
- Need for a transit site comprising five pitches (each capable of accommodating two caravans).
- No need for Travelling Showpeople plots.

Against this need, several additional residential pitches have been approved and delivered since the assessment base date of 2017. In September 2019 planning permission was granted to enable three extra GRT pitches to be created on site, if required at one of the Council's owned sites A full list of sites where additional pitches has been approved and completed since the study is shown in Table 1 and sites with outstanding planning permissions are detailed in Table 2:

Site	Net Pitches	No's Completed	Year of Completion		
116 Nine Mile Ride	2	2	2019/20		
Belvedere Park	2	2	2019/20		
Belvedere Park	5	2	2020/21		
Little Moor-Plot 1	1	1	2020/21		

**Table 2 Sites with planning permission at 31.03.21 – updated.**

Site	Application No	Net Additional Pitches	Date of Permission	Pitches under construction	Expected Delivery Date	Update
Carters Hill	192012	3	23/09/19	0	2022/23	Not completed, due to expiry of planning permission
Belvedere Park	192174	3	04/10/19	0	2021/22	Fully implemented
Cartref Farm	180072	1	01/11/19	0	2021/22	Not implemented
166 Nine Mile Ride	201143	4	28/01/21	0	2021/22	Implemented

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION**

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

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	0	N/A	N/A
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	0	None	None
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	0	None	None

**Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision**

N/A

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

Wokingham Housing Strategy 2020-204.

**Public Sector Equality Duty**

Enforcement action in respect of unauthorised encampments is compliant with public sector equalities duty.

**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**

Click or tap here to enter text.

**Reasons for considering the report in Part 2**

N/A

**List of Background Papers**

Unauthorised Encampments Leaflet

<https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/community-andsafety/communitsafety/unauthorised-encampments/>

**Contact** Narinder Brar

**Service** Place and Growth

**Telephone No:**

**Email** [Narinder.Brar@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:Narinder.Brar@wokingham.gov.uk)

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# Unauthorised Encampments

Wokingham Borough Council understands that unauthorised encampments can be concerning to communities when they occur. Therefore we have put together some advice and guidance on how the council and landowners can deal with them when they occur.

Unauthorised camping is not a criminal offence. Trespass is a civil offence, giving land owners and local authorities the right to repossess their land by using the due process of the civil law.

## **The land owner is responsible for dealing with and managing any unauthorised encampments on their land;**

- Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) is responsible for all unauthorised encampment on council land.
- The duty of the police is to preserve peace and prevent crime.

You can report an Unauthorised Encampment to Wokingham Borough Council on 0118 974 6000.

Any crime, disorder or nuisance associated with an encampment should be reported to Thames Valley Police on the 101 phone number or via Thames Valley Police website. If it is an emergency call 999.

## **What happens when WBC receive details of an unauthorised encampment?**

Wokingham Borough Council Officers

- Will confirm out who the land belongs to.
- Complete welfare checks
- Making contact with the landowner to offer support guidance.
- If the unauthorised encampment is on council owned land we will and service the necessary notices required.

### **If the land is owned by the council**

Council officers will visit the site within one working day to make an assessment of the situation and carry out welfare checks. Welfare checks include signposting the occupants of the site to housing advice, medical facilities or any other service they may require. At this point the occupants of the land are told that they are trespassing and inform they must vacate the site otherwise legal action may be taken.

### **If the land is privately owned**

It is the land owner's responsibility to take the necessary action to evict. The landowner can attempt to agree a leaving date with the trespassers or take proceedings in the County Court under the Civil Procedure Rules 1998 to obtain a Court Order for their eviction.

Landowners are recommended to seek legal advice as soon as the encampment arrives. The council can offer help and advice to private landowners, however it cannot take action on their behalf.

### **How quickly can trespassers be moved on?**

When an encampment is on land owned by the council;

The council must:

- Show that the trespassers are on land without consent
- Make enquiries regarding the general health, welfare and children's education
- Ensure the Human Rights Act 1998 has been fully complied with.

To do this, the council follows a civil legal process, alongside Government guidance, which involves proving ownership of the land, obtaining details of the encampment including taking into consideration and medical needs of the occupants, assessing an encampment's effect on the local area, and then following the most appropriate course of legal action to ensure the most effective and timely response is taken.

Once council officers have visited the site to carry out an assessment, they prepare evidence, which is reviewed to determine the most appropriate power available to the council to remove the encampment.

It is not possible to provide an accurate timescale for removal of the encampment, as each case differs. There may also be further delays if there are welfare concerns for those occupying the land which need attention.

## **Police responsibilities to unauthorised encampments**

Thames Valley Police will monitor unauthorised encampments for

- Crime, disorder and nuisance associated with any authorised encampment
- Liaise with the landowner accordingly with regards to any welfare concerns.

The Police may use powers under Section 61 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, to direct trespassers to leave land, if they consider it appropriate (although Section 61 cannot be used on encampments on the highway). These powers are discretionary and they will be considered when reviewing the most appropriate course of action to undertake.

The presence of an encampment without any aggravating factors should not normally create an expectation that police will use eviction powers. The police are bound by the Human Rights Act and need to consider the rights of both the site residents and the wider community. It is for the police alone to decide if Section 61 is to be used.

## **What measures can we take to prevent unauthorised encampments?**

All landowners have a responsibility to ensure that their land is secure at all times. Options and measures including installing railings, fences, bollards and earth mounds should be considered and installed when and where possible to prevent occupation without consent of the landowner. All landowners are advised to make arrangements to ensure the security of their land at all times.

## **Cleaning up**

Many unauthorised encampments are clean and tidy, however a small number will require waste collection and cleaning services. The responsibility for cleaning up after an unauthorised encampment lies with the landowner.

Where land belongs to Wokingham Borough Council, cleanup will take place as soon as practicable after the encampment has moved on.

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## **DRAFT WORK PROGRAMMES 2023-24**

**Please note that the Work Programme is a 'live' document and subject to change at short notice. The information in this Work Programme, including report titles is draft and is subject to approval by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.**

**The Overview and Scrutiny Committees will consider their work programmes at the first meeting in the new Municipal Year.**

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 2023-24 WORK PROGRAMME

DATE OF MEETING	ITEM	PURPOSE OF REPORT	REASON FOR CONSIDERATION	CONTACT OFFICER	
62	15 November 2023	Waste Alternate Weekly Collection Project	To consider progress in the move to alternate weekly collection of waste and recycling	Committee Request	Steve Brown
		Progress against Council Motions	To consider progress against Council Motions agreed since November 2022	Committee Request	Neil Carr
		WBC Recruitment and Retention	To consider the Council's policies and training/development provisions aimed at recruiting and retaining high quality staff	Committee Request	Louise Livingston
		Executive Forward Programme	To consider the Executive and IEMD Forward Programmes and identify any issues for Scrutiny	Regular Update	Neil Carr
		O&S Work Programmes 23/24	To consider the work programmes for the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees	Work Programme	Neil Carr
		Action Tracker	To consider the regular Action Tracker report	Regular Update	Neil Carr

<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>ITEM</b>	<b>PURPOSE OF REPORT</b>	<b>REASON FOR CONSIDERATION</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER</b>
<b>16 January 2024</b>	Leader & Chief Executive	To consider an update on challenges/opportunities from the Leader and Chief Executive	Committee Request	Susan Parsonage
	Thames Water	Follow-up discussions following attendance at June 2023 meeting	Committee request	Neil Carr
	Q2 2023/24 Performance Management	To consider the Q2 Performance Monitoring report	Regular item	Will Roper
	Air Quality	To scrutinise progress against the Council's Air Quality improvement targets	Committee Request	Narinder Brar
	O&S Work Programmes 2024/25	To start discussions on the work programmes for 2024/25	Committee Request	Neil Carr
	Executive Forward Programme	To consider the Executive and IEMD Forward Programmes and identify any issues for Scrutiny	Regular Update	Neil Carr
	O&S Work Programmes 23/24	To consider the work programmes for the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees	Work Programme	Neil Carr
	Action Tracker	To consider the regular Action Tracker report	Regular Update	Neil Carr

<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>ITEM</b>	<b>PURPOSE OF REPORT</b>	<b>REASON FOR CONSIDERATION</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER</b>
<b>6 February 2024</b>	Economic Development Strategy	To consider progress against the Council's Economic Development Strategy	Committee Request	Rhian Hayes
	Equality Plan	To scrutinise the annual update of the Council's Equality Plan	Regular Update	Emily Higson
	Tackling Poverty Strategy	To scrutinise progress against the Council's Tackling Poverty Strategy	Committee Request	Emily Higson
	Sports Pitch Strategy	To scrutinise the draft Borough-wide Sports Pitch Strategy	Committee Request	Andy Glencross
	O&S Committees Annual Reports	To consider the draft O&S Annual Reports prior to submission to Council	Standing Item	Neil Carr
	Executive Forward Programme	To consider the Executive and IEMD Forward Programmes and identify any issues for Scrutiny	Regular Update	Neil Carr
	O&S Work Programmes 23/24	To consider the work programmes for the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees	Work Programme	Neil Carr
	Action Tracker	To consider the regular Action Tracker report	Regular Update	Neil Carr



<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>ITEM</b>	<b>PURPOSE OF REPORT</b>	<b>REASON FOR CONSIDERATION</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER</b>
<b>6 March 2024</b>	O&S Work Programmes	To confirm the O&S Work Programmes for 2024/25	Annual item	Neil Carr
	Refugees and Asylum Seekers	To consider the Council's support for refugees and asylum seekers	Committee Request	Rhian Hayes
	Q3 2023/24 Performance Management	To consider the Q3 Performance Monitoring report	Regular item	Will Roper
	SSEN	To scrutinise the services provided by Scottish & Sothern Electricity Networks	Committee Request	Neil Carr
	Executive Forward Programme	To consider the Executive and IEMD Forward Programmes and identify any issues for Scrutiny	Regular Update	Neil Carr
	O&S Work Programmes 23/24	To consider the work programmes for the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees	Work Programme	Neil Carr
	Action Tracker	To consider the regular Action Tracker report	Regular Update	Neil Carr

## CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2023/24 WORK PROGRAMME

DATE OF MEETING	ITEM	PURPOSE OF REPORT	REASON FOR CONSIDERATION	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER / CONTACT OFFICER
1 November 2023	<b>Safety Valve Update</b>	To monitor the development and progress of the programme.	Standing item	Children's Services/ Ming Zhang
	<b>SEND Voices Survey</b>	To consider the findings of the SEND Voices survey	Committee Request	Children's Services
	<b>Draft SEND Strategy</b>	To scrutinise the draft SEND Strategy	Committee Request	Helen Watson
	<b>Complaints review</b>	To monitor the complaints received against the service	Challenge item	Children's Services / Helen Watson
	<b>Executive Member Update</b>	To receive an update from the Executive Member for Children's Services	Standing item	Prue Bray
	<b>Schools Update</b>	To monitor schools' performance.	Standing item	Children's Services / Ming
	<b>Schools Causing Concern – Part 2</b>	To consider the work being undertaken to support schools causing concern in a part 2 session	Standing item	Children's Services/ Ming Zhang
	<b>CSO&amp;S Forward Plan</b>	To consider the forward plan of the Committee	Standing item	Democratic Services/ Luciane Bowker

<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>ITEM</b>	<b>PURPOSE OF REPORT</b>	<b>REASON FOR CONSIDERATION</b>	<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER / CONTACT OFFICER</b>
<b>8 January 2024</b>	<b>Executive Member Update</b>	To receive an update from the Executive Member for Children's Services.	Standing item	Prue Bray
	<b>Schools Update</b>	To monitor schools' performance.	Standing item	Children's Services / Ming
	<b>Safety Valve Update</b>	To monitor the development and progress of the programme.	Standing item	Children's Services/ Ming Zhang
	<b>To Review the Post Ofsted Improvement Plan</b>	To monitor the progress of the improvement plan.	Challenge item	Children's Services / Helen Watson
	<b>Schools Causing Concern – Part 2</b>	To consider the work being undertaken to support schools causing concern in a part 2 session	Standing item	Children's Services/ Ming Zhang
	<b>CSO&amp;S Forward Plan</b>	To consider the forward plan of the Committee	Standing item	Democratic Services/ Luciane Bowker
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>ITEM</b>	<b>PURPOSE OF REPORT</b>	<b>REASON FOR CONSIDERATION</b>	<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER / CONTACT OFFICER</b>
<b>20 March 2024</b>	<b>Safety Valve Update</b>	To monitor the development and progress of the programme.	Standing item	Children's Services/ Ming Zhang
	<b>Schools Update</b>	To monitor schools' performance.	Standing item	Children's Services / Ming
	<b>Executive Member Update</b>	To receive an update from the Executive Member for Children's Services.	Standing item	Prue Bray

	<b>Schools Causing Concern – Part 2</b>	To consider the work being undertaken to support schools causing concern in a part 2 session	Standing item	Children’s Services/ Ming Zhang
	<b>CSO&amp;S Forward Plan</b>	To consider the forward plan of the Committee	Standing item	Democratic Services/ Luciane Bowker

## CLIMATE EMERGENCY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DATE OF MEETING	ITEM	PURPOSE OF REPORT	REASON FOR CONSIDERATION	CONTACT OFFICER
<b>2 November 2023</b>	<b>Communications &amp; Engagement Plan</b>	To consider the Communications and Engagement Plan which supports delivery of the CEAP	Committee Request	Rhian Hayes
	<b>Solar Farms</b>	To consider progress relating to the development of solar farms in the Borough in line with the CEAP	Standing Item	David Smith
	<b>Work Programme</b>	To consider the Committee's Work Programme for 2023/24 – to be informed by CEAP updates	Standing Item	Neil Carr
	<b>Action Tracker</b>	To consider the regular Action Tracker report	Standing Item	Neil Carr

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<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>ITEM</b>	<b>PURPOSE OF REPORT</b>	<b>REASON FOR CONSIDERATION</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER</b>
<b>9 January 2024</b>	<b>CEAP Progress Report</b>	To consider progress against one or more of the CEAP key priority areas for carbon reduction	Committee Request	Rhian Hayes
	<b>Solar Farms</b>	To consider progress relating to the development of solar farms in the Borough in line with the CEAP	Standing Item	David Smith
	<b>Work Programme</b>	To consider the Committee's Work Programme for 2023/24 – to be informed by CEAP updates	Standing Item	Neil Carr
	<b>Action Tracker</b>	To consider the regular Action Tracker report	Standing Item	Neil Carr

<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>ITEM</b>	<b>PURPOSE OF REPORT</b>	<b>REASON FOR CONSIDERATION</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER</b>
<b>29 February 2024</b>	<b>CEAP Progress Report</b>	To consider progress against one or more of the CEAP key priority areas for carbon reduction	Committee Request	Rhian Hayes
	<b>Solar Farms</b>	To consider progress relating to the development of solar farms in the Borough in line with the CEAP	Standing Item	David Smith
	<b>Work Programme</b>	To consider the Committee's Work Programme for 2023/24 – to be informed by CEAP updates	Standing Item	Neil Carr
	<b>Action Tracker</b>	To consider the regular Action Tracker report	Standing Item	Neil Carr

## COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DATE OF MEETING	ITEM	PURPOSE OF REPORT	REASON FOR CONSIDERATION	CONTACT OFFICER
<b>2 October 2023 2023</b>	<b>Medium Term Financial Plan</b>	To receive the strategic overview of the draft MTFP, and details of earmarked reserves held by WBC	Work programme	Graham Ebers
	<b>Street Cleansing and Grounds and Maintenance Services</b>	To consider the proposed changes to the Street Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance Services contracts.	Committee Request	Richard Bissett
	<b>Local Plan Update</b>	To receive an update on the development of the Local Plan Update	Work Programme	Ian Bellinger
	<b>Action Tracker</b>	To consider the Committee's action tracker	Standing Item	Callum Wernham
	<b>Work Programme</b>	To consider the work programme for the Committee for 2023-24	Standing Item	Democratic Services

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<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>ITEM</b>	<b>PURPOSE OF REPORT</b>	<b>REASON FOR CONSIDERATION</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER</b>
<b>9 October 2023 2023</b>	<b>Local Transport Plan 4</b>	To scrutinise the draft Local Plan 4	Work programme	Giorgio Framalicco
	<b>Action Tracker</b>	To consider the Committee's action tracker	Standing Item	Callum Wernham
	<b>Work Programme</b>	To consider the work programme for the Committee for 2023-24	Standing Item	Democratic Services

<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>ITEM</b>	<b>PURPOSE OF REPORT</b>	<b>REASON FOR CONSIDERATION</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER</b>
<b>30 October 2023</b>	<b>Medium Term Financial Plan</b>	To receive details of proposed bids within the draft MTFP	Work programme	Graham Ebers
	<b>Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy</b>	To consider an update on the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy.	Committee Request	Narinder Brar
	<b>Action Tracker</b>	To consider the Committee's action tracker	Standing Item	Callum Wernham
	<b>Work Programme</b>	To consider the work programme for the Committee for 2023-24	Standing Item	Democratic Services

<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>ITEM</b>	<b>PURPOSE OF REPORT</b>	<b>REASON FOR CONSIDERATION</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER</b>
<b>14 November 2023</b>	<b>Medium Term Financial Plan</b>	To receive details of proposed bids within the draft MTFP	Work programme	Graham Ebers
	<b>Action Tracker</b>	To consider the Committee's action tracker	Standing Item	Callum Wernham
	<b>Work Programme</b>	To consider the work programme for the Committee for 2023-24	Standing Item	Democratic Services

<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>ITEM</b>	<b>PURPOSE OF REPORT</b>	<b>REASON FOR CONSIDERATION</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER</b>
<b>28 November 2023</b>	<b>Medium Term Financial Plan</b>	To receive details of proposed and updated bids within the draft MTFP	Work programme	Graham Ebers
	<b>Action Tracker</b>	To consider the Committee's action tracker	Standing Item	Callum Wernham
	<b>Work Programme</b>	To consider the work programme for the Committee for 2023-24	Standing Item	Democratic Services

<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>ITEM</b>	<b>PURPOSE OF REPORT</b>	<b>REASON FOR CONSIDERATION</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER</b>
<b>19 December 2023</b>	<b>Medium Term Financial Plan</b>	To receive details of proposed and updated bids within the draft MTFP	Work programme	Graham Ebers
	<b>Action Tracker</b>	To consider the Committee's action tracker	Standing Item	Callum Wernham
	<b>Work Programme</b>	To consider the work programme for the Committee for 2023-24	Standing Item	Democratic Services

<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>ITEM</b>	<b>PURPOSE OF REPORT</b>	<b>REASON FOR CONSIDERATION</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER</b>
22 January 2024	<b>Enforcement and Safety Service</b>	To scrutinise the delivery of the Council's enforcement and safety service	Work programme	Narinder Brar
	<b>Planning Service</b>	To scrutinise the delivery of the Council's Planning, Strategic Planning and Planning Enforcement services	Committee request	Trevor Saunders
	<b>Action Tracker</b>	To consider the Committee's action tracker	Standing Item	Callum Wernham
	<b>Work Programme</b>	To consider the work programme for the Committee for 2023-24	Standing Item	Democratic Services

<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>ITEM</b>	<b>PURPOSE OF REPORT</b>	<b>REASON FOR CONSIDERATION</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER</b>
<b>4 March 2024</b>	<b>Police and Fire Services</b>	To receive an update on the work of the Police and Fire Services	Work programme	Graham Ebers
	<b>Flood Risk Management</b>	To receive the annual update on the Council's delivery of the flood risk management strategy	Work Programme	Boniface Ngu
	<b>Combatting Drugs Partnership</b>	To receive a report on the work of the Combatting Drugs Partnership Delivery Group	Committee Request	Narinder Brar
	<b>Action Tracker</b>	To consider the Committee's action tracker	Standing Item	Callum Wernham
	<b>Work Programme</b>	To consider the work programme for the Committee for 2023-24	Standing Item	Democratic Services

**Task & Finish Groups – Active Travel Task and Finish Group**

## HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD PROGRAMME

DATE OF MEETING	ITEMS	PURPOSE OF REPORT	REASON FOR CONSIDERATION	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER / CONTACT OFFICER
6 November 2023	<b>Adult Services Workforce Strategy</b>	Update	Update	Adult Social Care and HR
	<b>Plan for Covid booster and flu vaccines</b>	Update	Update	ICB
	<b>Autism Strategy</b>	Challenge item	Challenge item	Adult Social Care
	<b>Healthwatch update</b>	Challenge item	Challenge item	Healthwatch Wokingham Borough
	<b>ASC KPIs</b>	Challenge item	Challenge item	Matt Pope

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DATE OF MEETING	ITEMS	PURPOSE OF REPORT	REASON FOR CONSIDERATION	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER / CONTACT OFFICER
31 January 2024	<b>WestCall – out of hours GP service</b>	Update	Update	Berkshire NS Foundation Trust
	<b>Coroners court</b>	Referral from Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Update	
	<b>Healthwatch update</b>	Challenge item	Challenge item	Healthwatch Wokingham Borough
	<b>ASC KPIs</b>	Challenge item	Challenge item	Matt Pope



<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>ITEMS</b>	<b>PURPOSE OF REPORT</b>	<b>REASON FOR CONSIDERATION</b>	<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER / CONTACT OFFICER</b>
<b>19 March 2024</b>	<b>South Central Ambulance Service</b>	Update	Update	SCAS
	<b>Healthwatch update</b>	Challenge item	Challenge item	Healthwatch Wokingham Borough
	<b>ASC KPIs</b>	Challenge item	Challenge item	Matt Pope

**Currently unscheduled topics:**

- Maternal mental health – June 2024
- GP access
- communicating different ways of working with the public
- Domiciliary care (including Market Provision Statement)

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## Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee – Action Tracker 2023/24

<b>O&amp;S Management Committee – 12 June 2023</b>		
Agenda Item	Action	Update
Minutes of Previous Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed</li> </ul>
Thames Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter from Chair to Thames Water summarising issues discussed</li> <li>• Members to attend site visits at STWs</li> <li>• Notify Town/Parish Councils about opportunities for Thames Water briefings</li> <li>• Arrange discussion with Members on sinkholes in Borough</li> <li>• Thames Water – WBC discussions on cost of living measures, smart meters, adoption of infrastructure and water efficient homes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>
Q4 Corporate Performance Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review layout and content of pie charts in report</li> <li>• Director and Executive Member review targets in leisure centre KPI</li> <li>• Further report on performance of leisure centres</li> <li>• Officers consider inclusion of assets values in KPI on investment portfolio</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed</li> <li>• Completed</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>
O&S Work Programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allocate resident/Town/Parish suggestions to O&amp;S Committees</li> <li>• All reports/presentations to be submitted in advance of O&amp;S meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed</li> <li>• Completed</li> </ul>

<b>O&amp;S Management Committee – 18 July 2023</b>		
Agenda Item	Action	Update
Minutes of Previous Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed</li> </ul>
Leader of the Council – Stephen Conway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving the “Overview” aspect of O&amp;S – discussions with Leader and O&amp;S Chairs</li> <li>• All-Member briefing on the “Safety Valve” agreement with the DfE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing - requested</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific focus on improving partnership working with Thames Valley Police</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>
Annual Complaints Report 2022/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future reports to include data on response times for each stage of the complaints process</li> <li>• The term “customer” to be reviewed as part of the emerging Customer Excellence Strategy</li> <li>• Any policy updates to be submitted to the appropriate O&amp;S Committee</li> <li>• Future complaints reports include more detailed equality monitoring data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>
Bus Enhanced Partnership & Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress on implementation to be submitted to O&amp;S annually</li> <li>• Officers check legislation re inclusion of an exit clause to the agreement</li> <li>• Report to Executive to include clarification on WBC’s financial commitment after 2026/27</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed</li> <li>• Completed</li> <li>• Completed</li> </ul>
O&S Work Programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add OSMC item on Sports Pitch Strategy</li> <li>• Add OSMC item on WBC Recruitment and Retention</li> <li>• Approach SSEN re attendance at OSMC</li> <li>• Add C&amp;C item on 2023 grass cutting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed</li> <li>• Completed</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>

<b>O&amp;S Management Committee – 11 September 2023</b>		
<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Update</b>
Minutes of Previous Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed</li> </ul>
Q1 2023/24 Performance Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide further information on points raised by Members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>
Estate Infrastructure Task & Finish Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Original 12 recommendations endorsed and updated as agreed by Members</li> <li>• Further update to the Committee in 2024/25</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>

Scrutiny Improvement Review Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update Action Plan to reflect Member discussion</li> <li>• O&amp;S reports to include sections agreed by the Committee</li> <li>• SIR feedback session with Centre for Governance and Scrutiny noted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Completed</li> </ul>
O&S Work Programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add OSMC item on Sports Pitch Strategy</li> <li>• Add OSMC item on WBC Recruitment and Retention</li> <li>• Approach SSEN re attendance at OSMC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed</li> <li>• Completed</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>

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