



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

A Meeting of the **EXECUTIVE** will be held in David Hicks 1 - Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham RG40 1BN on **THURSDAY 25 JANUARY 2024 AT 7.00 PM**

Susan Parsonage
Chief Executive
Published on 17 January 2024

Note: Members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting or participate in the meeting virtually, in accordance with the Council's Constitution. If you wish to participate either in person or virtually via Microsoft Teams please contact Democratic Services: Democratic.services@wokingham.gov.uk

The meeting can also be watched live using the following link:
<https://youtube.com/live/JWg60ZNYDAg?feature=share>

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

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

MEMBERSHIP OF THE EXECUTIVE

Stephen Conway	Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Housing
Prue Bray	Deputy Leader and Children's Services
Rachel Bishop-Firth	Equalities, Inclusion and Fighting Poverty
David Cornish	Business and Economic Development
Lindsay Ferris	Planning and Local Plan
Paul Fishwick	Active Travel, Transport and Highways
David Hare	Health and Wellbeing and Adult Services
Ian Shenton	Environment, Sport and Leisure
Imogen Shepherd-DuBey	Finance

ITEM NO.	WARD	SUBJECT	PAGE NO.
78.		APOLOGIES To receive any apologies for absence.	
79.		MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING To confirm the Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 30 November 2023.	7 - 18
80.		DECLARATION OF INTERESTS To receive any declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests, other registrable interests and any non-registrable interests relevant to any matters to be considered at the meeting.	
81.		STATEMENT FROM THE LEADER	
82.		PUBLIC QUESTION TIME To answer any public questions. A period of 30 minutes will be allowed for members of the public to ask questions submitted under notice. The Council welcomes questions from members of the public about the work of the Executive. Subject to meeting certain timescales, questions can relate to general issues concerned with the work of the Council or an item which is on the Agenda for this meeting. For full details of the procedure for submitting questions please contact the Democratic Services Section on the numbers given below or go to www.wokingham.gov.uk/publicquestions	
82.1		Colin Watts has asked the Executive Member for Planning and the Local Plan the following question:	

Question:

In Michael Gove's speech to the RIBA conference on 19 December 2023 he presented the updated National Planning Policy Framework. Whilst the updated NPPF confirms that the standard method of calculating housing need remains in place, he went to great lengths to make clear that "Local authorities have the comfort of knowing that they need not re-draw the green belt or sacrifice protected landscapes to meet housing numbers".

Therefore, will you confirm that you will take advantage of the updated NPPF and produce an updated LPU with a significantly lower number of houses compared to the November 2021 version, reflecting that the standard method of calculating housing need has to be adjusted in order to provide greater protection for the green fields in Wokingham Borough.

82.2

Andy Bailey has asked the Executive Member for Planning and the Local Plan the following question:

Question:

Could the current land classification of Hall Farm site be clarified please. Is it Countryside and is it designated an area of Landscape Value and what protections does this afford ?

83.

MEMBER QUESTION TIME

To answer any member questions.

A period of 20 minutes will be allowed for Members to ask questions submitted under Notice.

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

83.1

Councillor Gary Cowan has asked the Executive Member for Planning and the Local Plan the following question:

Question:

It was clear from Cllr Ferris's answer to a resident's question at the last Executive meeting that Cllr Ferris has no clear understanding of the Core Strategy which is his key responsibility.

His reply to the resident's supplementary question was factually incorrect and so totally misleading.

His implication that that I was part of the Conservative Administration that put this current plan in place is a

complete lie as an Independent Councillor I was not involved in any administration in the evolution of the current LPU which is the responsibility now of the Lib Dem Administration.

Only they can honour their promise to the public of fighting housing numbers by declaring now they will not support any plans for housing beyond the 15 year plan period as laid down by the Government.

Does he owe myself and the residents a public apology?

Matters for Consideration

84.	None Specific	UNREASONABLY PERSISTENT COMPLAINANTS POLICY	19 - 30
85.	None Specific	REVENUE MONITORING 2022/23 Q3	31 - 46
86.	None Specific	CAPITAL MONITORING, QUARTER 3	47 - 58
87.	None Specific	CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER'S REPORT	59 - 94
88.	None Specific	SHAREHOLDERS MID-YEAR REPORT 2023-24	95 - 100
89.	None Specific	AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT AREAS	101 - 246
90.	None Specific	ANNUAL HEALTH & SAFETY REPORT 2022-23	247 - 260

A decision sheet will be available for inspection at the Council's offices (in Democratic Services and the General Office) and on the web site no later than two working days after the meeting.

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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF
THE EXECUTIVE
HELD ON 30 NOVEMBER 2023 FROM 7.00 PM TO 8.20 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Stephen Conway (Chair), Rachel Bishop-Firth, Lindsay Ferris, Paul Fishwick, David Hare, Sarah Kerr, Clive Jones, Ian Shenton and Imogen Shepherd-DuBey

Executive Councillors in attendance remotely:

Councillor Prue Bray

70. APOLOGIES

Councillor Prue Bray attended the meeting remotely and as a result was not permitted to vote on any items at the meeting.

71. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 26 October 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

72. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest submitted on this occasion.

73. STATEMENT FROM THE LEADER

‘Since the last council meeting, the work of the Tenant and Landlord Improvement Panel (TLIP) has been recognised at the National Housing Awards. TLIP won in the category of ‘excellence in community-led decision making’. I want to take this opportunity to thank TLIP’s chair, Steve Bowers, the other tenant volunteers, the officers in the housing department, and the elected members who serve on TLIP for their commitment to partnership working. The award is a just reward and reflects well on both the tenant volunteers and the council.

This is the last meeting of the Executive that will be attended by Councillor Clive Jones, the Executive Member for Business and Economic Development. As I explained at the last full council meeting, Clive wishes to concentrate on his role of parliamentary candidate for Wokingham.

I should like to thank Clive for his work as Executive Member for Business and Economic Development and for his leadership of the council in 2022-23, the first year of the new administration. Clive’s experience and determination helped the council greatly in the transition from one administration to another. I’m sure all my colleagues will join me in wishing Clive the best of luck with his parliamentary endeavours. Clive, as I announced at the last council meeting, will be replaced on the Executive by Councillor David Cornish, who has been shadowing Clive for the last few months and has a background in business that is ideal preparation for his new role.

Councillor Sarah Kerr, the Executive Member for Climate Emergency and residents services, is also leaving the Executive. Sarah has been offered a new job outside the council, which begins in January and she has asked to be relieved of her executive duties to focus on her new role. Sarah has been an outstanding champion for the areas of her executive responsibility and her hard work and commitment will be missed by all of us. I’m sure everyone will wish to join me in wishing her well for the future.

Sarah's executive responsibilities are wide-ranging and I have decided, in consultation with the deputy leader, that it would be unfair to ask anyone to fill the vacancy for the few months until the local elections. We have therefore asked other executive members to take on additional responsibilities and I am grateful for their all agreeing to do so. Councillor David Cornish has kindly consented to add Climate Emergency and Arts and Culture to his remit. Councillor David Hare will take on the area of Violence against Women and Girls and Domestic Abuse. Rachel Bishop-Firth will be responsible for the Website and Digital. I shall add to my own portfolio Solar Farms, Libraries, Customer Services and Residents' Engagement.'

Councillor Clive Jones expressed that it had been a privilege to work alongside Executive Members and to have been the Leader, he was delighted to hand over the mantle to Councillor Stephen Conway. He was pleased to be able to focus on his parliamentary campaign in the coming months.

Councillor Sarah Kerr thanked everyone for their efforts, she stated that it had been a very difficult decision to stand down as Executive Member. She thanked senior officers for their support during her tenure as Executive Member, it had been invaluable.

74. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

In accordance with the agreed procedure the Chairman invited members of the public to submit questions to the appropriate Members.

74.1 Andy Bailey has asked the Executive Member for Planning and the Local Plan the following question:

At a recent meeting with residents of Carters Hill it was stated by both a Council Officer and a University of Reading representative that Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) had requested an updated plan for Hall Farm with 3,750 dwellings, as opposed to the previous plan for 4,500. It was also stated that this figure (3,750) would not be adjusted, even if Central Government finally publishes the revised National Planning Policy Framework and the housing target for Wokingham is reduced.

Could you please confirm that this is the case and explain why the plans for Hall Farm would not be reduced as a result of any lower housing target for WBC?

Answer:

Since I took on responsibility for local plans, I have raised the concerns expressed by some residents towards the Hall Farm promotion led by the University of Reading, including the promotions scale of 4,500 homes.

In response, the University have indicated they are undertaking viability work looking at whether a lower scale of 3,750 homes would be viable, taking into account the infrastructure that would need to be provided and anticipated landowner/developer costs in delivering the garden village. This would represent a near 20% reduction.

The results of this viability work have not yet been provided to the council, with our understanding being that it is ongoing.

Turning to the anticipated revision of the NPPF, we are still waiting for the government. Whilst we are cautiously hopeful that the revised NPPF will allow past 'over delivery' of housing to be taken into account when considering future requirements, we must wait and see. If confirmed, we will need to consider implications for our strategy as a whole.

With regard to large development proposals, it is common for delivery from these to occur across a longer period. A proposal in the order of 4,500 or 3,750 homes would not fully complete by 2040, with some completions extending into years beyond this.

Supplementary Question:

If 4,500 houses are to be constructed, why is it that they need to run beyond the 15 year plan?

Supplementary Answer:

If we take the current Local Plan running to 2026, there are a number of developments, one in particular that will not be completed before 2026. So when you work on getting through on the Local Plan, you cannot ever be able to be sure that developments would be completed in the 15 plus years that you have as the Local Plan period. We think it's probably best to indicate what would be the situation, I think the vast majority would be included in the period up to 2040, but there has to be some indication beyond that period that there may be houses that go into the period beyond and as we have mentioned, the current Local Plan already has that happening.

74.2 Philip Meadowcroft has asked the Executive Member for Finance the following question:

So far, during 2023, £75m has been loaned by Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) to other local authorities. This is confirmed on page 514 in the meeting's agenda report documents.

With regard to the £10m loan to Woking, the minutes of the Council meeting on September 21 show the Executive Member for Finance saying "we have a commitment from Woking that they will honour our debt of £10m plus the interest that will come back with it." That repayment is due on March 8 2024.

Three months ago, on August 23, Woking announced on its website that Section 114 was declared because of I quote: "unaffordable borrowing, inadequate steps to repay that borrowing".

The Section 114 Notice means that Woking's finances are subject to intense supervision by Whitehall-appointed commissioners in a manner similar to that in the private sector when a firm declares bankruptcy and administrators and liquidators are appointed.

Rather than relying on an undefined "commitment from Woking" can the Executive Member for Finance reply to this Public Question by exhibiting valid, straightforward, and legally enforceable paperwork evidencing that there are no circumstances whatsoever which will prevent Woking from meeting its financial obligation to pay £10,356,000 to WBC on March 8 2024 ?

Answer:

When it comes to financial commitments, councils cannot be thought of in the same way as any other organisation. This is because council's provide statutory services to the residents of this country and are underwritten by the central government. If a council is

unable to produce a balanced budget it issues what is known as a Section 114 notice, which is named after its section in the Local Government Act.

In practicality, this means that commissioners are appointed who are tasked with bringing a council's finances back under control, usually by selling assets, cutting services and raising council tax. Money is often loaned to the council in the meantime from the Treasury, to cover their immediate financial crisis, but they are still able to borrow money from elsewhere.

There are specific statutory protections that are in the Local Government Act 2003, that protect us from defaults where the counterparty to the loan is central or local government. This is also referenced in the CIPFA Code of Practice and there are additional protections in place for loans made by local government organisations.

Part of the requirement of this S114 circumstance is that all contracts and financial commitments continue to be honoured. In the case of Wokingham making a loan to Woking, there is indeed a legally binding contract in place and before the loan was made. Our respective Chief Financial Officers certainly spoke to each other to double check that the loan was indeed secured under these protocols.

I reiterate, there has never been a situation where a council in a S114 state has defaulted on its payments and other councils are one of the safest places for us to invest. A council defaulting on payment would only happen if our government was unable to cover the costs and I think we would all have much bigger problems, if that were to happen.

Supplementary Question:

Two months ago, at the September 21st Council meeting, the Executive Member for Finance answered a public question about the £10m loan saying 'all financial transactions, are also required to meet Regulations and the process is set by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). Yesterday I contacted the FCA, they confirmed that Wokingham or any individuals connected with Wokingham are not registered with them and thus not authorised and not regulated by the FCA. It grieves me to say it, but the Executive Member for Finance has surely misled that questioner on September 21st, with the Council's connection or lack of it with the FCA, to give regulatory backing to the Council's loan or loans to distressed neighbouring councils. I'm afraid I found your reply inadequate, as I've not seen any tangible evidence of the guarantee, there is no proof as far as I can see that the Wokingham loan repayment is guaranteed either by legally enforceable paperwork or a treasury guarantee and given that there is a total of £75m of loans here to various local authorities which we will see on page 154, that's the equivalent of putting at risk more than a thousand pounds per household throughout the borough. So, because you have misled the questioner and the Council on the September 21st meeting, about the FCA, would you not be considering your position?

Supplementary Answer:

I'm not quite understanding your comments on the FCA as I don't believe that is what I said. Certainly, I can assure you that this regularly happens, it's been happening for 20 plus years, that councils are lending money to each other in this way and there has never been a problem with any council doing this. It doesn't matter to us whether a council is of Section 114 state or not, it is all underwritten by the Treasury. The principles we apply here are the CIPFA Code of Conduct principles and we are also bound to legislation set out in various Local Government Finance Acts. I believe Section 6 and 13 are probably the pertinent bits and you are welcome to review those.

74.3 Ian Scott has asked the Executive Member for Environment, Sport & Leisure the following question:

Costs/values that should be considered

1. land asset – value Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) suggest £1.5m – ‘modest’ to say the least for 1.32 acres.
2. present value total loss of revenue for the 20 years life of the existing building (the centre profit) - not specified.
3. costs connected with equalisation payment to PfP for other Leisure facilities - not specified.
4. cost of closure - not specified.
5. future cost of re-providing the (4?) teaching spaces within the Leisure building which has a 20 year life compared to a 60 year life new-build scenario. Not specified.
6. The £1m dowry to Circle Trust
7. People for Places Social Value Calculator estimates the social value of a typical centre to be a further £1.56m.

A simple addition of the WBC /PfP figures - even without the missing figures requested above - gets perilously close to disproving the WBC ‘good value’ argument. With full information requested Cllrs could make the judgement with confidence.

Why has a full analysis of the economic and social value being transferred still not been shown to Cllrs to allow them to make a properly informed judgement?

Answer:

Thank you for your question, I can assure you that this is a good value proposition and need to correct some of your assertions. The Leisure centre site has a theoretical land value of £1.5m but due to planning restrictions, in reality, has a value of community use only and that is what we would be seeking to protect through a legal agreement with the Circle Trust. Indeed, Circle Trust expressed their keen intent to continue the community provision offer at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee earlier this week. So there is no loss of value here.

The Leisure facility no longer operates at a profit, and therefore running Leisure facilities out of this centre over 20 years of more will not be financially beneficial to a contractor or the Council.

The cost of works needed for refurbishment to provide the Education Facilities, whilst protecting community provision will be in excess £1m and therefore WBC are only making a fixed capped contribution with Circle Trust funding all other costs. This is therefore the total cost to WBC to secure the vitally needed education places for our year 7 children, amounting to 330 places over our 6 year forecast but will no doubt be needed indefinitely. This is an incredibly reasonable price to pay given the costs associated with school builds and school extensions. This is clear in the Executive paper that states a modular building required to provide for this number of children would be in excess of £5m and up to £8m depending on the site location in the borough.

Given places leisure and Circle Trust between them can accommodate all current users of St Crispins Leisure centre, with the exception of squash usage during the day, the number of people with no continued offer is very small. These squash players could book further

out of school hours sessions through Circle Trust, as I understand they already book out of hours as well as daytime, or can use other squash facilities in the location. It is hard to think that with any stretch of the imagination that this inconvenience, although regrettable, compares with the social value attributable to the significant provision of Education places and the impact on the life opportunities of those children and the wellbeing of all the families involved.

75. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

In accordance with the agreed procedure the Chairman invited Members to submit questions to the appropriate Members

75.1 Councillor Gary Cowan has asked the Executive Member for Planning and the Local Plan the following question:

In the wake of Cop 26 a leading academic predicts that if the climate emergency continues at it's current rate our area will see an increase of 1.4C by 2040 compared to the average temperature between 1981 and 2000.

He added that this means we are expected to live through two heatwaves a year and 35 days where roads are at risk of melting. The river flood risk could increase by as much as 7.5 per cent and wildfires are projected to be a risk for 37 days of the year.

With the Local Plan update for Wokingham planning 2300 houses at Hall Farm close to the Loddon River what actual guarantees can the Borough Council provide now that this development planned to begin in 2040 can be developed safely.

Answer:

Before turning to the specifics of your question, I need to correct you in that development proposed in the new local plan will by in large be completed within the period to 2040. It is of course correct that some of the new homes from any large proposal might be delivered in years beyond this. This is recognised in national planning policy, and such circumstances are not uncommon.

Moving to the specifics of the question, and as you are already aware, Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) supports the new local plan. SFRA takes account of the projected impact of climate change by applying allowances advised by the Environment Agency to flood modelling. It is prepared in accordance with national policy and guidance and involves close review by the Environment Agency.

Whilst work on the new local plan continues, the Hall Farm proposal included within the Revised Growth Strategy Consultation in 2021 showed no homes in areas at risk of flooding, which included taking account of the forecast impacts of climate change. All of the new homes were shown as being located on land uphill from the River Loddon and other watercourses.

In addition to the consideration of flooding in local plan process, and as you are aware, detailed flood risk assessment is required to support individual planning applications. These assessments will also need to take account of the impacts of climate change.

Lastly, and to comment more widely on climate change and the local plan, we will be including a suite of new policies which reflect best practice in responding to the challenges of climate change, including requiring zero carbon development. New homes are required

to ensure people have a place to live which is essential for life chances, however our ambition is to enable this whilst mitigating the impacts of climate change.

Supplementary Question:

The report was written by a Professor at Reading University, and actually relates to this specific area, our area. Last month the Lib Dem Leader rightly said that the government tells councils how many new homes to build and must plan to accommodate and give Planning permission for them in a 15 year Local Plan period. In this weeks, Wokingham Today, the Leader of the Council did expand on the strategic partnership agreed with the borough and Reading University. The agreed Board consists of the Vice Chancellor and the Head of Community Engagement at Reading University and the Council Leader and the Borough Chief Executive supported by four workstreams each led by unnamed senior academics and senior council officers. Perhaps this might explain why 4,500 houses at Hall Farm over a 30 year period on the side of a river that floods has Lib Dem support. It's odd when the government is only asking for a housing plan for 15 not 30 years. The Lib Dem Administration maintains they are fighting excessive housing numbers yet this 2,300 houses in my question and not legally required by the government, should the Administration apologise to residents for misleading them on housing numbers? It also makes one wonder if other developers involved in the evolving Local Plan process have been left with an unfair disadvantage by this strategic partnership.

Supplementary Answer:

If I remember correctly, you were lead on the Local Plan, our current Local Plan that runs to 2026. I think you were instrumental in putting all the Strategic Development Locations (SDL's) together, built on large spaces of green land space across our borough, some of which run very close to rivers. I would wonder as to the issue you raise on that because I have been working very hard and I gave the answer to the last public question, where the first part I said: Since I took on responsibility for local plans, I have raised the concerns expressed by some residents towards the Hall Farm promotion led by the University of Reading, including the promotions scale of 4,500 homes.

In response, the University have indicated they are undertaking viability work looking at whether a lower scale of 3,750 homes would be viable, taking into account the infrastructure that would need to be provided and anticipated landowner/developer costs in delivering the garden village. This would represent a near 20% reduction.

We are still awaiting the results of this viability work. You are accusing us of not reducing our numbers, we are waiting for the government to come up with the National Planning Policy Framework, which included in the draft proposals an allowance for over provision. That over provision from the Local Plan that you put together, numbers nearly 2,000 homes so that the 2,000 extra homes in our borough at the moment are now currently in the Local Plan that have been provided by the one you put together.

In addition, we still have developments which are going to go well beyond the 2026 period. Whilst in your Local Plan, you didn't indicate anything beyond the 15 years by actual work activity taking place you go beyond the 2026 period because of the developments either not progressing at the pace you wanted or extra Planning approval occurs. I think it is much more appropriate to be open and honest as to what has happened. I would also like to advise you that the draft Local Plan which is in the current scheme was not put together by this Administration. It was by the Administration that you were part of, certainly at some point. I think you need to apologise to quite a lot of residents for spouting around things that are irrelevant.

76. ST CRISPIN'S LEISURE CENTRE

The Chair advised that there were some supplementary papers circulated following the publication of the agenda and these should be considered with the main agenda pack for this item. He also welcomed the Chair of the Community & Corporate Services O&S Committee, Councillor Chris Johnson who would be presenting the recommendations of the O&S Committee.

The Executive Member for Children's Services reported that there had been a consultation exercise in the summer months, this had identified some concerns around the leisure use and safeguarding. A significant level of activity had taken place since this consultation including two very robust O&S Committees which had considered and scrutinised this area in great detail. The outcome had been that the O&S Committee had endorsed the view that the leisure centre should be transferred to the Circle Trust to enable St Crispin's school to expand and offer an additional 330 school places across a number of years.

It was recognised that these school places were much needed in order to accommodate all children in the borough. It was noted that other schools in the borough were also being expanded to assist with the pressures on secondary school places in the borough.

The Executive Member expressed her thanks to everyone who had worked hard to ensure that all leisure provision currently provided by the leisure centre would continue to be provided, bar the use of the Squash courts in the daytime.

She thanked O&S for their time and input and for the value they had added to this work. She supported the additional recommendations that had been added to this report as a result of the work of the O&S Committee and stated that the Administration would be working to ensure that O&S continued to play a full role in scrutinising decisions in the future ahead of decisions being taken by the Executive. The recommendations before the Executive today, had been thoroughly explored and scrutinised as a result of the work of the O&S Committee. It had become clear that none of the alternative options put forward were viable.

It was noted that the leisure centre would continue to be utilised as a Polling Station.

The Executive Member for Environment, Sports & Leisure reported that since the early summer it was becoming clear that St Crispin's alone amongst our leisure centres, was not recovering post pandemic, evidenced by footfall. This had significantly decreased in all aspects of the leisure centre's activities. In addition, the pressure on school places had continued to grow and as a result a consultation exercise was undertaken on the future use of this Council asset.

He advised that the outcome of the consultation had identified two main overarching points these were that if the leisure centre was transferred to the school, there would be a significant loss to the Squash players and a significant loss to some of the older residents of the local area who use some of the classes. Having said this, it was becoming increasingly difficult to maintain the leisure facility class schedule as the school itself was requiring a greater use of the leisure centre for examination periods and other uses. This had made the sustainability of the leisure class schedule increasingly less sustainable.

He reiterated the point made by the Executive Member for Children's Services that all classes would be re-provided, including at the leisure facility itself, in the town centre or at Montague Park community centre. The only loss would be the daytime use of the Squash courts. He fully supported the recommendations to be considered by the Executive.

The Chair of the Community & Corporate Services O&S Committee reported that this had been a very emotive issue for the community and that he had had a lot of contact with local residents outside of meetings. In the first O&S meeting there was recognition that there was some resentment at the loss of a community asset. Having asked for further information at the second O&S meeting and the attendance of a representative of the Circle Trust at the second meeting, an in depth and detailed discussion was possible at the second meeting with some very pointed questions. The O&S Committee were appreciative of the work and liaison that had been put into this as it helped the Committee to consider how the community could be best supported and how their recommendations should be shaped.

The O&S Committee had fully recognised the marked need for school places, some 1045 over a five year period. This particular project would only accommodate 330 places, but that this would be in addition to other activity at St Crispin's which would create a further 179 school places. The Committee also recognised that the conversion of an existing building would allow the school places to be realised much more quickly than a new build. In addition, the cost differences were substantial.

The O&S Committee were also mindful that the transfer of the leisure centre facility to the Circle Trust did not equate to a loss of that facility, it would be leased. The Trust would then take responsibility for the maintenance and development of the facility. The Committee also discovered a flaw with the block booking system currently being deployed at the leisure centre which did not account for who was in the building, this gave rise to safeguarding issues for the school.

There had been some constructive comments from the Circle Trust around their intentions and aspirations for the facility. There was much work yet needed to develop the facility such as Planning permissions and design work, before the facility could be fully utilised. The Circle Trust had made a commitment that all current out of hours activity would be re-provided, this included the Squash courts out of hours. The Squash courts could not be accommodated during school hours.

Following all of the discussion and engagement and the evidence provided by witnesses at the two O&S Committees, the Committee had arrived at three additional recommendations which they wished to propose to the Executive for endorsement, these were listed in the supplementary agenda papers.

The Executive Member for Children's Services stated that the landscape around education was changing and this report had highlighted the need to look at the bigger picture for schools more generally and the co-location of leisure centres and other facilities and the possible implications for safeguarding and other issues that this might raise. It would be useful for Scrutiny to review this area. In terms of Montague Park, its financial viability would need to be assessed as a first step.

The Chair thanked the O&S Committee and all Members involved for their work and contributions on this difficult issue. This qualitative input had helped pushed this process forward and added considerable value to the process. He thanked the three witnesses,

Ginny Rhodes, Andrew ? and Tony Penge who had all attended the O&S Committee meeting and added a great deal to the deliberations and working through the issues. He also thanked the officers who had worked hard on this and the tremendous amount of work delivered across the two O&S Committee meetings. It would now be for the Executive to consider the benefits of the proposals as well as any disbenefits.

Executive Members commented that if the facility was to be restored, this would require significant refurbishment and cost. The most viable option was to lease the centre to the Circle Trust.

RESOLVED that the Executive:

1. Noted the findings of the public consultation on the Future use of St Crispin's Leisure Centre.
2. Noted the Council's legal responsibility in securing sufficient school places for local residents.
3. Approved in principle the closure of St Crispin's Leisure Centre and transfer of the land to St Crispin's School (The Circle Trust) to fulfil the school placement requirements and to continue to deliver 55 extra place each year in the next five years; subject to detailed agreement with the trust with lease arrangement under relevant Academy regulations.
4. Noted that the revenue impact of ending the Council's Leisure contractors' utilisation of the premises will be funded through the Leisure Management Equalisation Fund.
5. Noted that the capital expenditure of £1m for works is funded from the secondary school's expansion budget already approved as part of the 2023/24 capital programme.
6. Noted the Circle Trust is keen to work with the Council and Local Communities to continue the local squash provision in addition to the current community activities the school provide.
7. Noted that any repurposing of the school must also include the requirements of the Council to deliver a polling station at the site for elections as per requirements set out.
8. Delegated authority to the Director of Resources and Assets and Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Executive Member for Environment, Sport and Leisure, the Executive Member for Children's Services and the Leader of the Council, to enter into negotiation with Places Leisure to facilitate the closure of St Crispin's Leisure Centre and with The Circle Trust to secure the provision of additional school places and the transfer of the land and buildings from the Council to The Circle Trust.
9. Delegated authority to the Director of Resources and Assets and Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Executive Member for Environment, Sport and Leisure, the Executive Member for Children's Services and the Leader of the Council, to enter into negotiation with Places Leisure with regards to the running of leisure activities at Montague Park Community Centre or elsewhere

which will be subject to a financial viability test.

10. Noted the attached Appendix that provides additional information to support the proposal, following the consideration by Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 14 November 2023.
11. Officers be requested to progress the financial viability assessment relating to the Montague Park Community Centre;
12. Progress on the agreement between the Council and the Circle Trust, along with all other agreements involving schools and leisure facilities, be the subject of a report to the Committee within 12 months.

77. LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 4 - DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

The Executive Member for Active Travel, Transport & Highways thanked Rob Curtis and his team for all their work hard work on this Plan. The Plan would replace the existing Plan which covered 2011 to 2026 and cover a 10-15 year period. The adoption of the final Plan would be at a Council meeting in summer 2024.

He thanked the Community & Corporate Services O&S Committee for the value they has added by acting as a critical friend.

RESOLVED that the Executive agreed to publish the draft Local Transport Plan 4 for public consultation with the intention in summer 2024, subject to approval of full Council, for the council to adopt the plan as the council's strategic plan for transport over the next 10-15 years.

78. TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID-YEAR 2023-24 REPORT

The Executive Member for Finance reported that this report updated the Executive on the status of the Council's investments and loans and the overall management of the Council's treasury funds within the first six months of this year. It also allows the Executive to consider whether the Council is meeting all the requirements set out in the Treasury Management strategy.

The Executive Member stated that she wished to highlight a number of standout points, the first of which was the Council's net indebtedness. This had risen as a result of the Council using internal funds as opposed to borrowing externally to pay high interest rates. At present, this was positive as it helped with funding pressures. The Executive were confident that the level of cash balances could support this level of internal borrowing. The average interest rate on the Council's external debt was forecast to be 3.68% across the year. This was expected to rise in the next year. The impact of this was being monitored.

The treasury investment returns were forecast to be £3m over this year. On page 154 of the agenda papers, a list of investments that the Council had made was detailed, this included loans to nine other local authorities.

Overall, the Council was managing debt and working to get the most from investments in the interests of the Council's residents.

It was raised by Executive Members that a response should be made to Mr Meadowcroft to clear up any misunderstanding that had arisen relating to the Council's finances and

loans, which had been raised in his public question, earlier in the meeting. The Chair noted that he had offered to have a discussion with Mr Meadowcroft outside of the meeting.

RESOLVED that the Executive endorsed the Treasury Management Mid- Year Report 2023-24 and recommended it to Council and noted:

1) that all approved indicators set out in the Treasury Management Strategy had been adhered to; with the exceptions of;

- Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream – General Fund.
- Capital financing requirement – Housing Revenue Account.
- External borrowing – Housing Revenue Account

2) As at the end of September 2023, the forecast for the total external General Fund debt was £129m at March 2024, which reduced to £110m after taking into account cash balances.

79. COUNCIL PLAN EXTENSION 2024-25

The Chair reported that the Council was working with key stakeholders in the voluntary and charitable sector, town and parish councils, business, faith groups, health providers, police, the fire service, the Youth Council, schools, the University of Reading, and the wider public on a jointly authored Community Vision, which would establish the priorities of the borough for the years to come.

Whilst drawing up a new Council Plan based on the Community Vision, the gap between the expiry of the current Council Plan and the completion of the work on the Community Vision by extending the life of the current plan for a further year, needed to be bridged.

RESOLVED that the Executive:

- 1) Agreed to extend the current Council Plan for one year (2024-25)
- 2) Accepted the amendments to the plan as set out in the report and
- 3) Recommended submission to Full Council for approval.

TITLE	Unreasonably Persistent Complainant's Policy (updated Policy)
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Executive
WARD	(All Wards);
LEAD OFFICER	Lewis Borges, Head of Customer Experience & Change

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek the Executive's approval of an updated version of the Unreasonably Persistent Complainant's Policy.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Executive approve the updated Unreasonably Persistent Complainant's Policy, as attached at Appendix 2.

Background

The Unreasonably Persistent Complainants Policy (UPCP) is a policy that already exists. It has recently been updated to reflect the Councils approach to people who complain in an unreasonable manner about a particular matter, in line with what is set out by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO).

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Corporate Complaints Policy, which explains the steps to take if you have a complaint. Further details can be found at this link: [Complaints \(wokingham.gov.uk\)](http://wokingham.gov.uk/complaints)

Most complaints are resolved through the Council's internal complaints process or when needed, through the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO). However, there are a small number of customers who, because of the amount, nature, and quantity of their contact, are deemed to be unreasonable or unreasonably persistent complainants.

It is very rare that officers need to refer to Unreasonably Persistent Complainants Policy (UPCP) when interacting with complainants. We do not currently have any residents or members of community that are unreasonably persistent.

An unreasonably persistent complainant can be:

- a complainant who has been responded to in full but still wishes to pursue the same complaint
- a complainant who is pursuing their complaint through different ways in the hope of getting a different outcome
- a complainant who makes derogatory or dis-respectful comments aimed at our staff

The complainant would be informed that their actions are becoming unreasonable or unreasonably persistent. We would offer to discuss this with them before taking any further action.

This policy sets out a clear and transparent approach for officers around how and in what circumstances to apply the policy. The policy also explains to complainants what they can expect from us, the process and decision-making route should they be unreasonably persistent.

This policy and approaches within it are only used in exceptional circumstances, when all options have been appropriately explored and complaints policy exhausted, aligned to LGSCO guidance.

The policy has been reviewed and changes made by:

- Using the LGSCO guidance to re-write the policy.
- Learning from how we were using the policy now.
- Following the 3C principles in the re-write to make it easier to understand – Care, Clarity and Confidence

What the policy is not

- A way to stop customers complaining.
- A way to 'short cut' the complaints process.
- A way to avoid allowing customers to ask questions at the relevant committee meetings.

Key policy updates

In summary, the key updates are:

1. The policy has been re-written using clearer language (3C's).
2. Customers are no longer put on a 'list', instead an audit trail will be held by the Customer Relations Team, including how decisions were made.
3. The decision to make a customer unreasonably persistent is now made by the Director of the service, in conjunction with the Chief Executive and CLT – not just by the service themselves.
4. Included a summary flowchart of how the decision is made for 'quick reference'.

Once the policy has been formally signed off by the Executive, it will be transferred back into an accessible format, including development of an Easy Read document.

The policy has been reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny management Committee, and some changes made as a result of the committee's recommendations.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

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

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

Other Financial Information
No Costs or Savings identified.

Public Sector Equality Duty
An EQIA has been completed and no detrimental effects will impact any particular group.

Climate Emergency
N/A

Reasons for considering the report in Closed Session
None

List of Background Papers
None

Contact Lewis Borges	Service: Head of Customer Experience & Change
Telephone Tel: 0118 974 6000	Email Lewis.Borges@wokingham.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Formal Corporate complaints process at a glance

Early Resolution

- Notify Directorate complaint rep and ensure complaint is recorded
- If the complaint has been submitted via the online form, the complainant will receive an automatic acknowledgement. If the complaint has **not** been submitted via the online form, you will need to contact the complainant **within 3 working days** to discuss the matter and see what solution(s) is/are possible to put things right
- **Aim to resolve within 5 working days**
- Act on remedial action
- Learn from the complaint and act on any improvements within service

Stage 1

- Notify directorate complaints rep and ensure complaint is recorded
- **Acknowledgement within 3 working days**
- Investigation by the service/department involved in the complaint
- Keep the customer updated on progress
- **15 working days to provide a full response and resolve**
- Response signed off by Service Manager or Assistant Director
- Learn from the complaint and act on any improvements within service

Stage 2

- Request for escalation received
- Notify directorate complaints rep and ensure complaint is recorded
- **Acknowledgement within 3 working days**
- Investigation by the Customer Relations Team
- Keep the customer updated on progress
- **20 working days to provide a full response and resolve**
- Response signed off by the Assistant Director or Director
- Learn from the complaint and act on any improvements within service

Ombudsman

- Referral to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) or the Housing Ombudsman (HO)
- Customer Relations acts as the 'link' for the LGSCO/HO
- Provision of information by the service to Customer Relations, as requested by the LGSCO/HO
- Ombudsman liaises with the complainant and provides a draft then final decision

Formal Process ▶

Unreasonably Persistent Complainants Policy **DRAFT**

Contents

Section 1: Your guide to unreasonably persistent complainants

What's in this policy

Our promise to you

Equality and Diversity (Equality Act 2010)

Section 2:

Who is an unreasonably persistent complainant?

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Section 3:

What happens next?

Who keeps a record?

Section 4:

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Section 5:

Further information

Any queries?

Appendix 1:

Summary of how the decision is made to make a complainant unreasonably persistent

Section 1: Your guide to unreasonably persistent complainants

We always want to give you the very best service we can. But we know that sometimes we get things wrong or there are problems you need us to put right. Most of these complaints are resolved through the Council's internal complaints process or when needed, the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO).

However, there are a small number of customers who, because of the amount, nature, and quality of their contact, are deemed to be unreasonable or unreasonably persistent complainants.

The complainant would be told before any decision is made, that their actions are becoming unreasonable or unreasonably persistent. We would offer to discuss this with them before taking any further action.

The sections below will tell you how the decision is made. You can find a summary of this in appendix 1 at the end of the document.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Corporate Complaints Policy, which explains the steps to take if you have a complaint. You can find further details at this link: [Complaints \(wokingham.gov.uk\)](https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/complaints)

If you'd like this policy in another format like large print, please email customerrelations@wokingham.gov.uk or call 01189746000 and we'd be happy to help.

Our promise

Is to:

- treat you with respect and fairness
- be responsive, friendly, and helpful
- be open and honest and manage expectations
- support and care for you as an individual
- listen to what you have to say and learn from it

Equality and Diversity

This policy is written in conjunction with the Equality Act 2010 which created the Public Sector Equality Duty.

This policy will be applied fairly and consistently to all regardless of gender, race, marital status, national or ethnic origin, nationality, disability, sexuality, age or religion. This is in line with the Equality Plan 2021 to 2025 for Wokingham Borough Council, information on this can be found at: <https://wokingham.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s47397/>.

Wokingham Borough Council's Complaints Team are committed to being accessible to all and reasonable adjustments will be made for residents and representatives, where needed.

Section 2: Who is unreasonable or an unreasonably persistent complainant?

They can be:

- a complainant who has been responded to in full but still wishes to pursue the same complaint
- a complainant who is pursuing their complaint through different ways in the hope of getting a different outcome
- a complainant who makes derogatory or dis-respectful comments aimed at our staff

Examples of unreasonable behaviour:

- Refusing to give the grounds of a complaint, despite offers of help.
- Refusing to work with the complaints process.
- Refusing to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints process.
- Insisting on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are not in line with the complaints process or with good practice.
- Making unfair complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues
- Changing the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds.
- Denying or changing statements made at an earlier stage.
- Introducing new information at a later stage.
- Raising many detailed but unimportant questions, and insisting they are all answered.
- Submitting false documents.
- Adopting a 'scatter gun' approach: sending similar complaints on the same issue to lots of organisations.
- Making undue demands on the time and resources of staff and expecting responses straight away.
- Sending in repeat complaints with small changes to the original complaint and insisting this makes it a new complaint.
- Refusing to accept the decision; continuing to argue points with no new evidence.

The Information Commissioner has also issued guidance on what would be unreasonably persistent or classed as repeated requests.

- Could the request fairly be seen as obsessive?
- Is the request harassing the Council or causing distress to staff?
- Would complying with the request impose a burden on the Council?
- Is it likely that the request is designed to cause disruption?
- Does the request lack any serious value?

How we assess if someone is unreasonably persistent?

If while investigating a complaint the complainant displays one or more of the traits in Section 2 more than once, the Customer Relations Team will discuss it with the Head of Service as to whether to consider these actions unreasonable.

If the complaint has been through the whole complaints process and finished, the complainant will be advised that no further contact about the complaint or complaints related to this. However, if the complaint is ongoing, we may choose to limit the amount of contact to one officer and how often they will contact the complainant.

The following are some of the questions that will be considered before a complainant is classed as unreasonably persistent.

- that the complaint is being, or has been, investigated properly
- any decision reached on the complaint has followed the complaints policy and procedures
- communication has been maintained with the complainant
- whether the complainant is providing any significant new information that might affect the service's view on the complaint

A decision will then be made on what action to take. Below are some of the options available:

- Placing limits on the number and duration of contact with staff per week/month.
- Offering a restricted time slot for necessary calls.
- Limiting the complainant to one type of contact (i.e. email).
- Requiring the complainant to correspond with only one member of staff.
- Requiring any 'face to face' meetings to take place in the presence of a witness and in a suitable location.

However, whilst contact will be stopped about the complaint, if the complainant were to contact us on a separate matter, contact should be managed as normal.

The final decision will be made by the Director of service concerned, in conjunction with the Chief Executive and the Corporate Leadership Team.

Section 3:

What happens next?

If agreed, the complainant will be informed of what action will be taken. Correspondence will be sent informing of the decision.

This should make the following points clear:

- The complaint the complainant is being unreasonably persistent about.
- The action we propose to take.
- What restrictions will be put in place.
- That restrictions apply to this complaint and no other contact.
- That a record will be kept reflecting that the complainant has demonstrated unreasonably persistent behaviour in respect of the matter.
- When the record will be reviewed.

Keeping records?

If a complainant is classified as unreasonably persistent, we will keep a copy of evidence in support of the decision.

The Customer Relations Team are responsible for updating and monitoring the records.

These records include the following information:

- why and when the complainant's details were recorded
- who made and approved the decision
- date of review

The Customer Relations Team will keep a record of any correspondence about the complaint.

The Customer Relations Team will review the recorded details six months after the action has been taken. When reviewed, the Customer Relations Team will talk to the Head of service to check if there has been any contact about the complaint. If there has been no contact, the complainant details regarding being unreasonably persistent will be removed. If contact has continued, then officers will need to consider the nature and frequency, and whether the restrictions should continue.

Once this decision is made, correspondence will be sent to the complainant to advise of the decision.

This should inform of:

- the decision being made
- the reasoning to support this decision; and
- when it will be reviewed next, if it has been agreed to keep the complainant's details on record

The Customer Relations Team will update the record to reflect the outcome and any actions.

Section 4:

Referring unreasonably persistent complainants to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)

In some cases, agreements cannot be reached. If the complaint can't be resolved and is still ongoing, early referral to the LGSCO may be made.

Complainants can make a complaint to the Ombudsman about the way they have been treated. The Ombudsman is unlikely to be critical of actions if it can show that the policy has been applied correctly and fairly.

Section 5:

Further Information

The policy will be monitored and amended in line with best practice in both public and private sectors.

Any queries regarding this policy should be directed to the Customer Relations Team using the following contact information:

- Tel.: **(0118) 974 6000 and ask to speak to the Customer Relations Team**
- E-mail: CustomerRelations@wokingham.gov.uk

Appendix 1 – Summary of how the decision is made to make a complainant

Who could be unreasonably persistent?

- A complainant who has been responded to in full but still wishes to pursue the same complaint
- A complainant who is pursuing their complaint through different ways in the hope of getting a different outcome
- A complainant who makes derogatory or dis-respectful comments aimed at our staff

Section 2



How do we assess if someone is unreasonably persistent ?

- The Customer Relations Team will discuss the complainant with the Head of service, and establish whether to consider their actions unreasonable
- If the person has a complaint that is ongoing, we may choose to limit the amount of contact to one officer and how often they will contact the complainant

Section 2



Who will decide if someone is unreasonably persistent?

- The final decision will be made by the Director of the service concerned, in conjunction with the Chief Executive and the Corporate Leadership Team

Section 2



What happens next ?

- Once the decision is made, the complainant will be contacted and advised of the decision.

This should inform of:

- the decision being made
- the reasoning to support this decision; and
- when it will be reviewed next, if it has been agreed to keep the complainant's details on record

The Customer Relations Team will update the record to reflect the outcome and any actions. A review will take place after 6 months.

Section 3

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Agenda Item 85.

TITLE	Revenue Monitoring 2023-24 Quarter 3
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	The Executive on 25 January 2024
WARD	(All Wards);
LEAD OFFICER	Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers
LEAD MEMBER	Executive Member for Finance - Imogen Shepherd-DuBey

PURPOSE OF REPORT (INC STRATEGIC OUTCOMES)

To deliver the Council Priorities for the Community, ensuring the efficient effective and safe use of resource and seek remedial action to achieve a balanced budget where possible.

The Council agrees and sets its budget in the February preceding the current financial year and this report seeks to update Executive on the budget position throughout the year and provide an estimate of the outturn position and impact on balances at year-end (31 March 2024).

RECOMMENDATION

That the Executive:

- 1) note the overall forecast of the current position of the General Fund revenue budget, Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) illustrated in the Executive Summary and appendices attached to the report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

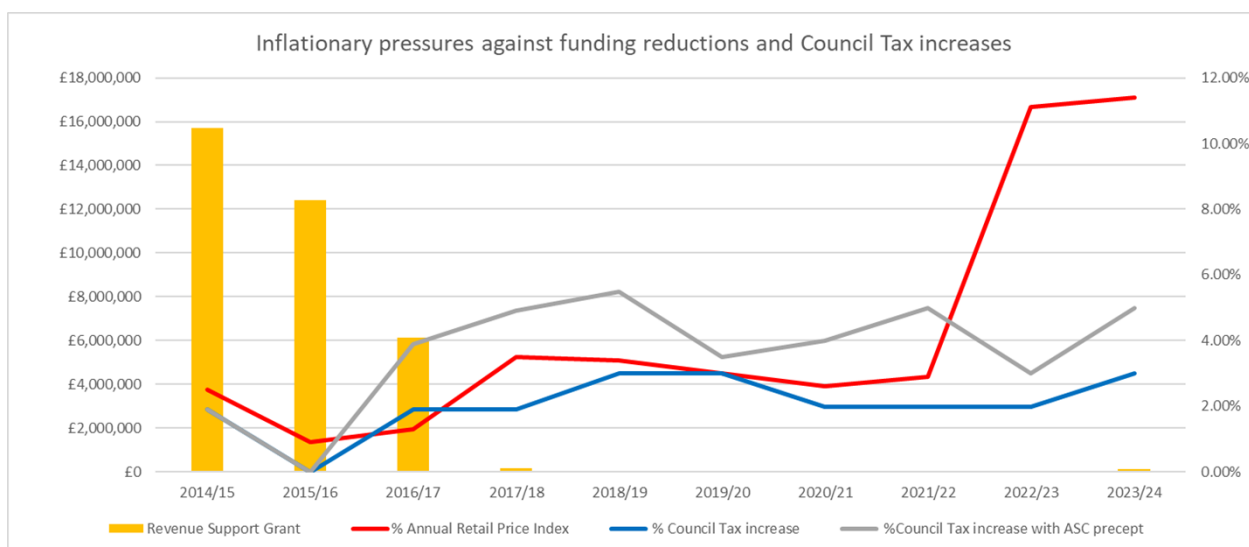
This report is to allow the Executive to note the current of the forecast outturn positions for 2023/24 for the Council's net revenue expenditure, its General Fund Balance (GFB), the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), and the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

BACKGROUND

Recommendation 1 – Current Position

The Council continues to face significant financial challenges from rising inflation, interest rates and demand for statutory services. The underlying spending pressures in excess of budget facing the Council are c£11m however there is significant levels of mitigating actions supporting to deliver the current projected overspend position of c£3.6m. This will continue to be closely monitored and further options will be explored as we move through the financial year to manage this position.

The graph below shows how acute the difference between inflation and the Council's ability to fund those costs (revenue support grant and council tax) has become in 2022/23 and 2023/24. This is placing a significant pressure across the organisation on current year budgets, before factors such as specific service demand which are detailed in the report.



As previously reported the context of the financial landscape remains hugely challenging. Over the past few months, a number of authorities have been reported as facing the real possibility of considering a Section 114 notice (issued when an authority is in financial distress and unable to balance its budget) in view of their current financial position and recent forecasts. Southampton City Council, Guildford Borough Council, Hastings Borough Council, and Kent County Council have all been quoted as facing significant challenges which if not addressed may mean the financial position of the council is unsustainable. Most recently in Berkshire, The Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead have reported significant financial stress and risk to future financial sustainability.

Given the significance of the financial challenge Directors together with their teams are working hard to come up with ways of reducing expenditure including additional levels of controls and approvals to support bringing us back to budget.

The Executive has agreed to consider Revenue Monitoring Reports on a quarterly basis. In February 2023, the Council agreed and set its net General Fund (Revenue) budget at £180.1 million; following year end, this is to be further adjusted to include supplementary estimates and agreed budget movements. This gives a working budget for each of the

Councils Directorates. The working budgets and forecast outturn are shown in the table below.

Department	End of Year Position		
	Current Approved Budget	Current Forecast	Net over / (under) spend
	£,000	£,000	£,000
Adult Social Care	65,961	66,391	430
Chief Executive	12,199	12,092	(106)
Children's Services	42,802	45,422	2,620
Place & Growth	53,743	54,307	564
Resources & Assets	5,782	5,850	67
Net Expenditure	180,487	184,062	3,575

Further details of the outturn forecast position and variances are also shown at Appendix A. The main items of variance identified to date are:

Adult Social Care

The predicted £0.43m overspend represents small (0.65%) variance against budget. This has reduced slightly from £0.48m reported at the end of quarter two. The overspend relates to continued pressures from inflation increasing market rates and increased demand for services. Work will continue to attempt to mitigate and manage through the remainder of the year.

Chief Executive

The forecast underspend of £0.106m is because of the successful reduction of the use of contractors and the holding of additional vacancies within the Chief Executive directorate.

Children's Services

Children's are forecasting a £2.6m overspend mainly due to external pressures which are masking in-service efficiencies.

Home to School Transport (HTST) accounts for £1.6m of the overspend, driven by continued pressure from SEND children being educated out of borough as well as higher cost price which is being driven by high inflation, and wider pressures in the market such

as driver availability. Policy changes have driven a reduction in mainstream children as well as root optimisation, but this has been eclipsed by the increases in SEND HTST provision.

Placement cost per night continues to be a challenge as market demand and complexity of needs continues to put pressure on the service. A balanced service ecosystem to support children at the right time means 14% a year-on-year reduction in Looked after Children (excluding UASCs) but eclipsed by cost price increases where they have seen a 50% increase in residential costs.

The service has accommodated £0.8m unbudgeted Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) and UASC care leaver costs into the service. Funding from central government falls significantly short of costs. The average net care cycle cost of each UASC into WBC is c.£0.1m. As the council keeps to its 0.1% government target number, we will need to support a new UASC for each one that ages out, leading to significant growth in former UASC care leavers, a significant future cost to the council if sufficient housing that matches funding isn't found.

There are emerging pressures in legal costs due to challenges for our provider being able to provide Legal Counsel in house resulting in a £0.5m pressure across the service.

The service is also facing significant challenges around recruitment of key staff and increasing demand across all areas. This provides for significant further risk and challenge to the budget as the service meets the costs of statutory services for vulnerable children and young people.

Place and Growth

An overspend of £0.56m is predicted which amounts to a 1% variance against budget. This has increased by £0.19m since quarter two.

The overall variance is a result of underachievement of income from car parking, which is due to delays in the implementation of both on street parking charging and to the increase in off street parking. Planning income is also down compared to budget and forecast to remain low for the remainder of the year mainly as a result of the impact of the current economic climate.

Further forecast pressures exist around the use of temporary staff and demands on temporary housing accommodation which are exacerbated by increasing numbers of asylum seekers and refugees entering the borough. The forecast offsets of additional one-off income in relation to bulky waste and additional grant income result in the overall forecast overspend of £0.56m.

Resources and Assets

The directorate is forecasting an overspend of £0.067m. Leisure income targets remain under significant pressure following the impacts of COVID and more recently cost of living pressures. Property rental income also remains under pressure from the external market conditions. The reduced capital programme impacts the work of the property team which is currently being reviewed. The revaluation of business rates in corporate properties has resulted in savings in quarter 3.

General Fund

The General Fund Forecast is approximately £7m. Work will continue throughout the year to contain costs and maximise efficiencies where possible to improve and firm up the year-end position.

The General Fund balance is held to provide a general contingency for unavoidable or unforeseen expenditure as well as providing some stability for longer term planning particularly in uncertain economic times.

See Appendix B for further details.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

The Housing Revenue Account is currently forecast to be £12k over budget come year end, a small increase from quarter two. Risks however continue to exist around rental income, the level of voids and maintenance costs, which are all significant budgets and continue to be monitored.

The original budget included a proposal to increase the HRA revenue reserve balance by £161k. However, the starting position on the HRA reserve of £1.08m was higher than anticipated when the budget was set and is a prudent level of reserves and above the minimum recommended reserve balance of £0.9m set out in the Medium-Term Financial Plan. See Appendix C for further details.

Subject to the final year end position the proposal is therefore not to increase the reserve balance by £161k but to use the funds to make a higher than budgeted repayment of borrowing. This helps reduce the level of borrowing within the HRA more quickly, reducing repayment costs and increasing capacity for future borrowing if required. The HRA reserve balance is therefore forecast to be £1.08m on 31st March 2024.

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)

An in-year deficit of £12.18m is projected, as demand for EHCPs continues, rising 9% since the start of the financial year. Taken with the brought forward deficit of £9.2m, and expected Safety Valve funding received in-year, a forecast cumulative deficit of £15.3m is now projected to 31st March 2024. This includes income received via the Safety Valve Agreement and use of the Equalisation Fund.

The current in-year forecast represents an adverse movement of £4.02m on the £8.15m deficit included in 2023/24 budget setting. The movement being:

- £0.3m increase in the Schools Block
- £3.7m increase in the High Needs Block

As is the case with the vast majority of authorities across the country, the overspend on the DSG relates to ongoing pressure on the High Needs Block (HNB), driven largely by continuing increases in the number of children and young people with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and their related needs resulting in demand for specialist placements.

Our Safety Valve Programme is now well established and whilst the HNB continues to be in a deficit position, we are building support from some schools as they accommodate complex children within their settings, however, we are still seeing an increase in requests from other settings and parents. In addition to the increased requests, the effects of a lack of specialist provision continues, forcing the local authority to continue to make expensive placements. The schools have recently approved the 0.5% transfer from the schools block to the HNB, demonstrating their support. Safety valve projects are on track to deliver but impacts won't begin to be felt until early 24/25 and will incrementally increase from there.

See Appendix D for further details.

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)	£184.1m	Yes	Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	N/A	Yes	Revenue
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	N/A	Yes	Revenue

Other Financial Information

Effective monitoring of budgets is an essential element of providing cost effective services and enables any corrective action to be undertaken, if required. Many of the budgets are activity driven and can be volatile in nature.

Stakeholder Considerations and Consultation

None

Public Sector Equality Duty

Public Sector Equality Duty assessment is undertaken during individual business cases.

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*

None – this is only a report on the financial position for quarter three.

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2

none

List of Background Papers

Appendix A – Revenue Monitoring Summary
 Appendix B – General Fund Balance
 Appendix C – Housing Revenue Account Monitoring Summary

Appendix D – DSG Monitoring Summary

Contact Stu Taylor	Service Finance
Telephone 07525 804116	Email stu.taylor@wokingham.gov.uk

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REVENUE MONITORING REPORT December 2023

GENERAL FUND SUMMARY

Department	End of Year Position			Comment on major areas of estimated over / (underspend)
	Current Approved Budget	Current Forecast	Net over / (under) spend	
	£,000	£,000	£,000	
Adult Social Care	65,961	66,391	430	The budget for 2023/24 was set with low net growth. The predicted £0.43m overspend represents small (0.65%) variance against budget. This has reduced slightly from £0.48m reported at the end of quarter two. The overspend relates to continued pressures from inflation increasing market rates and increased demand for services. Work will continue to attempt to mitigate and manage through the remainder of the year.
Chief Executive	12,199	12,092	(106)	The reported variance is unchanged from quarter two. Through successful reduction of contractors and the holding of additional vacancies the CE directorate is forecasting an underspend of £0.106m.
Children's Services	42,802	45,422	2,620	<p>For 2023/24 the main drivers of the variance are from Placement costs and Home to School Transport (HTST). But there are emerging pressures in legal costs due to challenges for our provider being able to provide Legal Counsel in house. Additional controls, next steps are underway to mitigate this exposure to the council.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nationwide demand in complex placements is driving a higher cost per night than we have seen historically with residential placement costs rising 50% year on year. Placed children with complex health needs are not being funded by CHC, resulting in a significant additional cost to the council that should be funded by Health, c£1m across Children's. - Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) government income doesn't cover total costs incurred which account for £0.8m of cost into the service in 2023/24. The average net care cycle cost of each UASC into WBC is c.£0.1m. As the council keeps to it's 0.1% government target number we will need to support a new UASC for each one that ages out, leading to significant growth in former UASC care leavers, a significant future cost to the council if sufficient housing that matches funding isn't found. - HTST accounts for £1.6m of the overspend with SEND HTST places increasing 28% year on year. - Recruitment and capacity continues to be a challenge. Other local LAs are beginning to increase SW salaries to improve turnover and reduce agency works, we are yet to fully understand the full impact of this on our own workforce.
Place & Growth	53,743	54,307	564	<p>The reported variance is due to forecast income being lower than budgeted in a number of service areas. This is in part in relation to planning application fee income and delays in relation to the implementation of new parking proposals. Additional pressures arise from the use of temporary staff and increase demand and costs relating to temporary accommodation.</p> <p>There are some favourable movements as a result of some additional grant income, vacant posts and lower than forecast electricity costs. Risks exist around the level of planning and parking income as a result of changes within the service and the level of use of temporary accommodation, exacerbated by asylum seekers and refugees.</p>
Resources & Assets	5,782	5,850	67	Leisure income targets continue to be under significant pressure following the impacts of COIVD and more recently cost of living pressures. Property rental income also remains under pressure from the external market conditions. The reduced capital programme impacts the work of the property team which is currently being reviewed. Revaluations and changes to corporate properties has resulted in reduced NNDR charges and energy costs.
Net Expenditure	180,487	184,062	3,575	

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Estimated General Fund Balance - 31st March 2024

Note	£,000	£,000
1 Estimated General Fund Balance (as at 31/3/2023)		(£9,109)
Budgeted contribution to general fund (as per MTFP)	(£1,550)	
		(£1,550)
<u>Supplementary Estimates</u> Sept '23 - procurement of waste collection contract	£86	
		£86
<u>Service Variance</u> Adult Social Care & Health	£430	
Chief Executive	(£106)	
Children's Services	£2,620	
Place and Growth	£564	
Resources and Assets	£67	
		£3,575
Estimated General Fund Balance 31/3/2024		(£6,998)

Notes

1. General balance as at 31/03/23 is estimated pending completion on the 2022/23 statement of accounts.
2. The General Fund Forecast is just under £7m. Work will continue throughout the year to contain costs and maximise efficiencies where possible to improve and firm up the year end position.

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REVENUE MONITORING REPORT 2023/24

Report Date: December 2023

Service	End of Year Position			Comment on major areas of estimated over / (underspend)
	Current Approved Budget	Current Forecast	Net over / (under) spend	
	£,000	£,000	£,000	
Housing Revenue Account				
Capital Finance				
Expenditure	4,232	4,232	0	
Income	(20)	(20)	0	
Net	4,212	4,212	0	
Fees & Charges / Capital Finance Charges				
Expenditure	87	163	76	Utility rates are higher than budgeted putting pressure on Gas and Electricity costs and Insurance costs have also increased following original provide pulling out of the market.
Income	(90)	(112)	(22)	Increased service charge recover covering some of the additional costs.
Net	(3)	51	54	
HRA General Management				
Expenditure	2,411	2,423	12	Staff costs
Income	(102)	(118)	(16)	Unbudgeted grant received.
Net	2,309	2,305	(3)	
HRA Housing Repairs				
Expenditure	4,496	4,535	39	Savings through staff vacancies but an overspend on void costs.
Income	(226)	(225)	1	
Net	4,270	4,310	40	
HRA Housing Services				
Expenditure	2,448	2,707	259	Transfer of increase income for Loddon & Berry Brook
Income	(18,889)	(19,167)	(278)	Increased income - mainly Loddon and Berry Brook
Net	(16,441)	(16,460)	(19)	
Sheltered Accommodation				
Expenditure	464	389	(76)	Savings on reactive maintenance and voids costs
Income	(644)	(628)	16	rental income is lower the budgeted
Net	(179)	(239)	(60)	
Subtotal Excluding Internal Recharges	(5,833)	(5,821)	12	
Internal and Capital Charges	5,833	5,833	0	
Total	0	0	12	

Housing Revenue Account Reserves	£,000	£,000
HRA Reserves as at 31st March 2023		(1,083)
Planned Spend	(12)	
Net Variance	12	
2023/24 Forecast Net Spend against Reserves		0
HRA Reserves as at 31st March 2024 (Forecast)		(1,083)

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REVENUE MONITORING REPORT 2023/24

Report Date: December 2023

Service	End of Year Position			Comment on major areas of estimated over / (underspend)
	Current Approved Budget	Current Forecast	Net over / (under) spend	
	£,000	£,000	£,000	
Dedicated Schools Grant				
Central School Services Block				
Expenditure	1,039	1,039	0	In line with budget.
Income	(1,039)	(1,039)	0	
Net	0	0	0	
Early Years Block				
Expenditure	12,615	13,261	646	No material variances identified at this time. Increase due to Early Years Supplementary Grant.
Income	(12,615)	(13,261)	(646)	
Net	0	0	0	
High Needs Block				
Expenditure	36,585	40,044	3,459	Overspend reflects early impact of Safety Valve investment driving longer term interventions and benefits, with the main increase in forecast being increased number and spend on pupils supported in mainstream schools and those in out of borough special schools. Pressures in out of borough special schools and independent special schools are greater than we had expected.
Income	(28,430)	(28,160)	270	
Net	8,155	11,884	3,729	The £12,176K is inline with the updated Q3 Safety Valve model, and includes updated estimates for new and ceasing EHCPs, with a big focus on reallocation of Health funding. We must continue to push on the SV workstreams to ensure we manage the increased demand. The second of three instalments of 2023/24 SV payment has been received, this sits against the cumulative deficit and not shown in these numbers.
Schools Block				
Expenditure	138,780	139,072	292	Overspend reflects planned use of Growth Fund reserves held to support sufficiency planning
Income	(138,780)	(138,780)	0	
Net	0	292	292	
Total	8,155	12,176	4,021	

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TITLE	Capital Monitoring 2023/24 - Q3
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	The Executive on Thursday, 25 January 2024
WARD	(All Wards);
LEAD OFFICER	Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers
LEAD MEMBER	Executive Member for Finance - Imogen Shepherd-DuBey

PURPOSE OF REPORT (INC STRATEGIC OUTCOMES)

Effective use of our capital resources to meet the Council Plan investment priorities, and delivering value for money for residents.

RECOMMENDATION

The Executive is asked to:

- 1) note the position of the capital programme at the end of Quarter 3 (to 31 December 2023) as summarised in the report below and set out in detail in Appendix A to the report;
- 2) approve and note the proposed carry forwards in the capital programme as set out in Appendix B;
- 3) note an additional budget of £8,987,586 has been agreed for Gorse Ride Redevelopment to cover additional inflationary costs (materials + labour) estimated over the project life (above original £106m budget). The Executive decision in February 2022 gave delegated authority to the Director of Resources and Assets, in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing and Finance, to approve the use of additional Affordable Housing s106 commuted sums as a contingency against cost and funding variations such as any future design changes and/or fluctuations in costs and values of up to 15% of the cost of the scheme in the event of any other financial impacts.
- 4) approve additional capital budget of £2,920,000 for 2023/24 in relation to the secondary school expansion programme. This is an acceleration of budget previously set out in the MTFP for use in 2024/25 and funded from DfE capital grants which have been received and available to use.
- 5) to approve a supplementary budget of £250,000 for Disabled Adaptations. This is funded in full from the Housing Revenue Account non-RTB reserve.
- 6) to approve a supplementary budget of £93,862 for the Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) project. This is funded in full from additional ringfenced grant awarded to the Council in the current financial year.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report informs the Executive of the progress of the Council in delivering its capital programme for the financial year 2023/2024. The Executive have previously agreed to consider Capital Monitoring Reports on a quarterly basis and this report highlights the capital monitoring as at the end of the third quarter of the financial year (31 December 2023).

The Council continue to face significant financial challenges from rising inflation and demand for services, this impacts both revenue and capital resources. It is therefore essential that the capital programme is closely reviewed to assess the assuredness of funding sources and if there have been any changes in service requirements. The Council on the other hand must recognise that capital investment will play an important role in delivering important services for residents and businesses in the borough.

The programme will continue to be monitored and reviewed throughout the financial year and any further rephasing will be notified to Executive for approval. During the first nine months of the financial year, £27.8m savings have been identified (further detail below and on Appendix A), of which, c£3.0m can be reinvested into future funding of capital schemes in the capital programme. The remaining savings are where budget has been reduced to match grant availability or relate to capital loans to our subsidiary companies which are not required.

Capital Monitoring Forecast Outturn Position for 2023/2024 (as at 31 December 2023):-

		£'million
Capital programme approved at Council (Feb 2023)	a	101.7
Budget rephased from prior years (existing projects)	b	320.7
Budget movements in year	c	12.9
Current approved budget	d = a + b + c	435.3
Forecast spend for 23/24	e	114.0
Forecast carry forward into 24/25	f	293.5
Forecast variance (underspend) / overspend	g = (e+f) - d	(27.8)

As at 31 December 2023, there are a net £(27.8m) in savings across the capital programme identified. These are made up as follows:

Analysis of material budget risks / (savings) identified as of 31 December 2023	£'million
<u>Place & Growth</u>	
Winnersh Triangle Parkway - £80k pressure expected in 23/24, main build complete but potential remedial works to move unforeseen Thames Water Main, future costs could be up to a further £520k, timing still to be confirmed. Project team working with contractor to further reduce costs of claimed compensation events in 22/23 for delays caused by utilities which may offset these additional costs	£0.60m

Electric Vehicle Charge Points - works program aligned to grant funding availability	(£1.16m)
SCAPE Major Road Schemes – savings identified as schemes are completed or near completion. Savings relate to budgets held for risk / retention / final bills, etc.	(£0.92m)
California Crossroads - saving identified via procurement tender now released.	(£0.84m)
Nine Mile Ride Extension – savings now available as scheme operational. Allowance has been made for outstanding post construction costs.	(£0.61m)
Transport corridor improvements - Shepherds Hill to Thames Valley Park, Park & Ride - Only feasible if receive Bus Service Improvement Plan grant from DFT. Saving back to s106 for reallocation to another scheme.	(£0.57m)
Land Acquisition for Major Road Schemes - budget reviewed against current known requirements, any potential costs in future being monitored.	(£0.50m)
Active Travel & Bus Priority - works program aligned to funding availability	(£0.38m)
Bridge Strengthening - budget reviewed against current programme.	(£0.30m)
Borough Wide Non SDL Play Area Enhancement Project - All s106 for non-SDL play areas has been allocated	(£0.15m)
Integrated Transport Schemes - works program aligned to grant funding availability.	(£0.10m)
California Lakeside Refurbishment - reduction to align with available funding (no impact on scheme delivery / objectives).	(£0.10m)
Completed Road Schemes Retention - retention costs able to be met from existing budgets within projects.	(£0.07m)
Pedestrian Network improvements - Hurricane Way - Scheme completed, s106 saving	(£0.05m)
Coppid Beech Park & Ride - Scheme completed, s106 saving	(£0.04m)
Street Lighting Column Structural Testing - budget not required due to more efficient network (i.e. less work required on LED columns)	(£0.04m)
<u>Resources & Assets</u>	
WBC (Holdings) Ltd Loan - capital loans not required at this stage. Future loans dependant on approved business cases.	(£21.0m)
Previous M&S site - Site use under consideration as an option for future HQ (discussed at Sept' 23 Exec). Budget for other works not required at this stage.	(£0.76m)
Property Maintenance and Compliance - budget no longer required	(£0.13m)

Contract register - budget no longer required.	(£0.03m)
Shute End Accommodation Moves & Refurbishment	(£0.02m)
Re-Roofing Waterford House & Chimney repairs - No further works expected	(£0.01m)
<u>Children Services</u>	
School Kitchens – saving against budget	(£0.03m)
Special Educational Needs Website Development - saving against budget, scheme complete	(£0.02m)
Total	(£27.82m)

Appendix B provides a list of the capital carry forwards identified during the first nine months of the year totalling £293m. This is a movement of c£1m from the £292m identified in the quarter two executive report. Carry forwards can relate to either projects that have started and some which are delayed due to issues such as planning, design, etc. Some carry forwards also relate to budget allocations where individual business cases will need to be developed and agreed by the Executive on use of these budgets.

Carry Forwards will be reprofiled across the next three financial years.

Recommendation Three

The Executive are asked to note an additional budget of £8,987,586 has been agreed for Gorse Ride Redevelopment to cover additional inflationary costs (materials + labour) estimated over the project life (above original £106m budget).

As agreed by Executive, on 17 February 2022 within the Gorse Ride Regeneration paper, recommendation three stated “give delegated authority to the Director of Resources and Assets, in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing and Finance, to approve the use of additional Affordable Housing s106 commuted sums as a contingency against cost and funding variations such as any future design changes and/or fluctuations in costs and values of up to 15% of the cost of the scheme in the event of any other financial impacts;

Recommendation Four

The Executive are asked to approve additional capital budget of £2,920,000 for 2023/24 in relation to the secondary school expansion programme. This is an acceleration of budget previously set out in the MTFP for use in 2024/25 and funded from DfE capital grants which have been received and available to use.

As set out in last years medium term financial plan, the ‘basic needs secondary places’ programme set out a three year budget of £15,500,000 between 2023/24 and 2025/26. Detailed work has been undertaken during the year to review the programme of works to

ensure affordability and delivery. This has been complete with an overall reduction across the three years from £15.5m to £13.2m. Further work continues to understand future demand and needs whilst considering value for money and budget availability. The Council are accelerating the investment in the current year requiring the reprofiling of £2.92m as set out in the recommendation.

Recommendation Five

The Executive are asked to approve a supplementary budget of £250,000 for Disabled Adaptations. This is funded in full from the Housing Revenue Account non-RTB reserve.

This additional budget requests ensures important works are carried out to support disabled adaptations and continues investment in the housing stock and utilising all assets where possible to support housing needs.

Recommendation Six

The Executive is asked to approve a supplementary budget of £93,862 for the Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) project. This is funded in full from additional ringfenced grant awarded to the Council in the current financial year.

In September, the government announced further additional funding of £50m for the disabled facilities grant programme in 2023-24. The Councils share of this was £93,862 and has been received.

The DFG is capital funding for the provision of home adaptations to help eligible older and disabled people to live as independently and safely as possible in their homes.

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)	c£114m	Yes	Capital
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	c£294m Carry Forward	Yes	Capital
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	See MTFP	See MTFP	Capital

Other Financial Information

It is likely some of the carry forwards will be spent across multiple years once detailed business cases are worked through and agreed.

Stakeholder Considerations and Consultation

None

Public Sector Equality Duty

Equality assessments are carried out as part of each capital 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

The capital programme includes projects which help achieve our priorities in relation to climate change.

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2

N/A

List of Background Papers

Appendix A: Capital Monitoring Summary Report for Quarter 3 (2023-2024)
Appendix B: List of proposed rephrasing of projects in Quarter 3 to 2024-2025

Contact Mark Thompson	Service Business Services
Telephone Tel: 0118 974 6555	Email mark.thompson@wokingham.gov.uk

CAPITAL MONITORING REPORT DECEMBER 2023

Directorate	Current Approved Budget £,000	Forecast Spend £,000	Carry Forwards £,000	(Under) / Overspend £,000	Major Areas Of Forecast Overspend / (Underspend)
Adult Social Care & Health	24,764	6,427	18,336	(0)	No material variances identified at this stage.
Chief Executive's Office	9,007	5,332	3,675	(0)	No material variances identified at this stage.
Children's Services	33,146	21,392	11,701	(53)	- £(30k) saving - School Kitchens - £(23k) saving - Special Educational Needs Website Development - saving against budget, scheme complete
Housing Revenue Account (HRA)	44,944	34,133	10,811	0	No material variances identified at this stage.
Place & Growth 53	124,622	24,223	94,650	(5,749)	- £80k additional costs on Winnersh Triangle Parkway - Main build complete but potential remedial works to move unforeseen Thames Water Main, future costs could be up to a further £520k, timing still to be confirmed. Project team working with contractor to further reduce costs of claimed compensation events in 22/23 for delays caused by utilities which may offset these additional costs. - £(1,164k) saving - Electric Vehicle Charge Points - works program aligned to grant funding availability, hence reduced borrowing, future needs to be assessed and bid upon. - £(916k) saving - identified across a number of the SCAPE - Road infrastructure projects which are complete or near completion & £(607k) Saving - Nine Mile Ride Extension - schemes now operational, allowance made for outstanding post construction costs. - £(843k) saving - California Crossroads - saving identified via procurement tender now released. - £(570k) saving - Transport corridor improvements - Shepherds Hill to Thames Valley Park, Park & Ride - Only feasible if receive Bus Service Improvement Plan grant from DFT. Saving back to s106 for reallocation to another scheme. - £(500k) saving - Land Acquisition for Major Road Schemes - budget reviewed against current known requirements, any potential costs in future being monitored - £(375k) saving - Active Travel & Bus Priority - works program aligned to funding availability - £(300k) Saving - Bridge Strengthening - Identified at CLT / Exec Capital Budget Setting Workshop - £(155k) saving - Borough Wide Non SDL Play Area Enhancement Project - All s106 for non-SDL play areas has been allocated - £(103k) saving - Integrated Transport Schemes - works program aligned to grant funding availability. - £(100k) saving - California Lakeside Refurbishment - reduction to align with available funding (no impact on scheme delivery / objectives). - £(65k) saving - Completed Road Schemes Retention - retention costs able to be met from existing budgets within projects. - £(45k) saving - Pedestrian Network improvements - Hurricane Way - Scheme completed, s106 saving - £(41k) saving - Coppid Beech Park & Ride - Scheme completed, s106 saving - £(40k) saving - Street Lighting Column Structural Testing - budget not required due to more efficient network (i.e. less work required on LED columns)
Resources & Assets	198,869	22,532	154,318	(22,019)	- £(21.07m) saving - WBC (Holdings) Ltd Loan - capital loans not required at this stage. Future loans dependant on approved business cases. - £(756k) saving Marks & Spencer's site - Proposal to refurbish for commercial & residential use is no longer proceeding. The asset has been identified as the preferred option for the Council's future headquarters (Executive decision September 2023) and further feasibility work is currently being undertaken. The Future Headquarters programme has a separate budget. - £(128K) saving Property Maintenance and Compliance - budget not required - £(30k) saving - Contract register - budget no longer required. - £(19k) saving Shute End Accommodation Moves & Refurbishment and £(14k) saving Re-Roofing Waterford House & Chimney repairs - No further works expected
Total	435,351	114,039	293,492	(27,820)	

Notes:-

Details of carry forwards are shown on next page in Appendix B.

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Appendix B - December 2023 - List of proposed rephasing of projects into future years

Project	£			
	Approved current year budget	Carry forward previously agreed by Exec	New / movement in carry forward for the quarter	Total carry forward
Adult Social Care & Health				
Older People's Dementia Home	13,539,161	11,416,000	1,723,161	13,139,161
Adult Social Care Accommodation Transformation	3,774,401	2,500,000	1,272,618	3,772,618
Care Home Refurbishment	1,750,000	1,550,000	(300,076)	1,249,924
Replacement for Day services for adults	121,256	0	121,256	121,256
Suffolk Lodge - Fire Alarm replacement	53,399	53,399	0	53,399
Total - Adult Social Care & Health	19,238,217	15,519,399	2,816,959	18,336,358
Chief Executive's Office				
IT - Enhancement, Security, Infrastructure, Hardware & Applications	4,136,397	875,828	1,868,016	2,743,844
Planning & Public Protection Partnership (PPP) - system replacement	528,446	0	448,446	448,446
Berkshire Record Office	545,000	0	436,000	436,000
Library Offer	46,264	46,264	0	46,264
Total - Chief Executive's Office	5,256,106	922,091	2,752,462	3,674,553
Children's Services				
SEND Sufficiency	4,039,282	0	3,789,282	3,789,282
Sixth Form Expansion	3,980,000	3,499,406	0	3,499,406
Care Leaver accommodation	1,298,500	0	1,198,500	1,198,500
Care Leaver Supported Accommodation: Funding for renovation costs of Seaford Court	830,000	730,000	0	730,000
SEND Investment Programme / Investment in Special Education Needs Provision - Secondary (Historic SEN)	480,717	0	480,717	480,717
Primary strategy - Spencer's Wood Primary School (New Build)	462,000	462,000	0	462,000
St. Cecilia C of E Primary School & Community Centre (New build - Matthews Green)	369,371	0	299,371	299,371
Arborfield / Barkham Primary school - Furniture, Fixings Equipment	355,607	0	255,607	255,607
Primary strategy - Spencer's Wood Primary School (including Furniture, Fixings Equipment)	247,500	200,000	47,500	247,500

Project	Approved current year budget	Carry forward previously agreed by Exec	New / movement in carry forward for the quarter	Total carry forward
Basic Needs Primary Programme	242,065	242,065	0	242,065
SEND Schools Rooks Nest Farm (Abnormal costs)	250,000	0	200,000	200,000
Alder Grove Primary / Shinfield West Primary School Furniture, Fixings Equipment	157,725	0	157,725	157,725
Arborfield Primary (New Build)	187,032	0	80,000	80,000
Schools Access	37,516	0	37,516	37,516
Children in Care Website Upgrade	21,155	21,155	0	21,155
Total - Children's Services	12,958,471	5,154,626	6,546,219	11,700,845

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

Gorse Ride Regeneration Project	22,138,787	7,703,642	2,163,740	9,867,382
Purchase of council houses HRA	989,805	989,805	(45,918)	943,887
Total - Housing Revenue Account (HRA)	23,128,591	8,693,447	2,117,822	10,811,269

Place & Growth

SCAPE - Road infrastructure (dist roads etc)	55,860,026	55,057,026	517,535	55,574,561
Sports Provision to Serve North & South SDL's (Grays Farm)	6,501,659	6,220,000	131,659	6,351,659
Toutley Highways Depot Modernisation	10,100,000	5,787,537	0	5,787,537
Bulldog Garage - Temporary Accommodation	4,889,000	4,800,000	0	4,800,000
California Crossroads	4,144,452	4,031,608	0	4,031,608
Wellington Road Affordable Housing	4,000,000	3,800,000	0	3,800,000
Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans	2,295,990	2,300,000	(4,010)	2,295,990
Bridge Strengthening - Earley Station Footbridge	2,249,999	2,000,000	0	2,000,000
Gypsy, Roma, Traveller (GRT) Additional Pitches	1,590,000	1,590,000	0	1,590,000
Greenways	1,639,752	1,471,752	0	1,471,752
Wokingham Borough Cycle Network (including Bader Way Cycle route)	1,314,736	1,216,546	48,190	1,264,736
Self-Build Project	1,249,460	1,224,460	0	1,224,460
A327 Cycleway`	847,924	847,924	0	847,924

Project	Approved current year budget	Carry forward previously agreed by Exec	New / movement in carry forward for the quarter	Total carry forward
Public Rights of Way Network (PROW - Loddon Long Distance Path)	749,056	749,056	0	749,056
Land Acquisition for Major Road Schemes	1,190,918	297,748	223,661	521,409
California Lakeside Refurbishment	600,000	0	380,000	380,000
Highway Drainage Schemes (road subsided)	392,762	0	332,762	332,762
Integrated Transport Schemes (including Winnersh Crossroads Scheme)	302,775	0	195,720	195,720
Wokingham Borough Cycle Network - Kentwood Development - Cycle & Pedestrian Improvements	236,984	0	176,984	176,984
SCAPE - Road infrastructure - Arborfield Bypass (Post-construction works)	191,333	0	159,851	159,851
Covid Memorial Wood	254,385	0	134,385	134,385
SCAPE - Road infrastructure - Winnersh Relief Road Phase 2 (Post construction works)	0	0	125,000	125,000
SCAPE - Road infrastructure - South Wokingham Bypass (Post construction works)	152,601	0	100,000	100,000
Wokingham Borough Cycle Network - Beechwood Avenue footway/cycleway	107,960	0	92,960	92,960
Integrated Transport Schemes - Threes Tuns Vulnerable Road User Scheme	90,000	0	80,000	80,000
Traffic Signal Schemes - Easthampstead Road Wigwags	75,000	0	75,000	75,000
Safer Routes to schools - Toucan Crossing - A329 Reading Road, Woosehill	80,000	0	65,000	65,000
Integrated Transport Schemes - A327 Finchampstead Ped Crossing	80,000	0	65,000	65,000
Traffic Signal Schemes - Nine Mile Ride / Heathlands Road	65,221	0	60,373	60,373
Traffic Signal Schemes - Showcase Roundabout	60,000	0	60,000	60,000
Safer Routes to schools - Headley Road Crossing	80,000	0	60,000	60,000
Hilltop Road Area Walking & Cycling Improvements	44,713	34,713	0	34,713
Street Lighting - LED Project	79,615	29,001	0	29,001
Safer Routes to schools - Radstock Lane Path near school	50,000	0	25,000	25,000
Completed Road Schemes Retention	88,236	0	23,236	23,236
New bus stops and shelters N Wok SDL	29,217	22,261	0	22,261

Project	Approved current year budget	Carry forward previously agreed by Exec	New / movement in carry forward for the quarter	Total carry forward
Biodiversity Capital Projects	25,000	0	15,000	15,000
Integrated Transport Schemes - Denmark Street - 2 Way cycling	20,000	0	15,000	15,000
California Country Park - Scout Hut	12,450	0	12,450	12,450
Electric Vehicle Charge Points <i>(Removed as taken as saving now)</i>	0	987,500	(987,500)	0
Transport corridor improvements - Shepherds Hill to Thames Valley Park - Park & Ride <i>(Removed as taken as saving now)</i>	0	570,026	(570,026)	0
Bridge Strengthening <i>(Removed as taken as saving now)</i>	0	300,000	(300,000)	0
Byways <i>(Acceleration, scheme to be completed earlier than previously thought)</i>	0	45,160	(45,160)	0
Total - Place & Growth	101,741,224	93,382,318	1,268,072	94,650,391

Resources & Assets

Strategic Property and Commercial Assets / Community Investment	103,198,590	99,398,590	0	99,398,590
Solar Farms (Barkham)	24,838,595	24,215,065	388,000	24,603,065
Carnival Place	14,205,802	10,923,578	1,676,544	12,600,122
Renewable Energy Infrastructure projects	9,222,774	6,222,774	2,650,000	8,872,774
Infrastructure to enable Toutley East development	3,046,195	3,003,809	0	3,003,809
Energy Reduction Projects	3,521,752	625,000	2,185,642	2,810,642
Investment Fund - 14-28 Denmark St, Wokingham	2,934,704	1,394,704	0	1,394,704
Investment Fund - Mulberry Business Park Wokingham	1,514,835	1,314,835	0	1,314,835
Montague Park Community Facility	232,161	0	222,161	222,161
Investment Fund - General project costs	80,414	60,414	0	60,414
Investment Fund - Waitrose 108-114 Crockamwell Rd Woodley	47,240	37,240	0	37,240
WBC (Holdings) Ltd Loan	0	21,070,494	(21,070,494)	0
Total Resources & Assets	162,843,061	168,266,503	(13,948,147)	154,318,356

Total Reprofitting identified as at end of December 2023	325,165,671	291,938,385	1,553,386	293,491,771
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TITLE	Chief Financial Officer's Report
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	The Executive on Thursday 25 th January 2024
WARD	None specific;
LEAD OFFICER	Deputy Chief Executive – Graham Ebers
LEAD MEMBER	Executive Member for Finance – Imogen Shepherd/DuBey

PURPOSE OF REPORT (INC STRATEGIC OUTCOMES)

The Local Government Act 2003 requires the Chief Finance Officer (Deputy Chief Executive and CFO) to report to Members, when setting the level of Council Tax, on the robustness of the budget presented and adequacy of reserves. The CFO report highlights the strong financial management the Council. It also outlines the major financial issues facing the Council in the medium-term period, which without the Council taking a commercial approach could increase the reliance on council tax income as well as impact on the future delivery of Council services.

RECOMMENDATION

The Executive is asked to:

- 1) note the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) report (**Appendix A**) and the issues contained within, including the local government finance settlement and the sections on key risks, and that they consider these when setting the council tax for 2024/25 and agreeing the Council's medium term financial plan (MTFP);
- 2) support the Council's response to the local government finance settlement as set out in **Appendix 6 of the Chief Finance Officer report**.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Local Government Act 2003 requires the Chief Financial Officer (Deputy Chief Executive) to report to Members as part of the budget setting process. A major influence on the budget is the local government finance settlement. It is important to note that the current finance settlement is again for one year only. A 3-year funding settlement has been expected and requested across Local Government for a number of years but only a 1 year settlement was announced, again leaving considerable uncertainty over the Council's funding from 2025/26 onwards. Wokingham still face major ambiguity on future funding levels in the face of unprecedented risk and increases in demand and await the outcome from the delayed Government's comprehensive spending review.

The report seeks to explain the Council's finances, including its financial challenges and risks, to provide an important context to the 2024/25 budget proposals. The final version of this report will be presented to Council in February and will provide an opinion on how safe the 2024/25 proposals are considered to be.

BACKGROUND

The Local Government Act 2003 requires the Chief Finance Officer (Deputy Chief Executive and CFO) to report to Members, when setting the level of Council Tax, on the robustness of the budget presented and adequacy of reserves. The report outlines the major financial issues facing the Council.

The Chief Financial Officer's report contains issues, risks and strategic considerations in respect of revenue and capital. Key issues are also highlighted in the report.

The provisional local government finance settlement was released on 18 December 2023, outlining Wokingham's funding levels for 2024/25. A response to the consultation on the settlement has been prepared and is attached as appendix six. The final settlement will be ratified by Parliament in February.

Corporate Implications

The Medium Term Financial Plan covers both the revenue and capital budgets required to deliver the priorities of the Council over the next three years. The proposed net revenue budget for 2024/25 is approximately £169m (excluding depreciation) (£154m in 2023/24).

The Council needs to set a balanced budget in the context of this. The budget requirements for 2024/25 and 2025/26 are also shown in the plan as indicative figures only

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)	See MTFP	Yes	Revenue and Capital
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	See MTFP	Yes	Revenue and Capital
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	See MTFP	Yes	Revenue and Capital

Other Financial Information

Included in MTFP

Stakeholder Considerations and Consultation

The budget setting process starts early in the previous financial year with a focus on areas which require budget growth to meet growing demands and areas which can deliver savings through efficiencies and additional income generation.

A budget submission process is undertaken to ensure budget bids can be challenged in the context of the Council's aims and objectives. To enhance transparency and budget setting engagement this year's process (similar to last year) has included consultation

with the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee (CCOSC). Information provided at CCOSC is also available to the Public.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Public Sector Equality Duty was considered throughout the budget bid process

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*

The MTFP sets out the Councils planned investment to support Climate Change and individual service changes will also consider environmental impacts as part of business case and decision making process.

List of Background Papers

CFO Section for Medium Term Financial Plan

Appendix Six – WBC Consultation response letter to draft settlement

Contact Graham Cadle

Service Finance

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Appendix A

CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER'S STATUTORY REPORT

1. Introduction

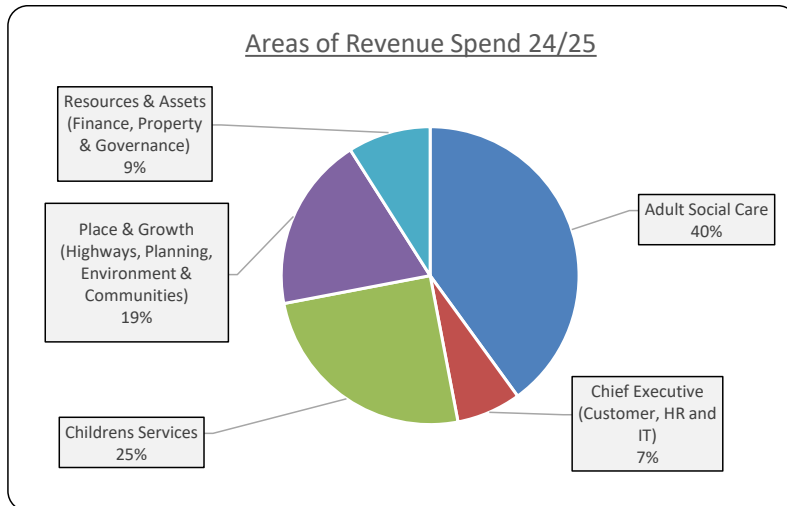
The Local Government Act 2003 requires the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) to report to Members (Councillors), when setting the council tax charges. The CFO must state if the budget is robust and if it has enough reserves. The report is intended to discharge this responsibility and provides an overview of the Council's financial position as a context before making specific recommendations on the 2024/25 budget.

The budget setting process started early in 2023/24 ensuring spend supports delivery of the Council's priorities (below) and are further detailed in the Council Plan (<https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/council-and-meetings/open-data/community-vision-and-council-plan/>). Budget proposals are put forward to invest in areas that require more spend to meet increasing demands, to reflect where services can be more efficient or where they can generate more income. The budget is also set to try to meet changing need, such as with the cost of living crisis.



A thorough and detailed budget setting process (where appropriate including impact assessments such as for Equalities) is undertaken to ensure spend is challenged against the Council's aims and objectives. To enhance transparency and engagement, this year's process has again included consultation with the Community & Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee (CCOSC) which is made up of Councillors from all parties and independent councillors. Information provided at CCOSC is also available to the Public.

A robust budget must be a balanced budget whereby total expenditure is matched by total income. Any change in the annual budget in relation to increased spend must be balanced by service efficiencies and/or additional income or council tax increases.



2. The financial standing of the Council

Heading into the 2024/25 financial year, the financial standing of the Council remains robust but with a number of significant local and national challenges ahead. This position has been maintained despite the Borough facing some of the most acute challenges in many years; the pandemic, cost of living/inflation rises, migration and the impacts of Brexit. It has only been achieved through strong financial management.

The Council has established financial resilience and sustainability, despite years of austerity resulting in minimal real terms increases and often real terms decreases in Government funding. **Appendix 6** is a letter from the Leader of the Council, Executive Member for Finance and Housing and the Chief Finance Officer to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in response to the latest Local Government Financial Settlement (2024/25) detailing the pressures and impacts locally from the current approach and allocation.

Further challenges currently outside of the main General Fund also continue to build, significantly the DSG deficit as with many councils continues to increase and requires intervention to develop a longer-term sustainable position.

Further information is provided in **Appendix 1** which details:

- The standing of Wokingham Borough Council as indicated by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA) Resilience index and other relevant benchmarking data; which shows the council in a strong position across a number of indicators

- context of the position in relation to government grants;
 - Lowest funding level across Berkshire LA's
 - Lowest Settlement Funding Assessment per head of population (unitary authorities)
 - Second lowest core funding per head of population (unitary authorities)
 - Percentage of Revenue Support Grant lost between 2017/18 and 2022/23 – 100%

In order to achieve such a strong financial position, despite the challenges from funding and local and national pressures, the Council has enacted and enhanced; an effective budget monitoring and management process, an ongoing improvement and efficiency programme, and a continual review of the allocation of resources to meet demand and local priorities.

Further details of the outcomes and impacts of the above approaches are detailed in **Appendix 2**

Enhanced financial management has been vital to the organisation through recent financial challenges and particularly the Covid-19 pandemic. As we further understand the longer-term implications of those events and now face further challenges such as “Cost of Living” and increases in national living wage as well as those from specific services such as care leavers and Home to School Transport, we are working closely with Directors and Lead Members to continually review and challenge forecasts and to model future impacts.

These activities include;

- Seeking to maximise opportunities to deliver on savings plans, ensuring service models and approaches reflect latest demand and local need.
- Exploring reduced expenditure opportunities, including a review of Special (one-off) expenditure Items.
- Maintaining a regular financial review of the ongoing Covid-19 and emerging pressures of cost of living impacts including collection rates and Direct Debit failure rates on major income streams.
- Undertaking departmental transformation and efficiency programs to identify key workstreams to shape and drive key opportunities including through use of assets and our approach to procurement and contract management.
- Initiating an early MTFP review process tailored to identify areas of relative financial certainty and high-risk areas of greater ambiguity.
- Reviewing non-General Fund balances to assess risks and potential options to transfer balances to the General Fund reserve (if the General Fund position becomes perilously low).
- Continuing to make representations for additional funding through Government Returns, Regional Conference calls and MPs.

Add in response to the escalating financial pressures and national context of the number of local authorities issuing Section 114 notices the organisation has during 2023/24 introduced additional short-term controls which will be reviewed pending impact and the wider budget position;

- A number of “GOLD” project groups chaired by members of CLT to oversee and add focus to key areas of business including;
 - capital programmes
 - schools place planning
- Additional departmental sign-off for all significant expenditure items
- Additional departmental review and sign off for all recruitment

As well as ongoing operational budget management and monitoring the authority utilises external and historical data and understanding to ensure confidence and robustness in its overall finances, funding and future spending need including those detailed in Appendix 1 and 2.

3. How are Council services funded?

For 2024/25, the Council is planning to spend in excess of £500 million across revenue, capital, housing revenue account and dedicated school grants services. Council services can be broken down across 4 key financial areas known as;

- **Revenue (also known as General Fund) – expenditure in providing day to day services.**

Revenue expenditure covers the day to day running of services across the Council. For 2024/25, the Council will spend approximately £272m across these services. This is known as gross expenditure. Service specific grants and income will reduce this spend to a net expenditure in the region of £169m.

Further information on where this money is spent is highlighted throughout the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). Funding of this revenue expenditure is determined through the local government finance settlement and consists of;

- Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA);
 - Revenue Support Grant (RSG)
 - Retained Business Rates
- Council Tax
- New Homes Bonus

A robust budget must be a balanced budget whereby total expenditure and total income match. Any change in the annual budget in relation to spend pressures must be balanced by service efficiencies and where appropriate council tax increases.

Local authorities have continued to push for a fairer funding review and long-term finance settlements to provide sustainable long-term funding for Local authorities. The intention from the government for some years has been to set a three-year finance settlement, however this has yet to materialise. There is no current timescale for the fundamental funding review and 2024/25 has recently been published for only one year, with few indications for 2025/26. This means that there is still much uncertainty around future settlements in terms of duration and the actual funding Wokingham will receive. Consequently, it has been difficult to make

definite determinations about budgets in 2025/26 and 2026/27. This context alongside a number of local and national pressures means it is extremely important the Council takes a prudent approach in its budget setting proposals for the 2024-2027 medium term financial plan.

- **Capital – expenditure in assets that generate economic benefits greater than one year.**

A five-year capital strategy has been developed with the aims of realising the Council's vision, raising the quality of life of residents and improving medium to long term planning.

The first three years of the capital vision invariably receive greatest consideration and provides an indicative capital programme, although budget approvals and scheme commitments are provided to year 1 only. This has been developed following an assessment against key Council priorities, including a value for money and risk analysis.

The capital programme over the next three years will include existing asset investment (predominantly school buildings and infrastructure assets) and schemes that seek to deliver the Council's vision.

To finance the capital strategy, an approach to funding has been taken that: optimises assets; seeks flexible use of future section 106 contributions and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL); and attracts new funding sources where available (particularly through the bidding for Government grants).

Under the prudential code, all authorities can borrow as much as they require to fund their capital programme provided it is affordable, prudent, and sustainable. A large proportion of Council borrowing is deemed as "supported" borrowing which means there is a direct repayment method identified meaning the cost of borrowing does not impact on the council taxpayer. These include investment to generate future cost reductions / income generation and forward funded investment to be recovered from developer contributions

The capital programme is funded from a variety of sources: capital receipts, borrowing, grants and other contributions. The relative reliance on each funding source is set out below and shows a greater dependency on borrowing and developer contributions as the Council embarks on its ambition to develop its four strategic development locations, regenerate the borough, and reduce our impact on the climate.

Further detail of the Capital Programme and its funding is shown in **Appendix 3**

- **Housing Revenue Account (HRA) – ringfenced expenditure across the local authority housing stock.**

Under the Localism Act the Council took control of its housing rental income thus enabling more effective planning for the long-term management of these key assets. In return Wokingham took on its share of the £28bn national housing debt as part of the self-financing settlement. Although the Council took on significant debt to do this, the scheme should be beneficial to the Council and its tenants in the longer term both regarding retaining income and generating capacity to invest in the housing stock.

The HRA is a ring-fenced account and as such has no impact on the level of council tax. The money spent maintaining the Council's housing stock (valued at approximately £274m) and providing a service to Council tenants is mainly funded by housing rents paid by Council tenants.

For capital spend, this is funded from the major repairs reserve, right to buy receipts and borrowing. Under accounting rules, an amount equal to the depreciation charge is transferred from the HRA revenue reserve into the major repairs reserve to contribute towards capital expenditure. It is therefore necessary to generate sufficient net income through housing rents to both reduce the level of debt over time and provide for major repairs.

- **Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) – ringfenced expenditure across maintained schools, early years and high needs services.**

The Council receives DSG annually from the DfE and it must be used in support of the schools' budget as defined in the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2022. The purpose of the schools' budget is defined in legislation as the provision of primary and secondary education. Since the implementation of these regulations DSG deficits have risen in many Councils across the country and Wokingham is no exception. The annual deficit has risen significantly over the past five years and the accumulated deficit is of considerable concern. For this reason the Council has enlisted in the national Safety Valve programme, to ensure it is doing all it can to appropriately contain demand through numerous measures with regards to early intervention and prevention, manage need through greater self-provision and attain some additional financial support from the Government.

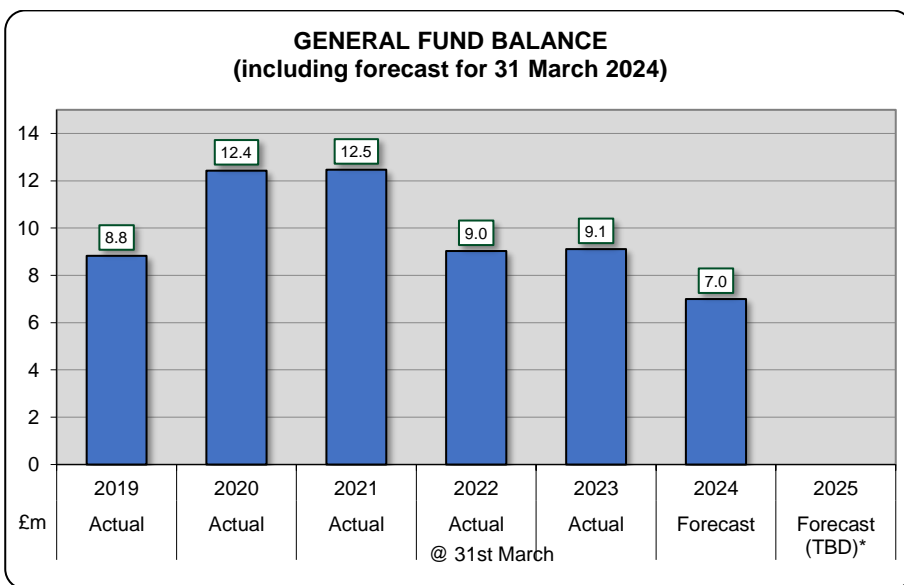
The Safety Valve agreement will last until 2028/29 and will see the council receive around £20m of funding to support improvement to ultimately bring the balance of the DSG back to nil by the end of the programme. The first 2 quarters returns have been signed off with initial payments received. Significant and senior project management arrangements are in place to support deliverables.

Further detail of the DSG are included in **Appendix 4**

4. Adequacy of reserves

The level of general fund balances is informed by a budget risk analysis. This approach was introduced in 2003/04 when the Council agreed the policy on reserves and balances. The budget risk analysis is included annually in the medium-term financial plan.

The risks facing the Council's finances have increased significantly, they include the implication of future years of austerity; further grant reductions; additional service pressures; substantial regeneration programmes requiring forward funding; dependency on future commercial income and capital contributions; risks around business rate receipts, and the level of retained business rates.



* Forecast general fund balance for March 2025 is still under review and will be updated as part of the MTFP approved in February 2024.

Please note that work continues in 2023/24 to reduce the in-year overspend of c£3.6m, as reported in the quarter three revenue monitoring, to restore reserves to higher levels.

Capital

The Council hold various reserves for capital spend in the form of capital grants and contributions. Due to the nature of capital spend and multi-year projects, some reserves will be held but will be allocated to funding future year capital projects. The Council continuously review all capital funding each financial year to ensure grants are used where possible ahead of borrowing to reduce the capital financing costs (e.g. principal repayment + interest).

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

Similar to the general fund balance, the level of HRA balance is informed by a budget risk analysis. Due to nature of the HRA being a ringfenced account where the main source of income is tenant's rental income, holding prudent reserves remain important to act as a contingency to meet unforeseen spending requirements or income reductions and to provide stability in medium term financial planning. Reserves have remained stable for the past two years and in line with our estimate of a prudential reserve limit

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)

As highlighted earlier, the Council have faced significant pressures over the past 4 years in relation to the High Needs Block, combined with under funding from the government the Council are now estimating a deficit reserve at 31st March 2024 of £15.27m in this area (inclusive of Safety Valve payments and use of the Equalisation Fund). For 2023/24 the mitigations are largely due to be delivered from actions and provision already planned for in the budget. From 2024/25 onwards, successful delivery of the mitigations is predicated on increased local provision and are likely to require additional capital investment options currently being developed. We are currently working with the DfE to form a recovery plan for this. Accounting guidance published by CIPFA state that this deficit reserve should be held as an unusable reserve. A statutory override is currently in place to March 2026 that protects this fund falling on the council taxpayer. It is expected that this timeframe will be reviewed by the Government.

The Council also hold approximately c£6.6m in school reserves as at 31st March 2023 which are held to act as a contingency to offset future pressures and or put towards capital investment within schools.

Other Balances

The Council holds other earmarked balances in addition to the general fund balance. These should be reviewed as part of the budget submission and in the context of their benefit and opportunity cost.

Many of the earmarked reserves are held for specific purposes such as developer funding for future maintenance of assets, grants received in advance and equalisation funds to smooth annual changes on demand led areas such as waste and recycling. Other reserves include interest equalisation and forward funding which are linked to the capital programme where infrastructure is delivered ahead of receipt of developer funding.

Further information is available in section 2 of the medium-term financial plan under reserves and balances.

5. Major Financial Risks – Forward Look

Although the Council has worked over many years on seeking high standards of financial management, including a strong track record of delivery of significant savings, the financial future looks both extremely challenging and uncertain. The degree of uncertainty is at a level never previously experienced by the Council.

The explanatory below sets out the key risks identified by each Directorate. Further detail including the mitigations and controls that are in place are provided in **Appendix 5**

Long-term Financial Viability – With a number of local authorities already having issued a section 114 notice and a significant further number issuing warnings that their financial position is extremely perilous and that a section 114 notice is a real possibility, it is critical that Wokingham is able to set a budget that does not rely on the use of significant reserves, that the efficiencies and savings identified are delivered in a timely and effective manner. Whilst longer-term funding arrangements are not clear, it is extremely likely that further funding pressures will be experienced, and the council will be required to review all expenditure and service delivery approaches. The level of efficiencies including significant staffing cost reduction included in the budget are higher than ever and will require considerable focus and management. Maintaining a healthy level of reserves will be critical to being able to manage cost spikes and to provide capacity to invest to deliver service changes.

Adult Social Care – Although the charging reform has been postponed, the risk of care reform measures and the impact on the care market remains. The further National living wage increase will mean an already struggling care market will require additional financial support through care payment increases. There is also a national requirement to enable an expedited hospital discharge rate with the consequence of a higher number of care placements to be secured and funded by the Local Authority with little additional funding to do this. Already demand in this area is increasing both in terms of numbers and complexity, which will be exacerbated through further pressures on both the care market and the health system.

Children’s Services – Particularly pressures are being experienced through a starkly rising number of Children in Care and through increased EHCPs. The later which is the primary reason behind the escalating DSG deficit and linked to this is significant year on year growth in Home to School Transport which is compounded by other factors such as the increase in transport running costs. Inward migration, particularly the Unaccompanied Asylum scheme which has recently required a higher uptake brings further pressure on Children’s Services.

Place & Growth – Inflationary pressures are being felt severely in many areas undertaken within this Directorate in terms of both in Revenue and Capital. As a Directorate that provides the highest value of discretionary services and generates the highest value of discretionary income, it is inevitable that it will be putting forward a number of the funding solutions to address the budget gap. The successful delivery of these proposals and major contract renewals and remodelling will carry risk, some considerably higher than others.

Corporate – The impact of inflation, interest rates, and the cost of living crisis is felt Council-wide both in terms of the direct impact and the imperative to respond to the needs of the community where we can.

From a strategic financial perspective, it will be extremely challenging to keep spending within budget in 2024/25 given the National and Local context and we must do all we can to minimise and prevent any unfunded financial burdens flowing into 2025/26. The 2024/25 budget proposals will attempt to fund and address the challenges described above, however considerable financial risk will need to be held and managed within Directorates and across the Council. The longer term strategic financial position will be impacted by the Council's responsible approach in setting the 2024/25 budget and how it continues to closely review and respond where necessary. These endeavours will need to be discharged in the context of considerable uncertainties which includes both the economic landscape and Government funding, given the financial settlement was for one year only. Longer term the unknown financial pressures around future legislative requirements, will also need to be understood and overcome, such as; the removal of the statutory override on the DSG; the new requirements for Minimum Revenue Provision; and the ASC charging reform.

6. Conclusion

(adequacy of gf reserves and achievability of budget (wording from above) – will be included in February paper)



Graham Ebers
Deputy Chief Executive
(and Chief Financial Officer)

7. Glossary

Abbreviation	Description
ASC	Adult social care
CCOSC	Community & Corporate Overview & Scrutiny
CIPFA	Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy
CFO	Chief Finance Officer
CPI	Consumer Price Index
DSG	Dedicated Schools Grant
DFE	Department for Education
DoHSC	Department of Health and Social Care
ESG	Education services grant
GFB	General fund balances
HND	High Needs Block
HRA	Housing revenue account
MOD	Ministry of Defence
MTFP	Medium term financial plan
NDR	Non-domestic (business) rates
NHB	New homes bonus
PUF	Primary unit cost
RPI	Retail Price Index
RSG	Revenue support grant
SDL	Strategic development locations
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability
SFA	Settlement funding assessment
SoBM	Summary of budget movements
SUF	Secondary unit cost
TCR	Town centre regeneration
WHL	Wokingham Housing Limited

Appendix 1;

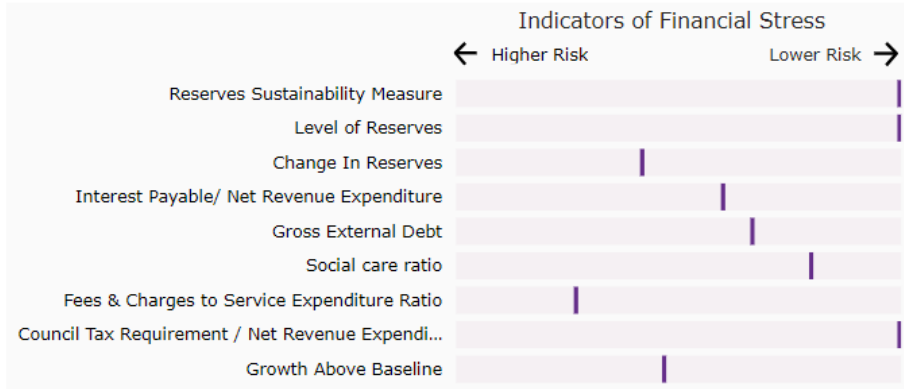
Key Financial Standing & Funding Context

As part of the overall approach to managing and monitoring the financial position it is important to monitor and review the longer-term trend, impacts of funding and the position against other Councils. These are useful measures to further ensure Wokingham’s approach and understanding is reasonable and there are no other risks or opportunities that have not been considered or understood.

CIPFA Resilience Index

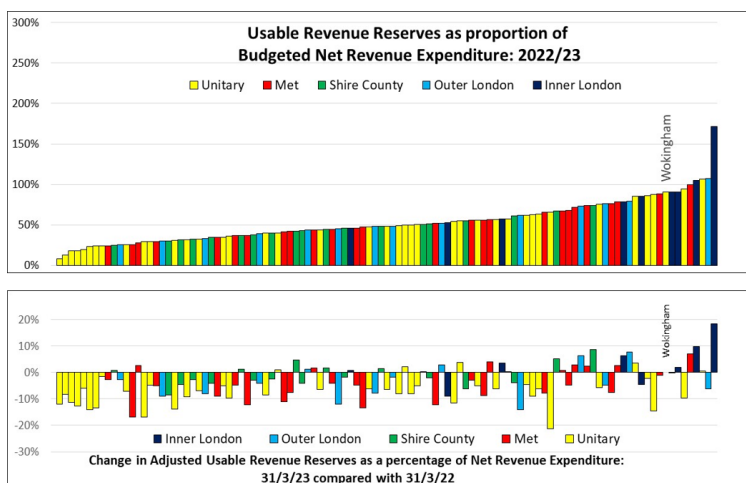
In December 2019, CIPFA published their first financial resilience tool which highlighted key financial indicators such as reserves sustainability, external debt and social care ratios based on the 2018/2019 financial year. The index shows a council’s position on a range of measures associated with financial risk and financial stress. The selection of indicators has been informed by the extensive financial resilience work undertaken by CIPFA over a number of years, public consultation and technical stakeholder engagement. Below table gives a summary of the position from the latest data (21/22), confirming a strong position across a number of indicators, particularly in respect to reserves. The position in reserves is especially relevant as a counter measure to the relatively higher risk position in interest payable/net revenue expenditure.

CIPFA Financial Resilience Index (2022/23)

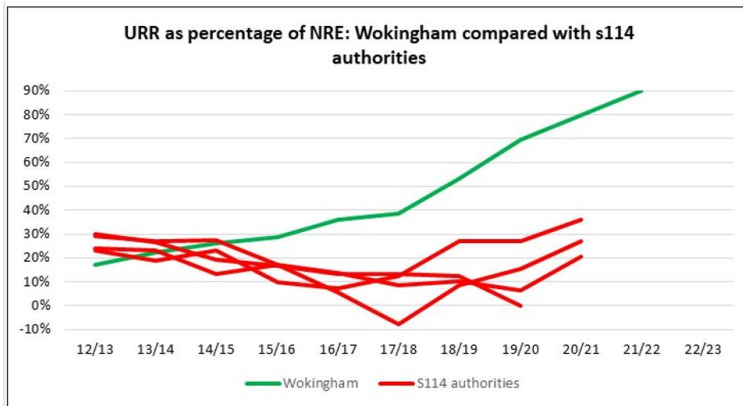


The index shows that Wokingham has slightly higher than average levels of external debt but relatively high levels of reserves which provides the Council with financial assurance. Although the Council have a slightly higher than average risk in interest payable compared to others, this is based on gross interest payable which excludes income received from capital assets which fund the capital financing costs. The Council have a lower risk in the cost of social care costs (adults and children’s) as percentage of net revenue expenditure (Social care ratio) compared to others. The percentage of our revenue expenditure funded through council tax also provides further confidence and resilience. The level is near the highest across all unitary authorities, it means a high dependency on local taxation and a lower risk in relation to cuts in government grants.

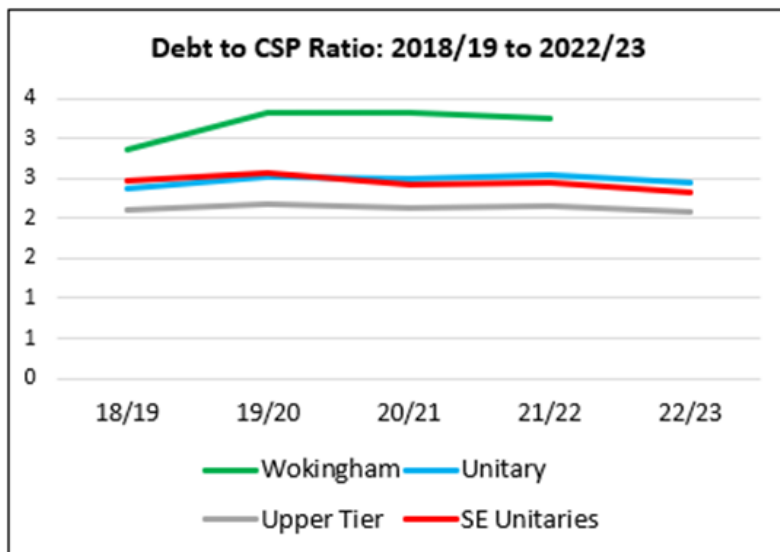
To further supplement the analysis from CIPFA the below table shows the level of usable Reserves as a proportion of budgeted net revenue expenditure (2022/23) and how that position has changed in the last year relative to other councils. Again supporting the position that our level of reserves are strong in comparison to most authorities and we have not had to reduce them in recent years, indicating a sound and well managed budget position.



To emphasize the importance of healthy reserves, the below graphs show Wokingham's (green line) usable reserves as a percentage of net revenue expenditure against those of a number of authorities who have issued a Section 114 notice (red lines). Whilst those section 114 authorities have not released accounts in last 2 years, all had low level of reserves and more importantly a consistent year on year depletion pointing to unresolved structural budget issues. Wokingham's position can be seen to be strong against the type of scenario that has seen those authorities fall into financial instability.



With regard to “Capital” health, the below table shows that the ratio of debt to CSP (core spending power) is slightly higher than relevant benchmarks, although the capital financing requirement has been stable over the past few years. The relatively high position of CSP is a result of the Councils ambition to invest in income generating investments in particular regeneration and housing. New statutory guidance in relation to the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) has been issued for final consultation and is expected to increase the Councils ongoing capital financing costs which will be reflected in the final budget submission.



Wokingham Funding Context

The reductions in Government grants have had a major impact on the Council’s finances and budgets since 2010/11. The Council’s net expenditure budget has been reduced each year since 2010/11 as shown in the table below, which indicates that the net expenditure budget

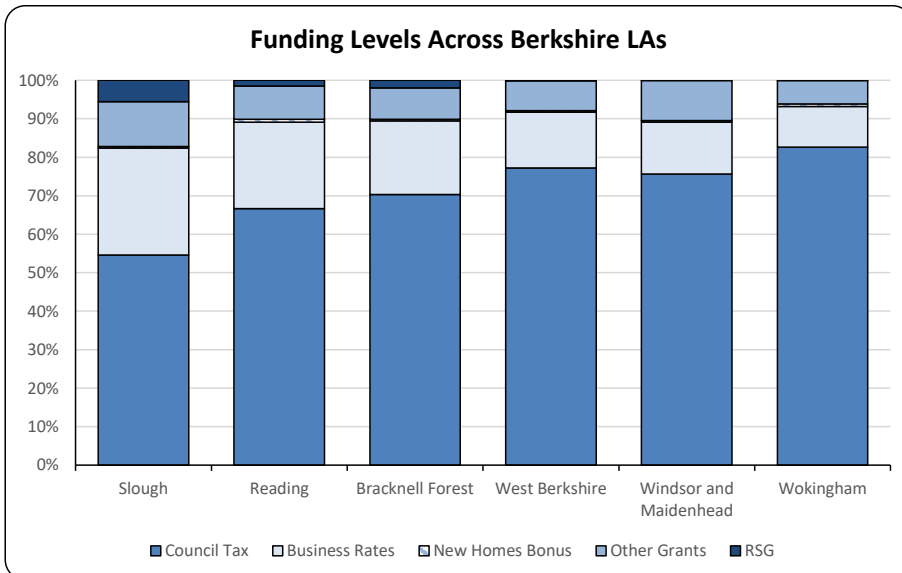
has been reduced by £55.7m (53%) between 2010/11 and 2024/25 meaning the Council are delivering services more cost effectively.

	£m
WBC 2024/25 net expenditure budget	169.2
Less reduction in grants for services now part of formula grant	(12.5)
Less discount re inflation since 2010/11 (based on CPI)	(84.6)
Less discount re growth in council tax base since 2010/11	(22.6)
Net expenditure budget 2024/25 discounted to 2010/11 Prices (a)	49.5
WBC 2010/11 net expenditure budget (b)	105.2
Estimated reduction in expenditure since 2010/11 (b – a)	£55.7m (53%)

This is the result of numerous years of local government funding driven by a formula that is skewed toward deprivation factors (as opposed to recognising the basic cost of providing services) and reductions in centrally funded grants based on percentage reductions to previous years, Wokingham Borough Council has been for many years the lowest funded unitary authority (per head of population) in the country. A consequence of this is that Wokingham Borough Council's local services are deemed in the finance settlement to have the majority funded by its council taxpayers. Whilst the average unitary authorities receive revenue support grant and retained business rates to fund around 30% of their service costs, Wokingham receive only 11%.

Revenue Funding Sources

The graph below highlights Wokingham's funding dependency on council tax and shows the variation in funding sources across the 6 Berkshire authorities. Although the Council will continue to make representations for a higher level of government grant, the dependency on Council tax does to some extent reduce the risk of the impact of cuts in central funding.

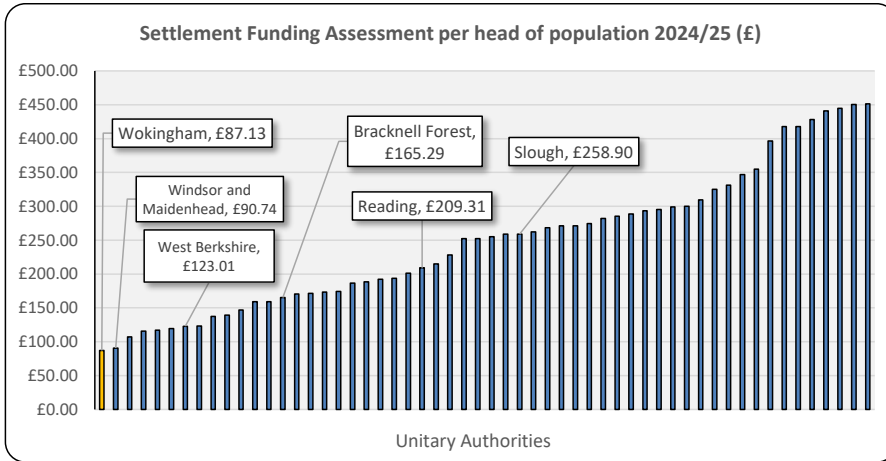


Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA)

The SFA is a calculation consisting of the sum of baseline funding level (BFL) and the revenue support grant (RSG). The BFL represents Wokingham’s share of business rates retained income (£15.39m) which is just over 20% of the total business rates collectable. It also includes the general grant (RSG) from government of £0.13m.

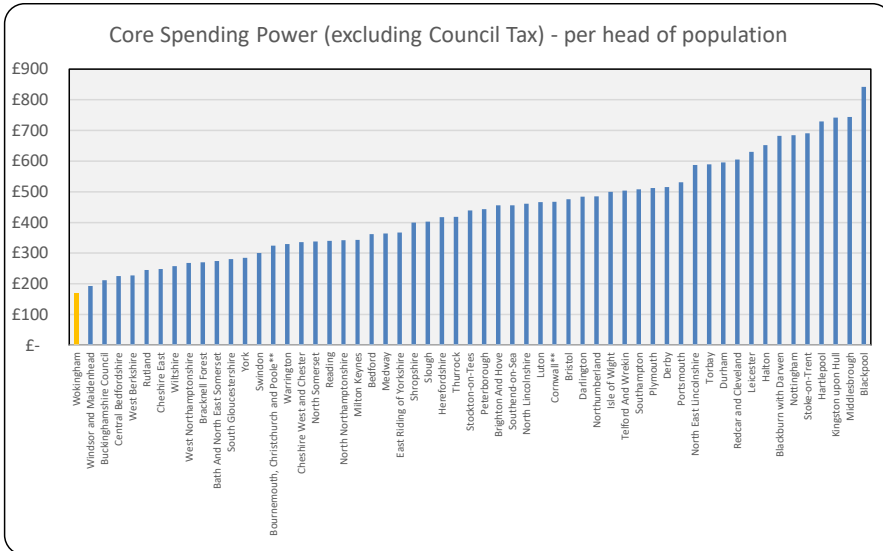
Wokingham’s total SFA will be £15.52m in 2024/25, compared to £19.07m in 2016/17, a reduction of 18.6%, or £3.55m. Wokingham’s SFA has remained close to £14.1m since 2017/18 after the reduction in 2016/17. 2023/24 was the first year the Council received an increase which has been increased again with inflation for 2024/25. This still means, over time, our baseline funding level and therefore retained business rates have not seen any inflationary increases.

The graph below shows the position for 2024/25 in terms of SFA funding per head of population and confirms that Wokingham is the lowest funded unitary authorities, well below the unitary average, and less than 17% of the highest funded unitary authority:



Wokingham will receive the SFA per head of £87.13, which is significantly lower than the unitary authorities' average. It is also less than half the funding of two of the Berkshire authorities. If the Council received £250 per head (approximate average), this would equate to an additional c£29m in funding.

The table below shows Wokingham has one of the lowest levels of core funding in England (i.e. Core Spending Power excluding Council Tax). Blackpool has the highest score on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) and receives five times the funding per head that Wokingham receives (£169 compared to £843 per head). If Wokingham received funding in line with Blackpool it would receive an additional £120m per annum and if funded at the average funding level for a unitary it would receive an additional c£50m per annum.



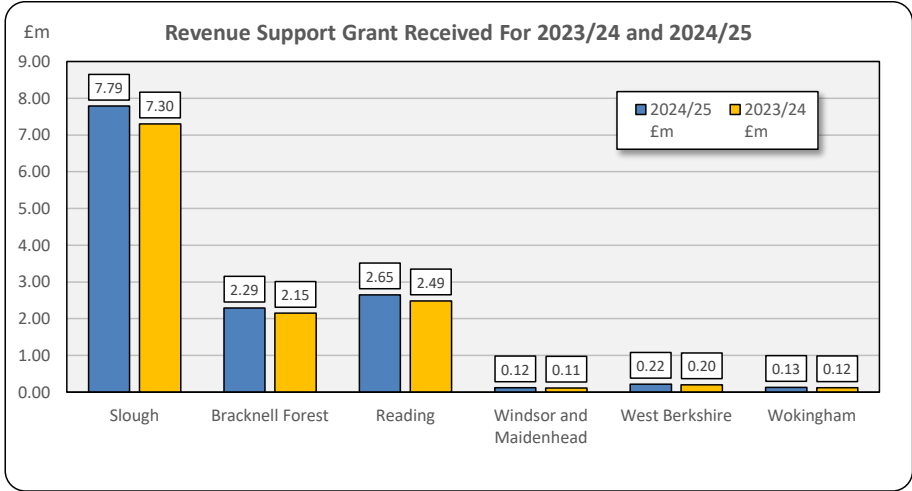
Revenue Support Grant (RSG)

RSG was previously the significant un-ringfenced grant that supported the Council's ongoing revenue expenditure. From 2013/14 it has been incorporated within the settlement funding assessment (SFA) which Wokingham faced reductions in grant yearly and the complete removal of this grant since 2018/19. From 2023/24, have Wokingham seen some RSG allocation, increasing from £0.124m to £0.132m, an increase of £8,000.

It was expected that from 2019/20 the grant would be cut still further with some authorities required to pay a 'negative RSG'.

However, following consistent representations made by this authority, we have been informed again through the finance settlement that negative RSG will not be enacted in 2024/25 (similar to 2023/24). The funding position is unclear from 2025/26 onwards and Wokingham will need to continue to make representations regarding the new methodology for financing local authorities to ensure we secure a fair and viable ongoing funding settlement from the Government.

The graph below compares the RSG allocations over the past two years across Berkshire Councils. Although the increases are similar in % terms, the actual increases are different with Wokingham only receiving an additional £8k.

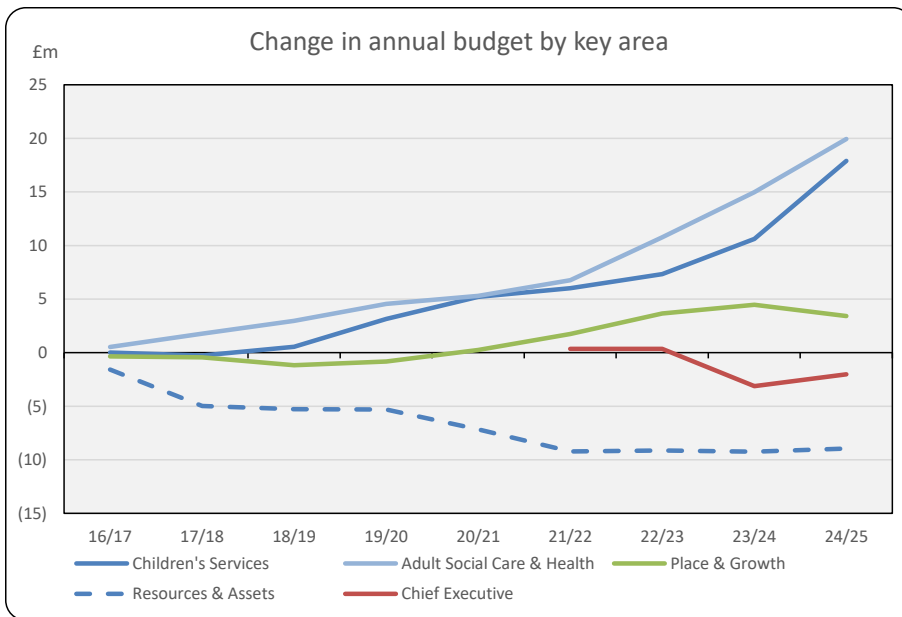


Appendix 2;

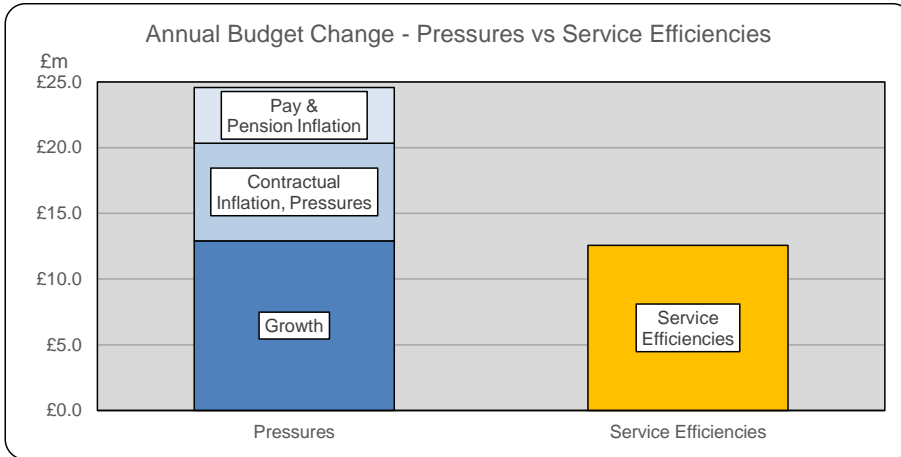
Delivering through financial governance and ongoing efficiency

Across the many varied and complex services the Council provide, there will be pressures and risks as well as efficiencies and opportunities to reduce costs or to deliver more value from current resources. Often efficiency initiatives are required to meet additional demand and service need without the need for budget growth. The budget process aims to capture these to ensure the budget set is prudent and robust and that services continue to review their operations and cost base. The detail below shows where opportunities have been identified and how those initiatives have impacted the distribution of resources across services and the impact on the overall budget position.

The graph below shows the cumulative change in annual budget across four key areas of Children’s Services, Adult Social Care & Health, Place & Growth, Resources & Assets. Whilst the graph shows cost pressures across the social care areas, the Council have managed to offset many of these through efficiencies and income generation within resources & assets services and recently place & growth.



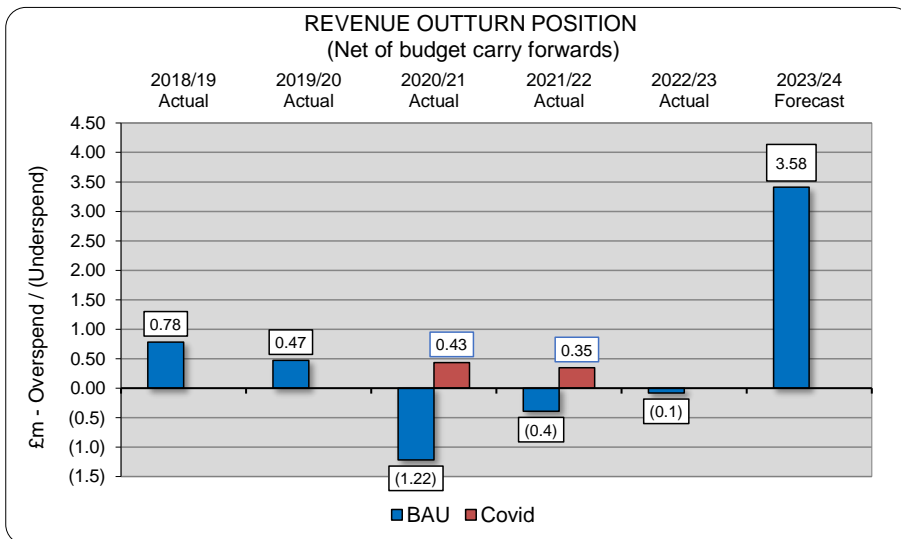
The annual change in budget is shown below. For 2024/25, the total pressures outweigh the service efficiencies. The difference will be required to be funded via council tax rises. The detail budget changes have formed part of the information provided to Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee throughout the budget process.



* Service Efficiencies are designed to reduce costs whilst maintaining services to the public.

Mitigating Service and Budget Pressures

Over the past number of financial years, the Council have faced a number of demand led pressures in year and more recently, the financial impact from inflation, temporary accommodation and demand in Childrens Services. These underlying pressures are considered as part of the budget process. The forecast budget variance in 2023/24 currently shows a combined overspend of £3.575m compared to the budget approved in February 2023, based on December 2023 monitoring.



Further information is available in the quarterly revenue monitoring reports reported to Executive and available on the Councils website.

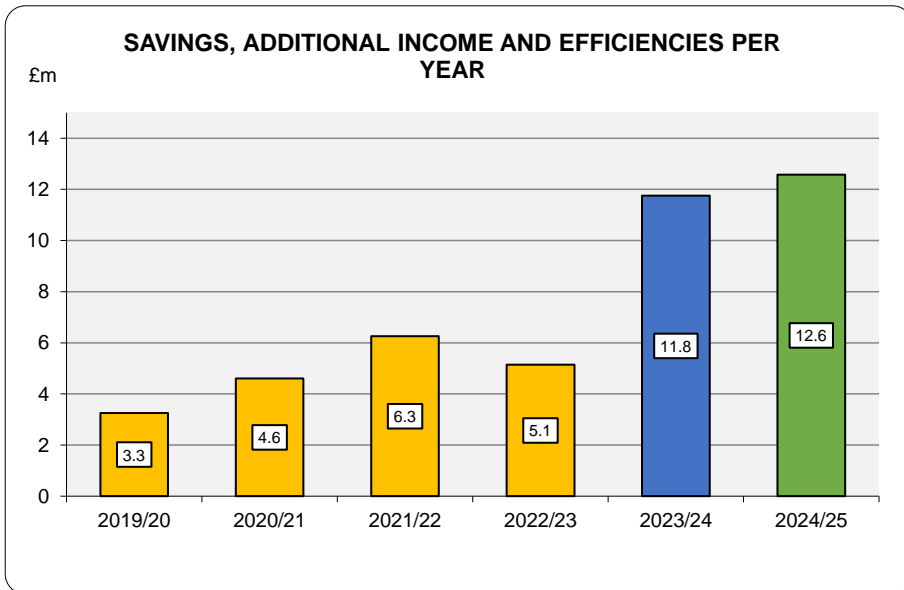
Extensive work is currently underway to manage the in-year 2023/24 position and to bring the current forecast back to a balanced position. This is critical in order to maintain appropriate reserves. Current activity includes;

- a) Departmental budget savings programmes,
- b) Restrictions on all recruitment,
- c) Implementation of future savings programmes being brought forward where possible,
- d) Program of contract reviews to manage inflation and understand efficiency options

Delivering Efficiency and Income generation

In order to continue to provide value for money and to maintain budgets within the ever difficult financial environment, efficiencies and income generation are required to meet the changing pressures in growth, inflation, and demand for services.

The total savings, efficiencies and income generation that have been identified in setting the council tax in previous years are shown below, along with planned savings required in the 2024/25 three year medium term financial plan. Efficiencies are used to fund growth, inflation and reductions in Government grants whilst allowing the Council to maintain frontline services.



Nb – Amber denotes savings delivered, Blue denotes savings in delivery and Green denotes savings in future plans.

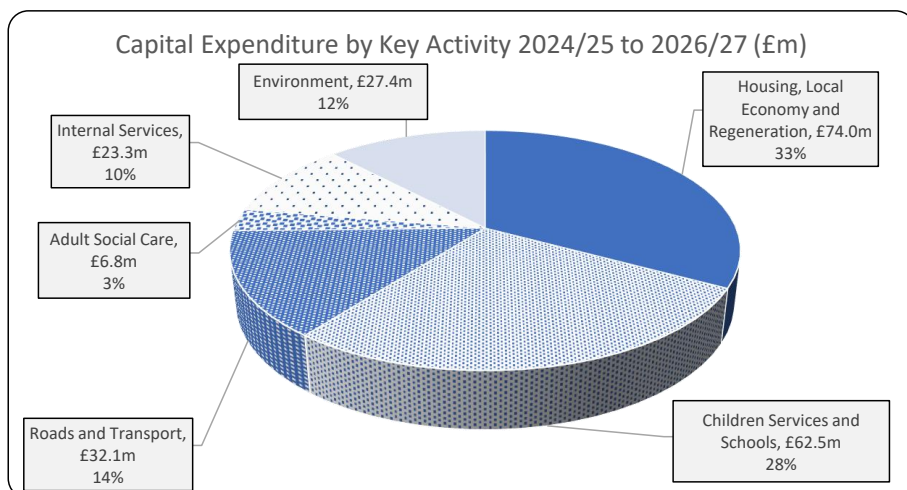
Appendix 3;

Capital Programme – Investing in the Borough

The following paragraphs further detail the Capital Programme showing where investment is being made, how the programme is being funded and the overall impact on borrowing, the capital financing requirement and the return on investments.

Spend Analysis

The graph below shows the capital expenditure planned for the next 3 years by key activity area. This excludes any previously approved budget that has will be carried forward into future years. In total the Council plan to invest a further £227m (including HRA) over the next 3 years.



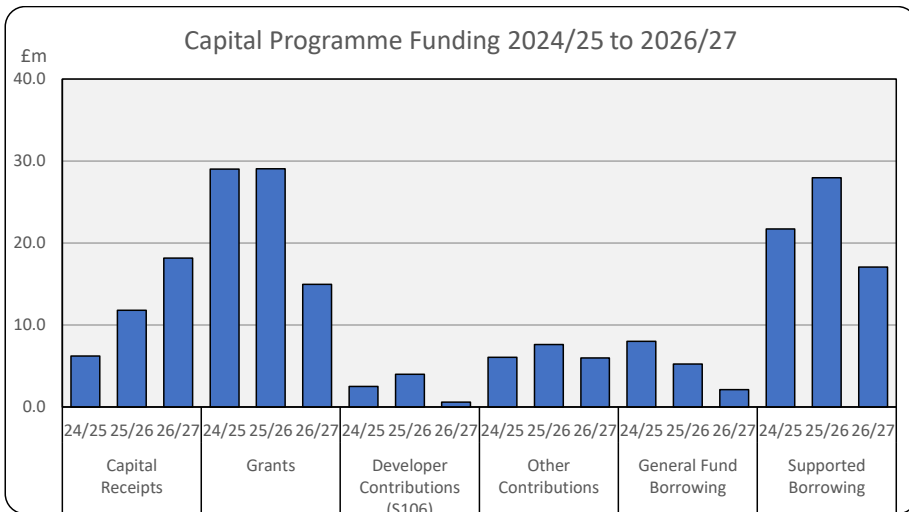
As highlighted above, significant investment is planned across schools, roads and transport, housing, local economy, and regeneration.

Funding Capital Investment

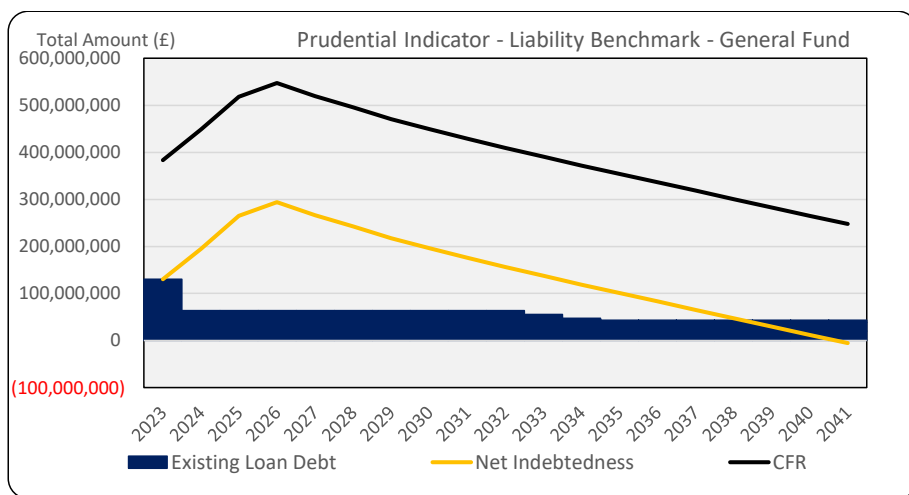
There is currently a gap in funding for the capital programme over the full MTFP period, however year 1 of the programme is fully funded. The longer-term budget gap will be addressed through a combination of expenditure reductions, reprofiling of projects and seeking to maximise funding resources.

The major funding source for the capital programme will be supported borrowing which relates to borrowing upfront where a direct repayment source (e.g. Income generation, HRA rental income, repayment of subsidiary company loans and future developer contributions) has been identified whereas general fund borrowing is funded through existing revenue base budget. The graph below shows how the capital programme will be funded over the next 3 years (assuming the funding gap in year 2 and 3 are met through reducing / rephasing capital expenditure).

The amounts shown under supported borrowing are based on the budget permissions set out in the capital programme consisting of different projects. Some projects will be committed to deliver whereas some budget allocations will not yet have detailed plans for spend or relevant outcomes/returns and therefore will not progress until that detail is fully understood.



As the Council continues to borrow over the short to medium term period to support the investment through the capital programme, debt levels will increase as shown by the net indebtedness line in the graph below (liability benchmark - prudential indicator). The level of debt is considered affordable and sustainable as required by the CIPFA prudential code. All capital projects are supported by detailed business cases which include where appropriate how supported borrowing will be repaid.



Commented [GC1]: To replace this graph with the one now required for the treasury strategy

Note – the CFR line excludes capital budgets that are currently included in the capital programme as ‘permission to spend’ budgets which will be approved subject to viable business cases.

Further information on the funding of the capital programme is set out in the Capital Strategy and the Treasury Management Strategy.

Appendix 4;

Dedicated Schools Grant

The Council receives DSG annually from the DfE and it must be used in support of the schools' budget as defined in the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2022. The purpose of the schools' budget is defined in legislation as the provision of primary and secondary education.

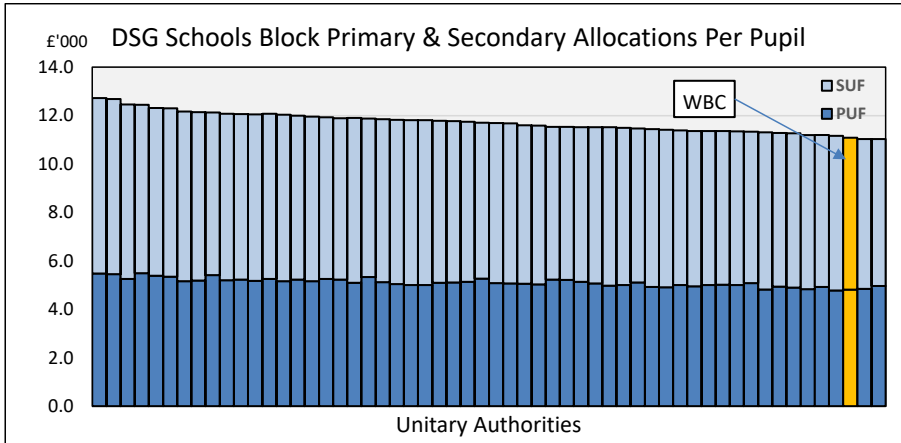
The following pages explain further how the grants are calculated and distributed. They also show Wokingham's grants in comparison to some other unitary authorities

The amount for 2024/25 was notified to the authority by the Department for Education (DfE) in December 2023. However, a proportion of this amount is in respect of free schools and must be paid to them. The actual DSG allocation available to the Council for 2024/25 is £197.34m, compared to £180.59m in 2023/24. The increase to 2024/25 is accounted for by increased funding on both two-unit costs, one for primary unit cost (PUF) and one for secondary unit cost (SUF), as well as an increase in Early Years funding due to the extension of the age range of the free entitlement. The DfE created a centrally retained schools block for the Council to carry out its statutory duties which includes an element of the old education support grant.

DSG funding has increased for 2024/25 for all four blocks. This much needed funding increase is welcomed by the Council and all of our schools and will help contribute to the day-to-day funding of services.

Block	2023/24 £,000	2024/25 £,000	Change £,000	Change %
Schools Block	138,780	146,763	7,983	5.8%
High Needs Block	28,160	29,544	1,384	4.9%
Early Years Block	12,608	19,953	7,345	58.3%
Central School Services Block	1,039	1,081	42	4.0%

The actual 2024/25 PUF is £4,813 and SUF is £6,272 per pupil compared to £4,579 (PUF) and £5,936 (SUF) in 2023/24. Wokingham continues to receive one of the lowest funding amounts of all unitary authorities.



As outlined in the previous section, the DSG funding is based on 4 blocks and therefore expenditure mirrors these 4 blocks and includes;

- Schools Block – expenditure on day to day running of schools.
- High Needs Block – expenditure on high needs including independent special schools. This area has seen significant financial pressures due to growing demand and complexity in cases.
- Early Years Block – expenditure in relation to providing to early year settings including funding for free entitlement for 2, 3 and 4 years old, and 9-month-olds from September 2024.
- Central Schools Services Block – expenditure in relation to statutory services such as school admissions and education support services.

Of the £146.7m in the Schools Block, £1.4m is proposed to be retained for the Growth Fund, funding new and growing schools. Schools Forum approved a 0.5% transfer from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block which equates to £734k. The remaining £144.6m is allocated to individual school budgets based on the local funding formula, which all schools have been consulted on, and will be presented to Schools Forum for final approval on the 10th January.

All schools are funded using the same formula regardless of whether they are maintained or an academy, with the formula taking account of a large number of variables including pupil numbers and other factors such as deprivation.

The current school profile is as follows:

	Number of Schools	Total Number on Roll	Draft Budget 2024/25 £,000
Maintained Schools	27	9,142	46,089
Academies	38	17,504	98,541
TOTAL	65	26,646	144,630

The High Needs Block is separate block of funding to support those young people with SEND requirements. This has been underfunded by central government for the past few years and, when combined with the increased demand and out-of-borough placements this has meant that the account has operated in a deficit position since 2017/18. Whilst this is permitted under regulation in the short term, it is not an ideal scenario nor sustainable in the medium to long term; The Council are a part of the government's Safety Valve Programme and are reporting to the ESFA against the agreed DSG Management Plan that will see The Council setting an in-year balanced budget by 2028/29.

Appendix 5;
Key Financial Risks with Mitigations and Controls

Risk	Mitigation and Controls
Adult Social Care placement costs, market sufficiency and inflation pressures	Rising demand, a struggling external market and cost pressures, including from Living Wage increases are adding to a position where the service is experiencing significant demand and increased complexity of cases. Various approaches are progressing to manage the position including additional in-house provision to manage cost and the external market.
Additional statutory costs of Children in Care	We are experiencing significant increases in demand and a number of management actions are in place to mitigate the risks including targeted service work to support children to remain at home and working with partners to manage and reduce costs of placements.
One-year financial settlement	Working with central govt, professional orgs and other local authorities to best understand future options and implications. MTFP includes a number of assumptions and contingencies.
Increasing interest rates and debt charges	The treasury team work with external experts to continually review and update borrowing and lending strategies. Investments are reviewed and modelled against various scenarios. Holding high levels of earmarked reserves supports the Council in minimising external debt costs through a greater level of internal borrowing.
Inflationary pressures – including pay and contracts	Specific corporate support is in place to assist contract management and procurement. MTFP includes provision for increases as best understood.
Dedicated Schools Grant deficit	Actively involved in Safety Valve potential opportunity. Continually review service models and efficiency opportunities. MTFP includes further annual funding.
Cost of living pressures	Ongoing engagement with community partners to provide support and wherever possible proactive interventions.
Specific service pressures; Home to School Transport Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers	Detailed budget monitoring and forecasting. Support to services to review and innovate in service delivery models. Where appropriate lobbying to central government for appropriate funding.

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**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Tel: 0118 974 6557 (Direct Line)
Email: graham.ebers@wokingham.gov.uk

Date: TBC

Our ref: CorpFin/03/24-25/CFO Report

Local Government Finance Settlement Team
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
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2 Marsham Street
LONDON
SW1P 4DF

Corporate Services

PO Box 150

Shute End, Wokingham

Berkshire, RG40 1WN

0118 974 6000

DX: 33506 - Wokingham

www.wokingham.gov.uk

Dear Sir,

LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE SETTLEMENT 2024/25 – CONSULTATION RESPONSE

I am writing to you in respect of the above, and whilst we will also formally respond to the consultation questionnaire I felt it important to also provide you further details about the current financial pressures and significant risks that the settlement, and previous years settlement are now meaning for Wokingham.

The Council continues to be hit hard by a number of demand and cost pressures including; pressures from accommodating refugees, inflation, including particularly national living wage, and the impacts of cost of living pressures. Therefore whilst the increase in core spending is welcomed it does not go anywhere near far enough to meet the number of pressures and ultimately costs increases we are experiencing. This in the context of further very significant pressures expected from future changes to adult social care.

Whilst again acknowledging the reasons for a single year settlement following the spending review, it is crucial that future settlement are of a longer duration and that any new local government funding model based on needs and resources.

We welcome the continued flexibility the ability to increase Council Tax provides and believe that local discretion to levy taxes and generate additional income should be provided to councils in any new funding settlement, particularly in the context of the escalating costs of statutory demand led care services.

We believe that the continuation of the New Homes Bonus is important if local authorities are to remain financially incentivised for their work in “fixing our broken housing market”, and therefore support its inclusion in the 2024/25 proposed settlement and hope that any fairer funding model continues to recognise the long term planning of authorities attempting to address the national housing shortage.

Wokingham Borough Council once again welcomes the Government's decision not to enact the potential transfer of our council taxpayers' money to other councils through the imposition of Negative Revenue Support Grant. We hope that this baseline funding for 2024/25, without the imposition of Negative Revenue Support Grant, will be honoured in any new long term settlement beyond this year.

However, our most substantial point is about the calculation of Local Authority need and the level of funding attributed to the current need calculation. Wokingham Borough Council are the lowest funded Unitary Authority of our type and to demonstrate the disparity, if funding was set at the same level per head as the highest Authority it would increase our budget by **£120m p.a.** which would add a staggering **80%** on our total budget. Whilst recognising some Local Authorities will have higher needs, this level of disparity cannot be correct or appropriate. The current model of funding is significantly flawed as it is driven by erroneous needs-based calculations that both assume need only arises from deprivation factors and weights this need disproportionately, leaving little left for the basic cost of running services. An example of the unfairness and inaccuracy of the current approach is illustrated through the University of Kent Social Care distribution model, which is based on strong evidence and has a level of sophistication to understand local financial impacts. If grants were allocated on this basis rather than the current formula Wokingham would receive an additional **£11m p.a.** This would have a huge impact on allowing the Council to deliver key services to local residents.

I hope the above response clearly conveys this Council's key concerns in respect of the proposed Local Government Finance Settlement and informs future funding considerations. We are concerned that it is not recognised or understood that relative affluence also drives Local Authority costs and that the focus to date has been on deprivation factors alone. Because of this we strongly advocate a more sophisticated funding model that reflects real needs and a flatter distribution of funding across Local Authorities.

If you would like to discuss any of the points raised then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours

Stephen Conway
Leader of the Council

Imogen Shepherd-Dubey
Executive Member for Finance

Graham Ebers
Deputy Chief Executive (& Chief Finance Officer)

TITLE	Shareholders Report
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	The Executive on Thursday, 25 January 2024
WARD	(All Wards);
LEAD OFFICER	Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers
LEAD MEMBER	Executive Member for Finance - Imogen Shepherd-DuBey

PURPOSE OF REPORT (INC STRATEGIC OUTCOMES)

To provide transparency in respect of Council Owned Companies

RECOMMENDATION

The Executive is asked to note:

- 1) The Housing companies' budget and operational position and forecast as at the end of quarter 2 (September) 2023/24 financial year,
- 2) The Optalis budget and operational position and forecast as at the end of quarter 2 (September) 2023/24 financial year

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to ensure awareness and transparency of the financial performance of the Council Owned Companies.

Housing

The Council recognised that the provision of good quality affordable housing as a priority for Wokingham and established a group of wholly-owned housing subsidiaries to develop and manage this need.

The housing group consists of Wokingham Housing Limited (WHL), Loddon Homes Limited (LHL) and Berry Brook Homes Limited (BBHL). Historically, once developed by WHL homes are sold within the group to Loddon Homes or Berry Brook Homes who act as landlords for the properties.

Loddon Homes provides Wokingham Borough Council with the additional flexibility to meet the housing needs of its residents of while generating a financial benefit for the Council which is available to be reinvested to fund essential Council services including new local housing.

Including homes of multiply occupancy, Loddon Homes have 170 tenanted spaces across all tenures: shared ownership, social rent, affordable rent, specialist supported housing, young person accommodation and independent living for older people.

The objectives of Berry Brook housing limited are similar, however this company is not set up under Register provider status which enables it greater freedoms and the ability to operate in private rented sector if and where appropriate. Berry Brook has an annual turnover of almost £1m p.a.

Adult Care Services

Optalis was established to be the Council’s provider of choice for Adult Care Services. Its key objectives were to provide safe and good quality Adult Social Care Services commissioned by the Council at a good price providing financial benefits to the Council. To date a considerable reduction of commissioning costs have been achieved and following a merger with RBWM, the business continues to expand. This will enable Optalis to grow and create further financial returns through economies of scale and allow the company to generate additional steams of income.

Operational Update

Housing

An operational update is provided for each of the companies as at the end of quarter 2 2023/24 – 30th September 2023.

There is currently a full review of the operations across the businesses to ensure the future development and business plans provide a financially sustainable position. This includes improving governance, improving efficiency as well as developing a strong and consistent programme of work across the companies.

Wokingham Housing Ltd

It had previously been considered to close the development arm of the Housing companies due to the limited ‘pipeline’ of schemes for housing development. More recently the board is reviewing that position and is exploring further opportunities to understand the best long-term approach.

Financial position;

Wokingham Housing Ltd - Profit & Loss				
	Q2 (2023/24)			Projection
	Budget	Actual	Variance	Projection
	£k	£k	£k	£K
Income	£0	£0	£0	0
Expenditure	£91	£91	£0	£125
Operating (profit) / loss	£91	£91	£0	£125

Income/Profit/positive variance - shown in brackets

Costs include audit and accounting fees and management fees from the holding company

Berry Brook Housing Limited

Detailed work is currently underway to review the financial viability of all the current schemes which will inform future focus for cost effectiveness. This will feed into a future development plan to enhance future sales income and profit.

Financial position;

Berry Brook Homes Ltd - Profit & Loss				
	Q2 (2023/24)			
	Budget £k	Actual £k	Variance £k	Projection £k
Income	(489)	(487)	2	(984)
Expenditure	662	641	(21)	1,296
Operating (profit) / loss	173	154	(19)	312

Income/Profit/positive variance - shown in brackets

Loddon Homes Limited

As with Berry Brook, a detailed financial viability review is underway across the current schemes. There are currently a number of future development opportunities under development with potential business case and market analysis in progress.

Financial position;

Loddon Homes Ltd - Profit & Loss				
	Q2 (2023/24)			
	Budget £k	Actual £k	Variance £k	Projection £k
Income	(741)	(683)	58	(1,399)
Expenditure	690	671	(19)	1,468
Operating (profit) / loss	(51)	(12)	39	69

Income/Profit/positive variance - shown in brackets

The reduced income and forecast position is due to a delay in 3 schemes, which will now be progressed in Q4.

WBC Holdings Ltd

The board with oversight for the companies overall position

Financial position;

	Wokingham Holdings Ltd - Profit & Loss			
	Q2 (2023/24)			
	Budget £k	Actual £k	Variance £k	Projection £k
Income	(£311)	(£311)	£0	(706)
Expenditure	£333	£333	(£0)	843
Operating (profit) / loss	£21	£21	£0	137

Income/Profit/positive variance - shown in brackets

Most of the Expenditure and Income is in relation to interest charges from the Council and is passed through to the subsidiaries. Expenditure also includes the cost of professional support such as Legal and Finance. Costs also include the current review of the business plans and future housing development approach.

ADULT CARE SERVICES GROUP

Optalis Limited

1. Operational Report

Optalis continues to perform well in all operational areas.

Following the acquisition of the Berkshire Care Home, the focus has been on stabilising and improving the service provided for residents. Optalis has been working in close partnership with WBC's Property, IT, Legal and Commissioning teams to address the various concerns highlighted by the Care Quality Commission when the home was under previous ownership. Plans are well advanced for refurbishing rooms to a higher standard, as well as completing the required dementia-friendly improvements before occupancy levels increase. A CQC inspection is expected soon, so the process of upgrading policies, procedures and paperwork is continuing. It is hoped that these improvements will be sufficient to secure an early uplift in the CQC rating from the current inherited level of Inadequate. Optalis will support WBC's investment in this property by moving the CQC rating to Good and then Outstanding at the earliest opportunity.

The latest national report issued under the Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework has confirmed that Wokingham has been ranked number one, out of more than 150 councils in England, for the proportion of adults with a learning disability in paid employment for 2022-23. This is a remarkable outcome for a unitary authority and reflects the impressive performance of the Optalis Supported Employment Service (SES), which is commissioned by WBC to support this cohort of residents.

2. FY 2023/24 Projected Financial Outcome

Financial performance across the year is challenging. The national workforce issues affecting adult social care continued to drive the need to use agency workers to ensure safe working. This is the main reason for the Optalis provider services overspend. The overspend is mitigated by private income generated by the Extra Care service where some customers are invoiced directly by WBC. The Berkshire Care home came on board on the 18th of September and is not included within the figures below. The contract spend is expected to be circa £400k across the current financial year.

Projected outturn – Quarter 2 actuals and full year forecast

Service	Budget (£000)	Outturn (£000)	Variance over / (underspend) (£000)
WBC Provider Services*	8,197	8,814	617
Central Management	960	960	-
Total	9,157	9,774	617
ASC Income within WBC (Extra Care Service)			(118)
Net cost of services			499
Funding from Adult Social Care			(499)
Company annual trading position			0

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)	See other financial information	Yes	Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	See other financial information	Yes	Revenue
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	See other financial information	Yes	Revenue

Other Financial Information

The Council will benefit from reduced costs in commissioning services, the interest and management charges to WBC (Holdings) Ltd and future profits paid out as dividend. These will be factored into the Medium Term Financial Plan under the appropriate service.

Legal Implications arising from the Recommendation(s)

None

Stakeholder Considerations and Consultation

None

Public Sector Equality Duty

An Equality Impact Assessment is not required for this report

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*

Companies are working alongside officers to align approach with the councils commitment and strategic direction

Reasons for considering the report in Closed Session

N/A

List of Background Papers

None

Contact Mark Thompson	Service Business Services
Telephone Tel: 0118 974 6555	Email mark.thompson@wokingham.gov.uk

TITLE	Air Quality Management Areas
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	The Executive on Thursday, 25 January 2024
WARD	(All Wards);
LEAD OFFICER	Director, Place and Growth - Giorgio Framaliccio
LEAD MEMBER	Executive Member for Environment, Sport and Leisure - Ian Shenton

PURPOSE OF REPORT (INC STRATEGIC OUTCOMES)

To ensure the council is compliant with Environment Act 1995 and statutory policy and guidance with respect to Local Air Quality Management. To achieve this compliance, progress the revocation of two out of the three Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) Orders in the borough.

For both Twyford and M4 AQMA's 3 years and 5 years of data respectively, show achievement of the annual mean objective nitrogen dioxide levels. Full details of the robust supporting data are provided in the Revocation Report attached (Nov 2023).

Statutory guidance states that where local authorities have three years of compliance, they should consider revocation. Where there is five years compliance there should not be any AQMA's in place. Twyford has three clear years compliance data and the M4 has 5 clear years compliance data. Therefore, Defra's annual status report appraisal has recommended that these orders are revoked.

The report contributes to the Community Vision of making Wokingham a great place to live, learn, work and grow. Residents will benefit from the knowledge that air quality has improved substantially, to meet objectives in two Air Quality Management Areas.

It contributes to enriching lives, by providing an environment of good air quality to support healthy lives.

It acknowledges the achievements so far in respect of reducing nitrogen dioxide pollution, whilst recognising that there is still more to do, to ensure all the Borough, including Wokingham Town Centre meets the air quality objectives. Wokingham Borough Council is committed to continuing to reduce concentrations of all air pollutants across the whole borough.

RECOMMENDATION

The Executive is requested to:

- 1) Approve commencement of the revocation process in respect of the Air Quality Management Area Order in Twyford Town Centre.
- 2) Approve commencement of the revocation process in respect of the Air Quality Management Area Order along the M4 motorway.

- 3) Delegate responsibility to the Director of Place and Growth in consultation with the Executive Portfolio Holder to progress the revocation process to conclusion of revocation of the Orders (in conjunction with legal services).
- 4) Note that relevant stakeholders including the Act's statutory consultees will be informed of the revocations.
- 5) Note that the revocations, will impact on the review and update of the Air Quality Action Plan for Wokingham Borough Council (which will be subject to separate development and consultation in accordance with the Act)
- 6) Note that Wokingham Borough Council will retain a statutory responsibility to have an up-to-date Air Quality Action Plan, as an AQMA will be retained for Wokingham Town Centre, but that under the LAQM framework an Air Quality Strategy is not a statutory requirement, where a Council has a statutory responsibility to have an Air Quality Action Plan.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Three Air Quality Management Areas have been declared in Wokingham Borough Council – M4, Twyford and Wokingham Town Centre for exceedances of the annual mean nitrogen dioxide objective.

Air quality has improved across the Borough, since the declaration of the respective AQMAs, both along the M4 and in Twyford. It is deemed to have improved to an extent that in line with the statutory guidance on AQMAs, it has been recommended by Defra that these 2 AQMA's are revoked. Should the revocations guidance not be followed, the Secretary of State has powers, which can be triggered, resulting in a direction being issued for the council to comply with the recommendation that has been set out. Following the agreement for respective revocations for Twyford and the M4, air quality monitoring will take place on a reduced scale and frequency.

The Wokingham Revocation Report (November 2023) prepared by the Public Protection Partnership on behalf of Wokingham Borough Council details the robust scientific evidence basis to support the two revocations and outlines the process to be taken to effect revocation.

An Action Plan for the retained AQMA in Wokingham Town Centre, will require updating and consideration of additional actions to achieve the objectives. This will be subject to a separate process, which will include statutory consultees.

BACKGROUND

The Environment Act 1995 places a legal duty on all Local Authorities to regularly monitor the levels of Air Quality within their borough and identify areas where the Government's air quality objectives are likely to be exceeded.

Within Wokingham Borough Council area, Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) has been identified as a pollutant of concern. This is a pollutant that is produced by vehicles. The Government's objective for NO₂ is an annual average of no greater than 40ug/m³ (micrograms per cubic metre). If monitoring identifies high levels of NO₂, then the objectives are likely to be exceeded, and further action is required. Where exceedance are identified, the Local Authority is required to declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and produce an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) setting out the measures that will be taken to improve Air Quality in the AQMA.

The Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) Framework has required Local Authorities to carry out regular reviews of Air Quality in their areas since 1998. These reviews used to be known as the Updated and Screening Assessment (USA) reports. The USA has now been replaced with the Annual Status Report (ASR), which provides an overview of air quality and fulfils the requirements of Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) as set out in Part IV of the Environment Act (1995) and the relevant Policy and Technical Guidance documents.

Local air quality reviews have led to Wokingham Borough Council declaring three Air Quality Management Areas, known as:

M4 AQMA
Twyford Town Centre AQMA
Wokingham Town Centre AQMA

The M4 AQMA was declared for the NO₂ annual mean in 2001 and amended in 2004. It is a Zone 60m either side of the M4 from the Council's boundaries with Reading Borough Council (in the west) & Royal Borough Windsor & Maidenhead (in the East), it runs throughout the borough including an extended area along the A329 Reading Road where it underpasses the M4.

The Twyford Crossroads AQMA was declared for the exceedance of annual mean NO₂ in 2015. It includes the residential and commercial properties along parts of High Street in the west, Wargrave Road in the northwest, London Road in the north-east and Church Street the south-east.

The Wokingham Town Centre AQMA was declared for the exceedance of the annual mean NO₂ in 2015. It includes properties, along a small part of Reading Road and Station Road in the north-west, along Shute End and into Broad Street to the front of 44-52 Denmark Street, in the south-west, and along Peach Street into London Road ending at the junction with London Road and Seaford Road in the West.

Action Plan

An Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) is required where local authorities have declared AQMAs. A combined AQAP for the AQMAs was developed, approved, and published in

2018. Measures in the plan, have been implemented since that time, with the Annual Status Reports providing updates on progress with implementation.

Recent Air Quality Data

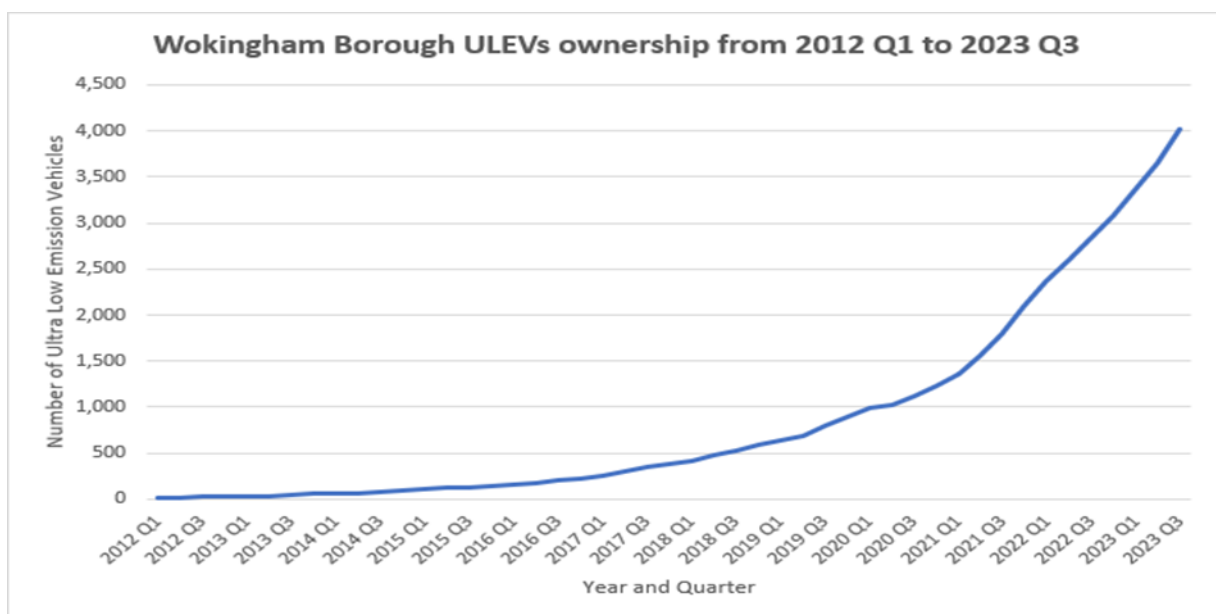
Monitoring and assessment of air quality has continued intensively in the AQMAs, along with less intensive monitoring at selected locations around the borough outside of the AQMAs.

For two of the AQMAs – Twyford and M4, the recent nitrogen dioxide levels show that the annual mean objective value is being met, and having regard to recent trends, and the levels being well below the objective value, there is sufficient confidence that the objective will continue to be met, that it is appropriate to revoke these two AQMAs. Full details of the robust supporting data are provided in the Revocation Report (Nov 2023).

The recent data for Wokingham town centre AQMA, as detailed in the latest Annual Status Report, shows that the annual mean objective value is being met, but that having regard to recent trends indicating an increase in concentrations, and the margin of achievement of the objective, there is not currently sufficient confidence that the objective will continue to be met, and therefore at the current time it is not appropriate to revoke this AQMA.

Future Vehicle Use Considerations.

Future patterns and type of vehicle use will have an impact on local air quality in AQMA areas and should be noted, especially in the post pandemic period. One key factor is the use of electric vehicle's and ultra-low emissions vehicles, which is set to increase nationally and across the southeast, this is anticipated to have a positive impact on the borough. Local ultra-low emission vehicle ownership data informs us that there has been an increase in local ownership levels of this type of vehicle (see charts below). In addition, the council has a commitment to increase accessibility to electric charging points and to support more active travel initiatives as set out in its draft Local Transport Plan (LTP4) all factors that are anticipated to have a positive effect on air quality locally.

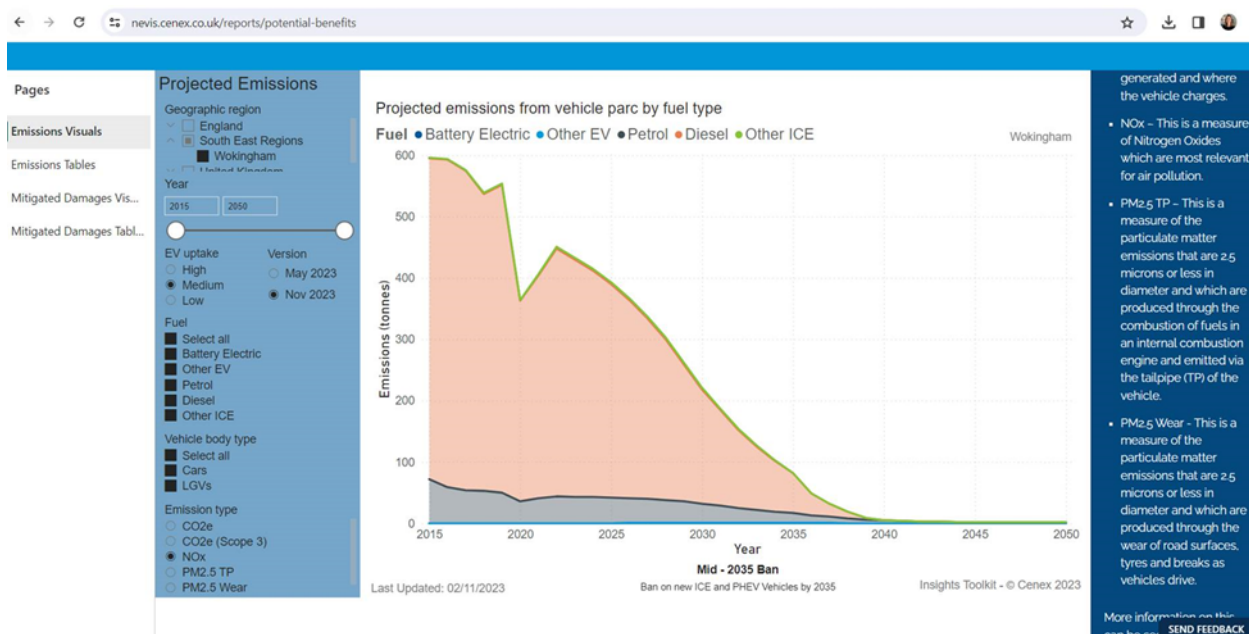


The Chart above shows Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) ownership in the Borough between 2012 and 2023. The following table is a summary of Wokingham Borough's ULEVs Penetration in Total Licensed Vehicles from 2020 to 2023.

Wokingham Borough ULEVs Penetration in Total Licensed Vehicles from 2020 to 2023

	2023 Q3 total	2022	2021	2020
Total ULEV's	4,017	3,070	2,091	1,229
Total Licensed	118,243	116,571	115,029	113,777
ULEV's Penetration %	3.40%	2.63%	1.82%	1.08%

In respect of Nitrogen Oxides and projected emissions, the chart below shows predictions based on current national policy in relation to the sales and production of internal combustion engines. However, it should be noted that these are a working assumption based on current policy.



Revocation

DEFRA's appraisal (Aug 2023) of the last Annual Status Report, states that there is sufficient evidence to revoke Twyford and the M4 AQMAs.

To formally revoke the AQMAs, Wokingham Borough Council must issue orders for each respective declared AQMA.

A revocation can be completed without public consultation. The requirement is for the revocation to be widely accessible, and for the statutory consultees to be informed.

It is WBCs intention to inform residents on the revocation, with a letter drop to properties located within the two AQMAs, and to inform statutory consultees and stakeholders at least 4 weeks prior to issuing the revocation orders. The information will also be available to the general public on the WBC website.

Neighbouring Local Authority Picture 2023

South Oxfordshire Council are in the process of revoking 2 out of 3 AQMA's, Bracknell Forest Council, is revoking 1 out of 2 AQMA's, West Berkshire Council is revoking 2 out of 2. Overall, this reflects a trend of general improvements in air quality across the West of Berkshire.

Impact and future air quality monitoring and assessment

Revocation of two AQMAs will enable the intensity of monitoring to be reduced. WBC will still be required under the LAQM regime to provide annual status reports. These can only be informed by a degree of monitoring taking place at former AQMAs and at selected locations across the borough. As there will be a retained AQMA, the intensity of monitoring in this AQMA will continue, and inform the ASR.

Where there is an AQMA local authorities are required to have a current Air Quality Action Plan, and whilst progress with implementation is included in the ASR each year, a review and update of the AQAP should occur at least every 5 years. WBC currently have a combined AQAP. This requires review and update and will need to be developed with focus on the retained AQMA, whilst including generic measures to contribute to ongoing compliance and achievement of all the air quality objectives across the borough. Work commenced on this in 2023 - This will be progressed in 2024 with adjusted focus.

Under the LAQM framework, an Air Quality Strategy, is only required where a local authority does not have an Air Quality Management Area. Therefore, with the retention of an Air Quality Management Area, Wokingham BC is not required to have a statutory Air Quality Strategy.

The Council is committed to continue working toward reducing the concentrations of all air pollutants to achieve the Air Quality Objectives as stated in the Environment Act 2021.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

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

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

Other Financial Information

No other financial implications of this report.

Legal Implications arising from the Recommendation(s)
There are possible legal implications if the decision to proceed with the revocation orders is not agreed as the Council may be in breach of the Environment Act 1995, and the recommendations of Defra (which WBC are expected to have regard to, as detailed in the statutory Policy and Technical Guidance). The Secretary of State may proceed to issue a Direction under section 85 of the Act requiring the revocation of the AQMA orders by WBC.

Stakeholder Considerations and Consultation
Relevant stakeholders and statutory consultees (sch 11 of Act) will be informed of the revocation (s4.11 LAQM PG22), and the revocation orders will be made available to the public.

Public Sector Equality Duty
An Equalities Impact Assessment has been approved by the Inclusion Team.

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*
None

Reasons for considering the report in Closed Session
Not being considered in closed session.

List of Background Papers
Revocation Report – November 2023
Defra comments ASR 2023
Annual Status Report 2023

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**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**2023 Air Quality Management Area Revocation
In fulfilment of Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 Local
Air Quality Management**

Date: November 2023

Information	Wokingham Borough Council Details
Local Authority Officer	Emma Choules Residential & Environmental Team
Department	Enforcement & Safety
Address	Wokingham Borough Council Shute End Wokingham Berkshire RG40 1BN
Telephone	0118 974 6000
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Report Reference Number	Revocation Report
Date	November 2023 Report prepared by Public Protection Partnership on behalf of Wokingham Borough Council

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1 Introduction

This report was produced on behalf of Wokingham Borough Council and constitutes the required information under which the Council is to apply for the revocation of two Area Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) known as Twyford Crossroad and the M4.

The AQMA revocation report has been developed in recognition of the legal requirement on the local authority to work towards the Air Quality Strategy (AQS) objectives under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 and the relevant Regulations made under that part and to meet the requirements of the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) statutory process.

This report will provide the Council with robust evidence as required under the LAQM guidance, LAQM.TG (22), to enable it to revoke the two AQMAs.

2 Local Air Quality Management

2.1 Review and Assessment of Air Quality

Under the Environment Act 1995 local authorities are required to review and assess local air quality annually against national air quality objectives. This process sits under the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) programme which requires local authorities to report annually to the department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

The air quality objectives applicable to LAQM in England are set out in the Air Quality Standard Regulations 2010. The pollutant of concern for these 2 AQMAs is Nitrogen Dioxide only and the limits are set out in Table 1 below. The current AQMAs have been declared for the **annual objective**.

Table 1: The National Nitrogen Dioxide Air Quality Objectives

Pollutant	Air Quality Objective: Concentration	Air Quality Objective: Measured as
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO ₂)	200µg/m ³ not to be exceeded more than 18 times a year	1-hour mean
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO ₂)	40µg/m ³	Annual mean

2.2 Health Impacts

Air pollution is associated with several adverse health impacts. It is recognised as a contributing factor in the onset of heart disease and cancer. Air Pollution can be harmful to everyone, but particularly affects the most vulnerable in society: children, the elderly, and those with existing heart and lung conditions. There is also often a strong correlation with equalities issues because areas with poor air quality are also often less affluent areas^{1,2}.

Poor air quality is also a contributory factor in mortality. The mortality burden of air pollution within the UK is equivalent to 29,000 to 43,000 deaths at typical ages³, with a total estimated healthcare cost to the NHS and social care of £157 million in 2017⁴.

The major source of air quality pollutants in Wokingham Borough is road transport, and the main pollutant of concern is nitrogen dioxide (NO₂). Within the Borough there are three Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) which have been declared for exceedances of the Annual Mean NO₂ and 1-hour Objectives. These are located in Wokingham Town Centre, Twyford Centre Crossroads, and 60m either side of, the M4 throughout the whole of the borough ([Local Authority Details - Defra, UK](#)). (See Appendix A for the maps of Twyford Crossroads and M4 AQMAs).

2.3 Current Air Quality Management Area Status

In the comments from the June 2023 Annual Status Report (ASR) for Wokingham Borough Council DEFRA has recommended the revocation of two of the AQMAs the Twyford Crossroads and the M4, as they have both recorded annual levels at or below 36.0 µg/m³ for 3 continuous years.

2.4 Requirements for revoking an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)

The process for the revoking an AQMA is set out in the DEFRA Local Air Quality Management Policy (22) and Technical Guidance (22). The Technical Guidance states that;

¹ Public Health England. Air Quality: A Briefing for Directors of Public Health, 2017

² Defra. Air quality and social deprivation in the UK: an environmental inequalities analysis, 2006

³ Defra. Air quality appraisal: damage cost guidance, January 2023

⁴ Public Health England. Estimation of costs to the NHS and social care due to the health impacts of air pollution: summary report, May 2018

“3.57 The revocation of an AQMA should be considered following three consecutive years of compliance with the relevant objective as evidenced through monitoring. Where NO₂ monitoring is completed using diffusion tubes, to account for the inherent uncertainty associated with the monitoring method, it is recommended that revocation of an AQMA should be considered following three consecutive years of annual mean NO₂ concentrations being lower than 36µg/m³ (i.e. within 10% of the annual mean NO₂ objective). There should not be any declared AQMAs for which compliance with the relevant objective has been achieved for a consecutive five-year period.”

Wokingham Borough Council has robust monitoring data for both the Twyford Crossroads and the M4, that has recorded annual levels at or below 36.0 µg/m³ for 3 continuous years they can both be revoked.

3 M4 Air Quality Management Area

3.1 The M4 AQMA

The M4 AQMA was declared for the NO₂ annual mean in 2001 and amended in 2004. It is a Zone 60m either side of the M4 from the Council’s boundaries with Reading Borough Council (in the west) & Royal Borough Windsor & Maidenhead (in the East), it runs throughout the borough including an extended area along the A329 Reading Road where it underpasses the M4, (See Appendix A Map 1).

3.2 The Nitrogen Dioxide Levels

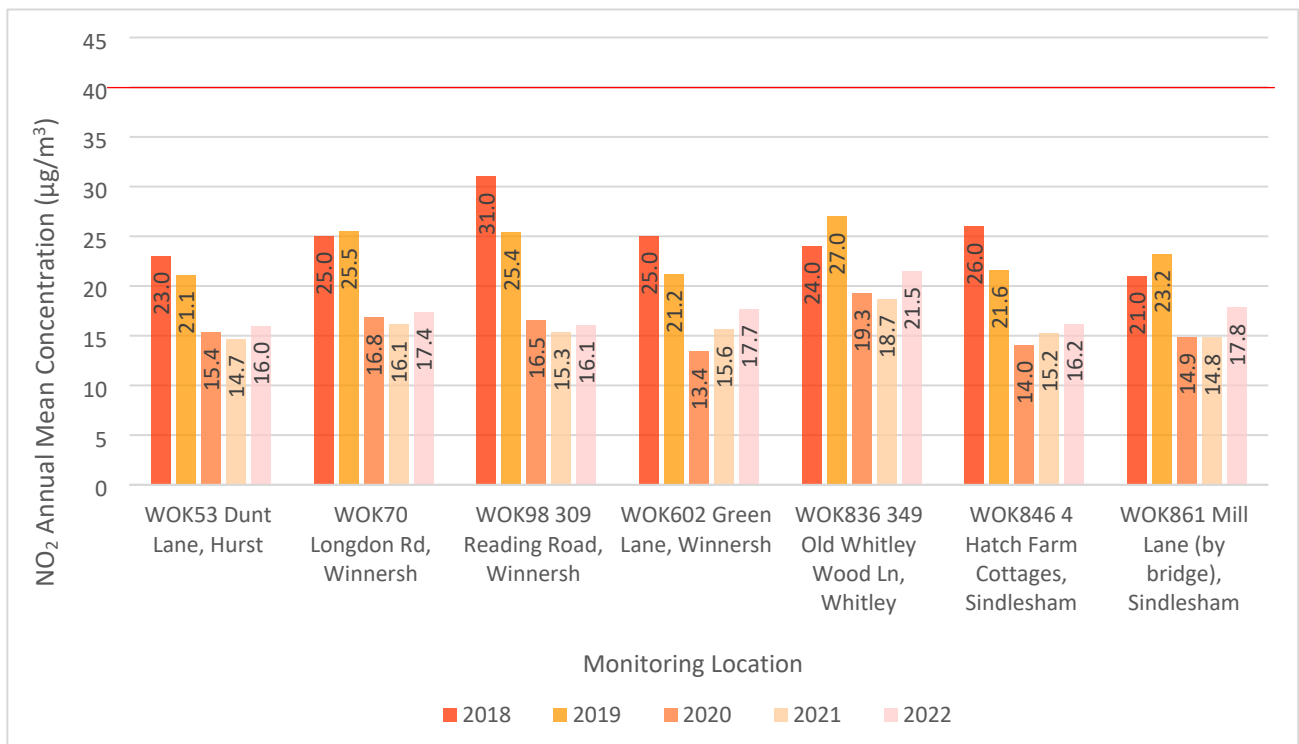
The NO₂ levels for the M4 AQMA, have been monitored using diffusion tubes since 2001 at 7 locations (see Map 3 and 4). These are all located within the AQMA.

- WOK53 – Dunt Lane, Hurst
- WOK70 - London Road, Winnersh
- WOK98 – 309 Reading Road, Winnersh
- WOK602 Green Lane, Winnersh
- WOK 836 – 349 Old Whitley Wood Lan4, Whitley
- WOK846 – 4 Hatch Farm Cottages, Sindlesham
- WOK861 - Mill Lane, Sindlesham

The results (se Figure 1 below) have been 36.0 µg/m³ or below for the past 5 years, within the highest level reaching 31.0 µg/m³ in 2018. Whilst the levels have started to rise slightly since 2020-2021 when the M4 had reduced traffic volumes due to the pandemic lockdowns, the levels have not risen to the levels measured pre 2020. A number of factors may attribute to this, including an

increased use of electric vehicles, more people working from home and “hybrid working”, and the implementation of the M4 smart motorway. Highways England commence the smart motorway construction in 2018 and was fully implemented in 2022. From 2018 – 2021 the section from Junction 8 to Junction 12, within which is this AQMA, the traffic speed was limited to 50 mph in 3 lanes, then increased to 60 mph during the testing period in 4 lanes during the final few months before completion. From December 2021 the motorway was reopened to traffic at the national speed limit.

Figure 1: Diffusion tube Nitrogen Dioxide Levels in the M4 AQMA from 2018 to 2022



3.3 Historic Continuous Monitoring

Between 25/03/2013 and 31/12/2016 automatic monitoring at Old Whitley Wood Lane, north of M4 was carried out, (results in Table 2 below). During this period there were only two exceedances of the 1-hour Objective in 2016 (18 are permitted) and the highest annual average of 36.9 µg/m³ was recorded in 2014.

3.3.1 Table 2: The results from the continuous monitoring unit from 2013 to 2016 at the M4 AQMA.

Year	NO ₂ 1 Hourly mean	NO ₂ Annual Mean (µg/m ³)
2016	2 exceedances	34.2
2015	Unit off line	Unit offline
2014	0 exceedances	36.9
2013	0 exceedances	30.2

3.4 Future Monitoring

Monitoring will continue at the 7 sites using diffusion tubes, as advised in LAQM.TG (22) to ensure that the levels remain at 36.0 µg/m³ or below, for the next 3 years, unless directed otherwise from DEFRA.

3.5 QA/QC of Monitoring Data

All the monitoring data is presented with a robust quality assurance and quality control refer to Appendix B for full details.

4 Twyford Crossroads AQMA

4.1 The AQMA

The Twyford Crossroads AQMA was declared for the exceedance of annual mean NO₂ in 2015. It includes the residential and commercial properties along parts of High Street in the west, Wargrave Road in the northwest, London Road in the north-east and Church Street the south-east (see Appendix A Map 2).

4.2 The Nitrogen Dioxide Levels

The nitrogen dioxide levels for the Twyford Crossroads AQMA, have been monitoring the NO₂ Annual mean objective using diffusion tubes (5 sites, 3 of which are triplicate) and a reference continuous monitor (see Appendix A Map 5). The sites are located as followed;

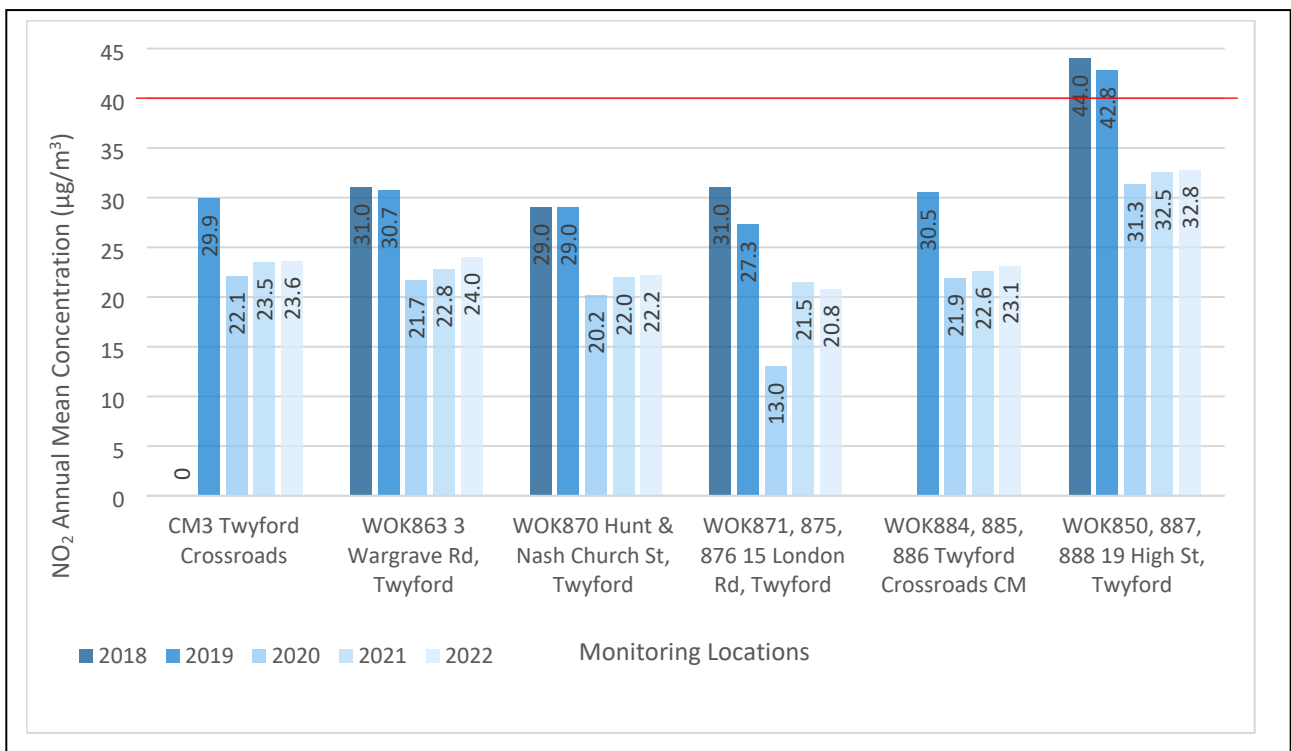
- WOK863 - 3 Wargrave Road, Twyford
- WOK870 - Hunt & Nash Church St, Twyford

- WOK871, 875, 876 - 15 London Road, Twyford
- WOK884, 885, 886 - Twyford Crossroads Continuous Monitor
- WOK850, 887 888 - 19 High Street, Twyford.

The results have been 36.0 µg/m³ or below for the past 5 years, in 4 of the diffusion tube locations and continuous monitor (shown in Figure 2 below). One of the diffusion tube locations, 19 High Street has been 36.0 µg/m³ or below since 2020. Whilst the NO₂ has started to rise slightly since 2020 they remain below the 2019 levels.

A number of factors can attribute to these reduced levels including an increased use of electric vehicles, more people working from home and “hybrid working”, increase in public transport use, and reduction in vehicle idling.

4.3 Figure 2: Continuous Monitor (CM) and diffusion tube Annual NO₂ concentrations at Twyford Crossroads AQMA from 2018 to 2022



4.4 Current Monitoring

Throughout 2023 the 5 diffusion tubes site within the AQMA have remained in place along with the continuous monitor. For the first 9 months the continuous monitoring results show that the annual NO₂ is predicted to remain below 36.0µg/m³ (Figure 3), with the average for quarters 1, 2, and 3 at

21.4µg/m³, which is below the 2022 NO₂ results for the same period of 23.3 µg/m³. The results from the diffusion tubes will not be known until the raw data has been bias corrected, however they are predicted to be below 36µg/m³ from analysing the previous year’s data and the current data from the continuous monitoring.

4.4.1 Figure 3: A table showing the Jan – Sept 2023 Continuous monitoring data for the Twyford Crossroads and the monthly and quarterly NO₂ comparison with 2022.

Month	Average NO concentration (µg/m ³)		NO2 Monthly comparison (%)	Quarterly Annual Average		Quarterly comparison (%)
	2022	2023		2022	2023	
January	33.2	28.9	-6.7	28.4	26.2	- 8
February	23.0	27.4	6.2			
March	28.5	22.2	-3.5			
April	26.2	21.3	-23	20.9	20.0	- 4.4
May	26.7	19.0	-41			
June	23.5	19.7	-19			
July	19.6	15.5	-27	20.7	17.6	-16.2
August	16.5	16.5	-7			
September	20.9	20.9	-20			

4.5 Future Monitoring

Monitoring will continue at the 5 diffusion tubes sites to ensure that the levels remain at 36.0 µg/m³ or below, for the next 3 years, unless direct otherwise from DEFRA.

4.6 QA/QC of Monitoring Data

All the monitoring data is presented with a robust quality assurance and quality control refer to Appendix B for full details.

5 Ongoing measure to improve the local Air Quality

In addition to working to reduce and maintain NO₂ concentrations below the annual objective in all areas of the Borough, we will continue to assess planning applications to ensure that future developments and changes to the road networks across the Borough do not lead to an increase in the NO₂ concentration above the annual mean objective of 40µg/m³. We will also continue to regulate installations to ensure that emission limits are not exceeded and also undertake regulation of smoke and waste burning to reduce impacts on local air quality. We will continue to provide our Anti-Idling

Schools Kit to the local Primary's as well as running Clean Air Day, and other campaigns which help improve our air quality. ([air-quality-school-toolkit-final-version-1-003.pdf](https://www.air-quality-school-toolkit-final-version-1-003.pdf) (publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk)).

5.1 Current Borough Wide Monitoring

In the 2023 Annual Status Report Wokingham Borough Council confirmed it has 47 diffusion tube sites monitoring NO₂ levels in borough and that they have shown a decreasing trend since 2018. No diffusion tube sites in 2022 located within Wokingham exceeded the Annual Mean Objective. No diffusion tube results were recorded above 60µg/m³, indicating no exceedances of the 1-hour NO₂ objective.

The continuous monitoring unit in Peach Street Wokingham town centre, within the Wokingham AQMA, recorded an Annual Mean NO₂ level of 27.1µg/m³ in 2022, which meets the Annual Mean NO₂ Objective (40µg/m³). The continuous monitoring also met the 1-hour NO₂ objective.

Within the Twyford AQMA the continuous monitoring recorded an Annual Mean NO₂ level of 23.6µg/m³, which also met the objective. The continuous monitoring also met the 1 hour NO₂ objective.

Furthermore, there were no exceedances of the Annual Mean NO₂ Objective from the monitoring sites within the M4 AQMA.

Wokingham Borough Council will be continuing to monitor the Air Quality across the borough (using diffusion tubes and continuous monitor(s) as appropriate. It may move the locations and add new areas to monitoring schedule as the local environment changes, such as new housing developments, changes to the road networks and the reduction of NO₂ across the borough. Wokingham is committed to continuing our work to reduce levels of pollution throughout the borough.

The council will continue working toward reducing the concentration of all air pollutants to achieve the Air Quality Objectives as stated in the Environmental Act 2021.

6 Consultation

Wokingham Borough Council will consult with stakeholders during the process of revocation of the two AQMAs.

7 What are the next Steps?

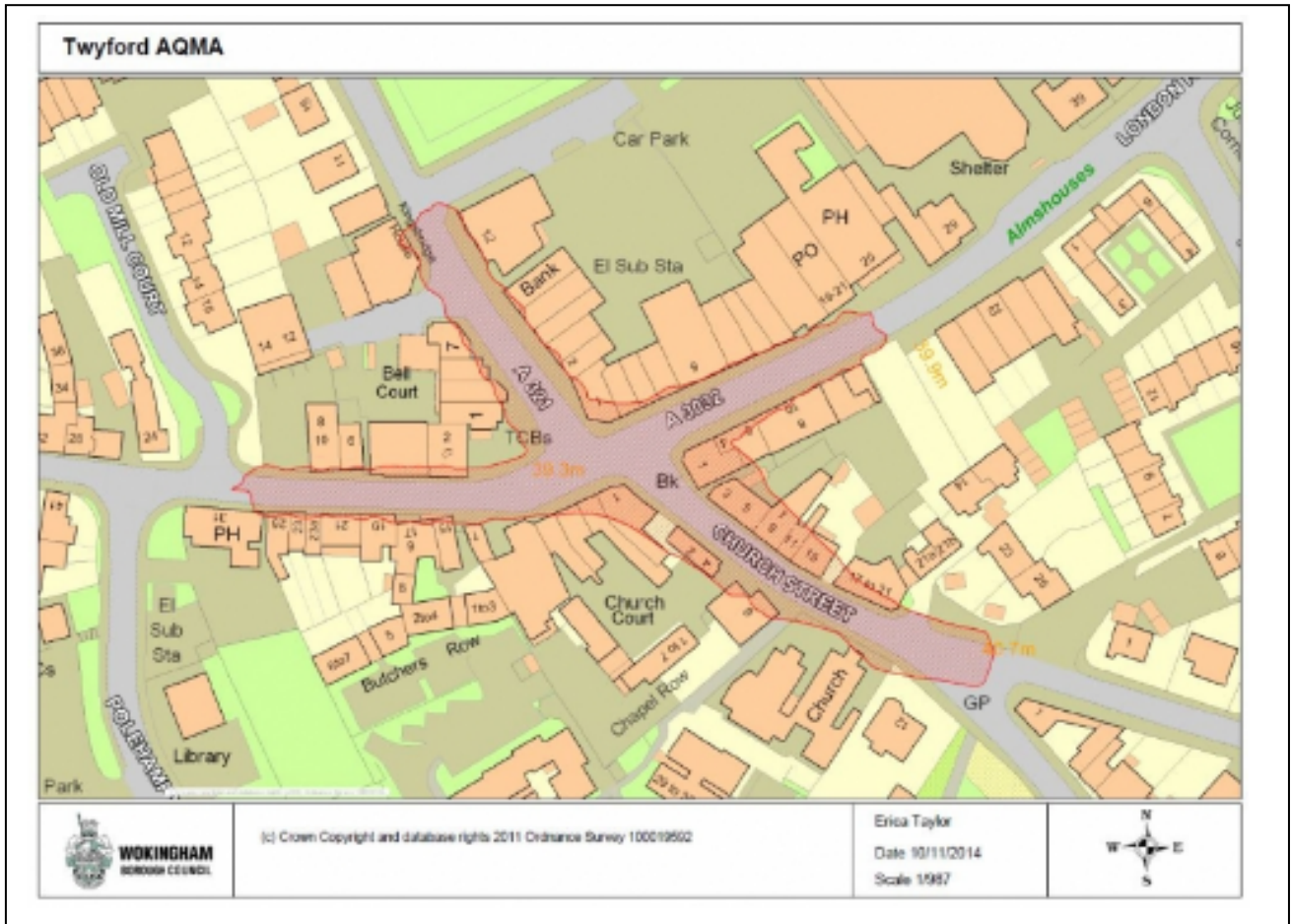
Wokingham will commence the process of revoking two AQMAs including a 4 week consultation period with statutory consultees and stakeholders.

The process will include a report submission to DEFRA and a revocation order will be issued and made available on our website.

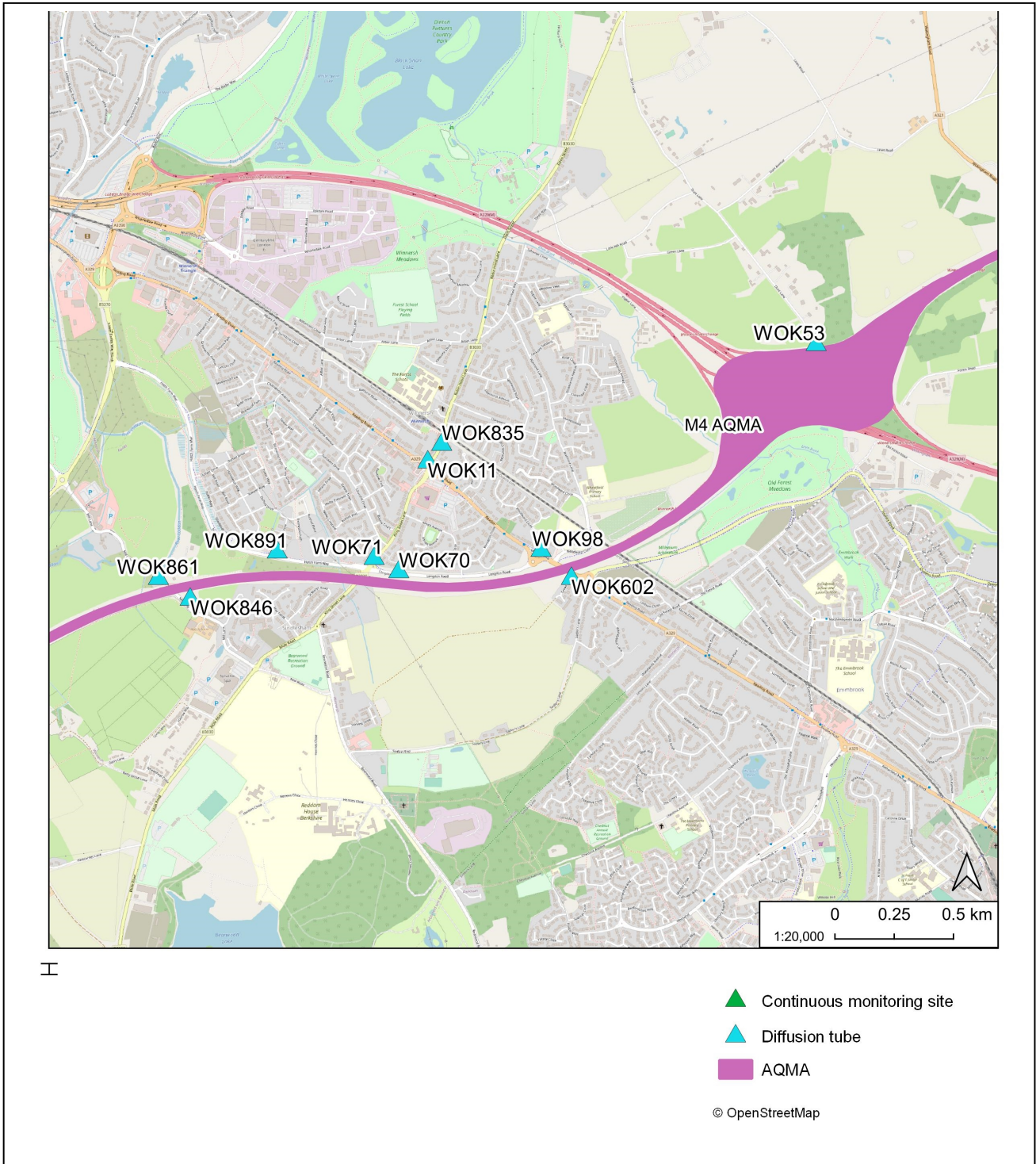
8 References and Papers

- **Wokingham Borough Council Annual Status Report** (*June 2023*), by Charlie Fielder.
[Air Quality Monitoring - PPP \(publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk\)](https://publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk)
- **Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs)** (*DEFRA October 2023*)
[AQMA Details - Defra, UK](#)
- **Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance LAQM.TG(22)** (*August 2022*).
Published by Defra in partnership with the Scottish Government, Welsh Assembly Government and Department of the Environment Northern Ireland.
[LAQM-TG22-August-22-v1.0.pdf \(defra.gov.uk\)](#)
- **Local Air Quality Management Policy Guidance LAQM.PG(22)** (*August 2022*).
Published by Defra in partnership with the Scottish Government, Welsh Assembly Government and Department of the Environment Northern Ireland.
[LAQM-Policy-Guidance-2022.pdf \(defra.gov.uk\)](#)

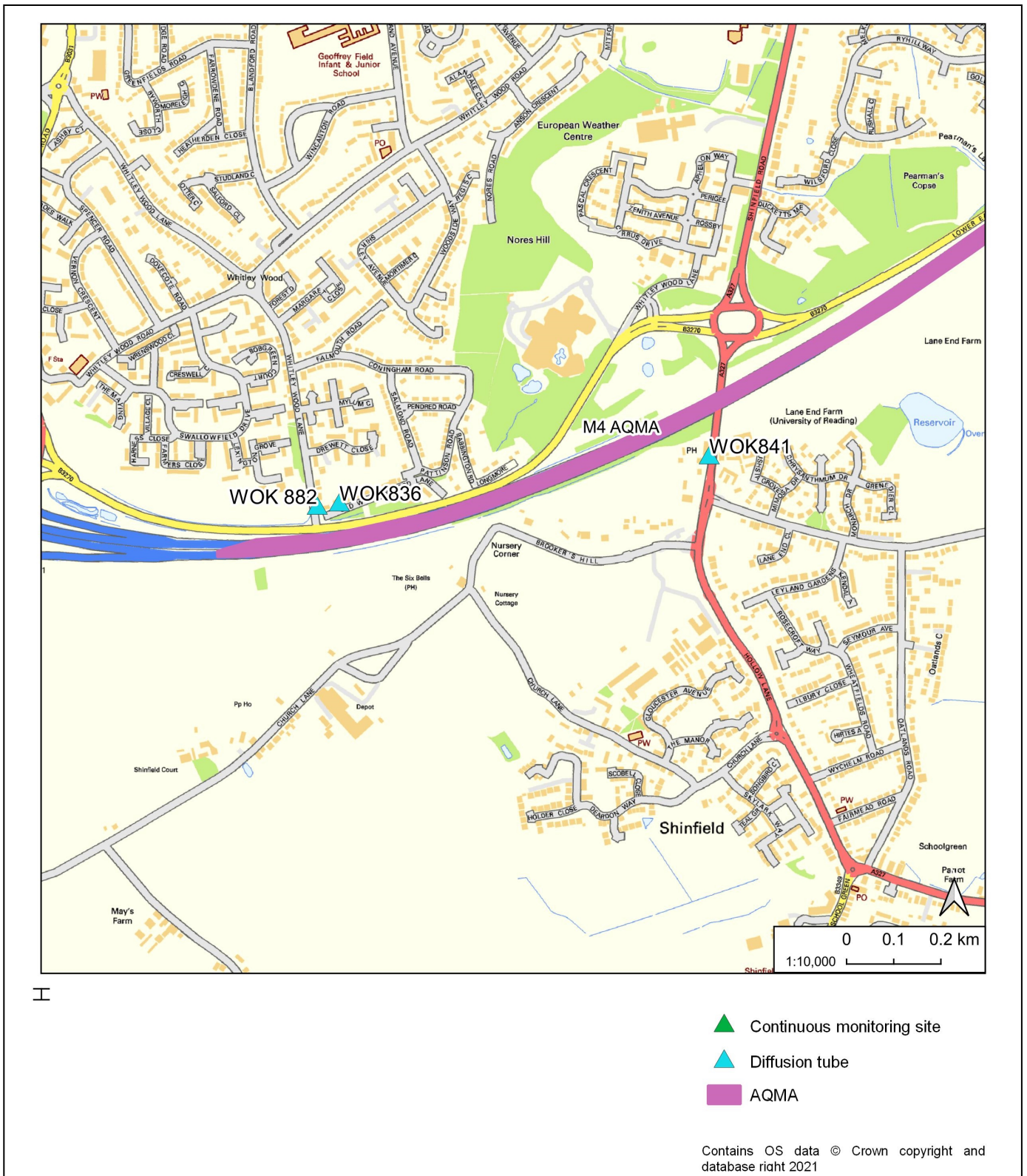
Map 2: The Twyford Crossroads AQMA ([AQMA Details - Defra, UK](#))



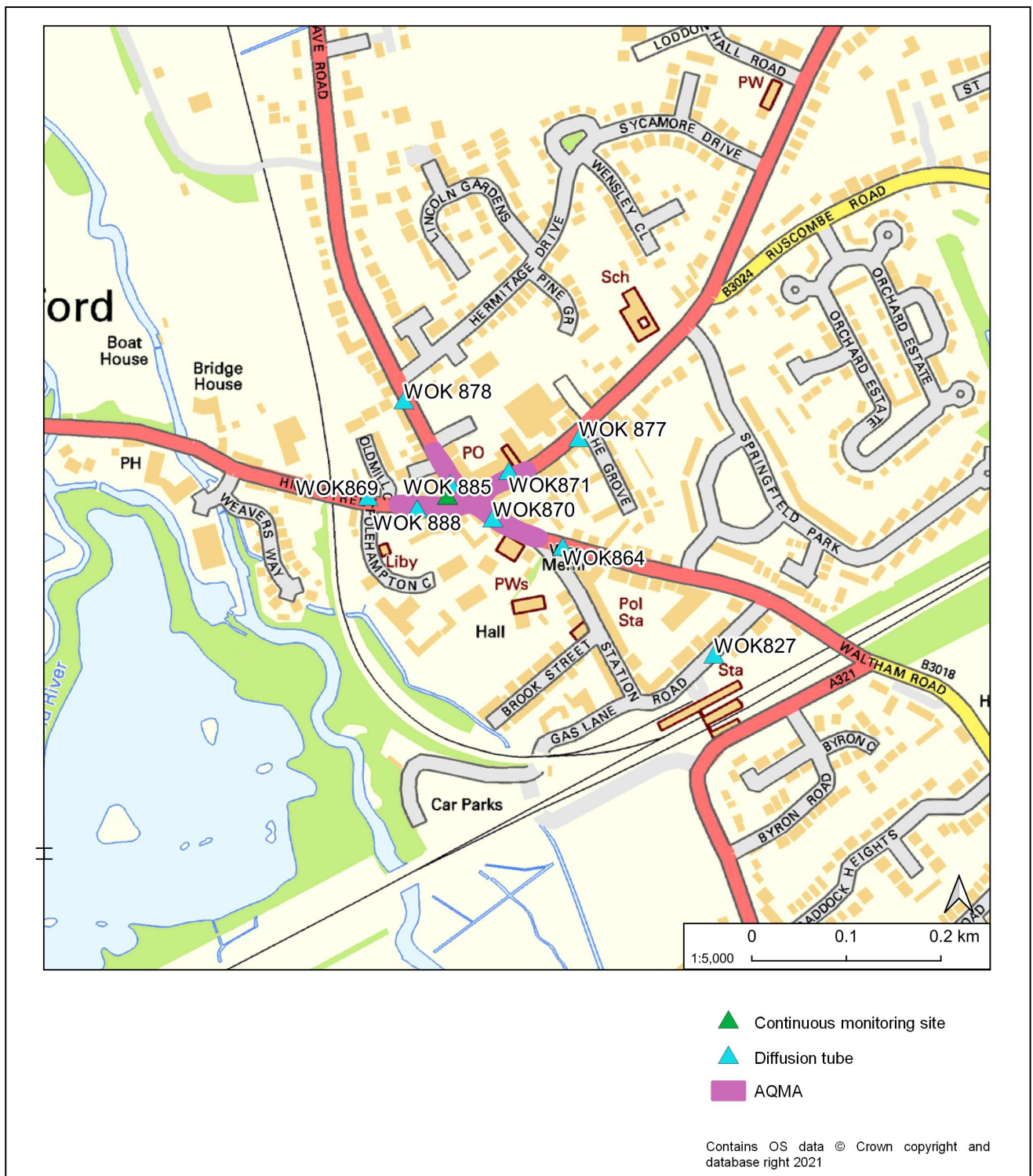
Map 3: The M4 AQMA (East) diffusion tube monitoring locations



Map 4: The M4 AQMA (West) diffusion tube monitoring locations



Map 5: The Twyford AQMA diffusion tube and continuous monitoring locations



Appendix B: QA/QC for the Diffusion Tubes and Continuous Monitor

QA/QC Diffusion Tubes

Wokingham Borough Council uses GRADKO as the supplier used for diffusion tubes within 2022 and the method of preparation, e.g. 20% TEA in water. The monitoring that has been completed is in adherence with the 2022 DEFRA Diffusion Tube Monitoring Calendar.

The Workplace Analysis Scheme for Proficiency (WASP) is an independent analytical performance testing scheme, operated by the Health and Safety Laboratory (HSL). WASP formed a key part of the former UK NO₂ Network's QA/QC and remains an important QA/QC exercise for laboratories supplying diffusion tubes to Local Authorities for use in the context of Local Air Quality Management. The laboratory participants analyse four spiked tubes and report the results to HSL. HSL assign a performance score to each laboratory's result, based on their deviation from the known mass of nitrite in the analyte. The Performance criteria are due to be changed, at present the criteria are based on the z-score method, and equates to the following:

GOOD: Results obtained by the participating laboratory are on average within 13% of the assigned value. This equates to a Rolling Performance Index (RPI) of 169 or less.

ACCEPTABLE: Results obtained by the participating laboratory are on average within 13-26% of the assigned value. This equates to an RPI of 169 - 676.

WARNING: Results obtained by the participating laboratory are on average within 26 – 39% of the assigned value. This equates to an RPI of 676 - 1521.

FAILURE: Results obtained by the participating laboratory differ by more than 39% of the assigned value. This equates to an RPI of greater than 1521.

However, from April 2009, the criteria has been based upon the Rolling Performance Index (RPI) statistic and will be tightened to the following:

GOOD: Results obtained by the participating laboratory are on average within 7.5% of the assigned value. This equates to an RPI of 56.25 or less.

ACCEPTABLE: Results obtained by the participating laboratory are on average within 15% of the assigned value. This equates to an RPI of 225 or less.

UNACCEPTABLE: Results obtained by the participating laboratory differ by more than 15% of the assigned value. This equates to an RPI of greater than 225.

Wokingham Borough Council use Gradko International for the supply and analysis of the nitrogen dioxide diffusion tubes for their non-automatic monitoring programme. Gradko's performance for AIR PT please see Table C.2. Nitrogen Dioxide AIR PT 2019.

Diffusion Tube Bias Adjustment Factors

The diffusion tube data presented within the 2022 ASR have been corrected for bias using an adjustment factor. Bias represents the overall tendency of the diffusion tubes to under or over-read relative to the reference chemiluminescence analyser. LAQM.TG22 provides guidance with regard to the application of a bias adjustment factor to correct diffusion tube monitoring. Triplicate co-location studies can be used to determine a local bias factor based on the comparison of diffusion tube results with data taken from NO_x/NO₂ continuous analysers. Alternatively, the national database of diffusion tube co-location surveys provides bias factors for the relevant laboratory and preparation method.

Wokingham Borough Council have applied a local bias adjustment factor of **0.87** to the 2022 monitoring data. A summary of bias adjustment factors used by Wokingham Borough Council over the past five years is presented in Table B.. The sites which were used were Peach Street in Wokingham Town Centre (AQMA) and Twyford Crossroads (AQMA). Gradko International Ltd of St Martin's House 77 Wales Street Winchester Hampshire is the supplier and analyst of the nitrogen dioxide diffusion tubes. The tubes are analysed by U.V. spectrophotometry. The limit of detection is 20% TEA/Water.

Factor from Local Co-location Studies and Discussion of Choice of Factor to Use

The local co-located sites combined are used as bias adjustment factor 0.83 was applied. A copy of the co-location spreadsheet used is provided below.

In determining the bias adjustment factor for the 2022 data the following was taken into consideration:

Cases where the locally obtained bias adjustment factor may be more representative:

- Where the diffusion tube exposure periods weekly or fortnightly – the Wokingham sites are town centre & Twyford Village Crossroads, and the co-location study is monthly.
- For co-location sites with “good” precision for the diffusion tubes and with high quality chemiluminescence results – It can be seen from Figure C.4 below that both the Wokingham Town Centre & Twyford Village Crossroads co-location study achieved “good” precision, and “good Data Capture” both at 95% & 96%. The chemiluminescence monitors

results (automatic monitoring) are high quality (see the QA/QC of Automatic Monitoring section above).

Cases where the combined (national) bias adjustment factor may be more representative:

- Where the survey consists of tubes exposed over a range of settings, which differ from the co-location site – this is not the case for Wokingham Borough.
- Where the co-location study is for less than nine months, although the diffusion tube monitoring is for a longer period - The Wokingham town centre & Twyford Village Crossroads co-location study and diffusion tube surveys are for a full calendar year (2020).
- Where the automatic analyser has been operated using local, rather than national, QA/QC procedures - The Wokingham town centre chemiluminescence results (automatic monitoring) are high quality, see the QA/QC of Automatic Monitoring section above.
- Where data capture from the automatic analyser is less than 90%, or there have been problems with data quality. Due to Data capture from the Wokingham Town centre automatic monitor was 95% in 2020 (Figure C.3) & the data capture from the Twyford Crossroads automatic monitor was 96% in 2021 (Figure C.3).
- For co-location sites with “poor” precision or laboratories with predominately “poor” precision, as set out on the Review & Assessment Helpdesk website - It can be seen from the table below that both the Wokingham Town Centre & Twyford Village Cross Roads co-location study & achieved “good” precision and the laboratory precision was “good”. See the QA/QC of Diffusion Tube Monitoring section above.

In conclusion, it can be seen from the discussion above that due to the high data capture rate from the both the automatic analyser in Twyford (96%) and Wokingham (95%) that the combined back Local Bias Adjustment Factor was of 0.87 was used.

Table B.1 – Bias Adjustment Factor

Monitoring Year	Local or National	If National, Version of National Spreadsheet	Adjustment Factor
2022	Local		0.87
2021	Local	-	0.83
2020	National	-	0.81
2019	National	09/20	0.88

2018	Local	-	0.95
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Table B.2 – Local Bias Adjustment Calculation

	Local Bias Adjustment Wokingham	Local Bias Adjustment Twyford
Periods used to calculate bias	11	11
Bias Factor A	0.85 (0.79 - 0.93)	0.89 (0.83 - 0.96)
Bias Factor B	18% (8% - 27%)	13% (5% - 21%)
Diffusion Tube Mean ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	32.7	26.2
Mean CV (Precision)	2.8%	3.1%
Automatic Mean ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	27.8	23.2
Data Capture	95%	96%
Adjusted Tube Mean ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	28 (26 - 30)	23 (22 - 25)

Notes:

A combined local bias adjustment factor of **0.87** has been used to bias adjust the 2022 diffusion tube results.

NO₂ Fall-off with Distance from the Road

Wherever possible, monitoring locations are representative of exposure. However, where this is not possible, the NO₂ concentration at the nearest location relevant for exposure has been estimated using the Diffusion Tube Data Processing Tool/NO₂ fall-off with distance calculator available on the LAQM Support website. Where appropriate, non-automatic annual mean NO₂ concentrations corrected for distance are presented in **Error! Reference source not found.** No diffusion tube NO₂ monitoring locations within Wokingham Borough Council required distance correction during 20

QA/QC of Automatic Monitoring

TRL carry out the QA/QC on behalf of Wokingham Borough Council, below is their QA/QC procedure.

Site operation

Routine instrument calibrations are conducted approximately once a month, which involve zero and span checks, a written record of the gas analyser diagnostics and a general visual inspection of all equipment is undertaken. There is a written operating procedure, and a calibration record sheet is completed at every site visit.

Data retrieval and daily data checking

Data from the monitoring station is retrieved and processed on a Campbell CR10x data logger as 15-minute mean data. The logger was interrogated via a Siemens TC35i GSM modem at 8-hourly intervals by the ENVIEW 2000 software hosted at TRL. This was used to retrieve, check and archive data. TRL's internal QA/QC procedures require all data to be backed up on a secure server and all documentation associated with each site to be uniquely identified and securely stored to provide an audit trail. Daily data inspections are undertaken during office hours using the facilities of the Data Management System. Initial observations of the Management System indicate whether the site has been contacted during its nominated 'poll time' overnight. If this has not been successful a manual poll of the site may be required. If this is not successful further investigation of the communications integrity will be required to establish contact with the site modem and data logger. Three-day plots of recorded data are viewed for the requested site, and these are inspected and assessed for continuity, validity, minimum and maximum values, date and time, power failures and general integrity. All anomalies are recorded on the Daily Check sheet, as required. Any anomalies or queries arising from daily inspection of data, or system operation, are brought to the attention of the Project Manager who will evaluate the situation and initialise any necessary action. In the event that the PM is not available, contact will be made with the next available senior person within the monitoring team. Any issues identified with equipment operation will be referred to the client for attention within 24 hours (excluding weekends). On a weekly basis, data are examined using summary statistics and outlier analysis to establish data validity. If unusual data episodes are recorded, these would be routinely examined over longer data periods to establish their impact on trends but would also be cross referenced with data peaks and troughs recorded at other national monitoring stations. In addition, integrity and validity of data logger clock times are checked, and any significant errors recorded in the Data Management System logbook. All site data recorded through the Data Management System is archived on TRL's Network. The data is backed up daily, and the TRL IT Department maintains these data within their long-term and secure archives. This secures all data in the event of any system failure.

Data calibration and ratification

Data is ratified as per AURN recommended procedures. The calibration and ratification process for automatic gas analysers corrects the raw dataset for any drift in the zero baseline and the upper range of the instrument. This is done using Evista software-based calibration and ratification process which incorporates the zero and span check information from the calibration visits. The zero reading recorded during the calibration visits is used to adjust any

offset of the baseline of the data. The difference between the span value obtained between one calibration visit and the next visit is used to calculate a factor. This change is assumed to occur at the same rate over the period between calibrations and as such the factor is used as a linear data scaler. This effectively results in the start of the period having no factor applied and the end of the period being scaled with the full factor with a sliding scale of the factor in-between. After applying the calibration factors, it is essential to screen the data, by visual examination, to see if they contain any unusual measurements or outliers. Errors in the data may occur as a result of equipment failure, human error, power failures, interference or other disturbances. Data validation and ratification is an important step in the monitoring process. Ratification involves considerable knowledge of pollutant behaviour and dispersion, instrumentation characteristics, field experience and judgement. On completion of this data correction procedure, the data set is converted to hourly means and a summary of the data is provided to Wokingham Borough Council at quarterly intervals and a calendar year annual report is prepared.

Independent Site Audits

In addition to these checks an independent site audit is carried out every 12 months to ensure the monitoring equipment is operating correctly. The audits that are carried out utilise procedures that are applied within DEFRA's National Automatic Air Monitoring Networks Quality Control Programme. The efficiency of the analyser's converter is checked, and the analyser is also flow and leak tested. The gas bottle used for calibrations on site is also checked against the auditor's gas bottle to ensure the stability of the gas concentration.

Twyford Village Cross Roads

The site audit for the Twyford Town Centre automatic monitoring unit was carried out on 26th January 2023. A major factor governing the analyser's performance is the NO_x analyser's converter and its ability to reduce the nitrogen dioxide to nitric oxide. The recommended range for instrumentation in the national automatic air monitoring network is in the range of 98% - 102% efficient. Our tests show the converter in the Twyford analyser to be 99.5% efficient at an NO₂ concentration of 271 ppb. Our tests show the converter in the Twyford analyser to be 99.5% efficient at an NO₂ concentration of 138 ppb. These are good result.

To ensure that the analyser was sampling only ambient air the instrument was leak checked. The results were satisfactory, indicating that the analyser sampling systems were free of significant leaks. The analyser exhibited good steady state responses to both zero and span (calibration) gases with acceptable levels of variation (noise).

As mentioned in the introduction, the site zero system produced a very unstable response, therefore the audit zero cylinder was used to determine the zero response of the analyser. In

order to provide reliable zero calibration results, we recommend the zero scrubber materials are changed at the next available opportunity.

The analyser flow rate was measured using a calibrated flow meter and compared against the analyser’s flow rate sensor to evaluate its accuracy. The analyser’s flow rate sensor was within $\pm 10\%$ of the calibrated flow meter and therefore passed this test.

Based on the NOx analyser’s response to the audit standard and audit zero, the concentrations of the stations NO cylinder have been reassessed. This provides an indication of the on-site standards stability (the gas concentration stabilities). For the purpose of these stability checks, the criteria adopted within the national network, and used here, is that the recalculated concentration should lie within 10% of the suppliers stated concentrations. The site cylinder was tested at all four TRL air quality monitoring stations and at each station the cylinder recalculation results were all within 3%. The results of the recalculations are presented in Table B.3.

Table B.3 Twyford Village Crossroads Recalculated Concentrations

TRL Twyford – NO cylinder 21901300298589				
	NOx (ppb)	% change from stated	NO (ppb)	% change from stated
Manufacturers Stated Concentration	445	---	444	---
Recalculated concentration (26/01/23)	457	2.8	448	1.0

The recalculated results for the site NO cylinder 21901300298589 indicate the concentrations are stable, within the definition adopted above, and can therefore reliably be used to scale ambient data.

Certificate of Calibration

Calibration factors and zeros have been produced on the basis of the audit calibrations conducted. All of these calibrations were conducted with transfer standards traceable to national metrology standards. The Certificate of Calibration provides the calibration and zero

response factors for the oxides of nitrogen analysers under test on the day of the audits. It is available upon request from TRL.

Data Management

The following recommendations and comments can be made because of these audits:

- Compare the TRL database scaling factors for the day of the audit with the factors and zeros on the Certificate of Calibration. If a deviation greater than the uncertainty associated with the calibration factor on the certificate is found, investigate the underlying reason and implement suitable data management actions.

Automatic Monitoring Annualisation

All automatic monitoring locations within Wokingham Borough Council recorded data capture of greater than 75% therefore it was not required to annualise any monitoring data.

NO₂ Fall-off with Distance from the Road

Wherever possible, monitoring locations are representative of exposure. However, where this is not possible, the NO₂ concentration at the nearest location relevant for exposure has been estimated using the NO₂ fall-off with distance calculator available on the LAQM Support website. Where appropriate, non-automatic annual mean NO₂ concentrations corrected for distance are presented in **Error! Reference source not found..)**

No automatic NO₂ monitoring locations within Wokingham Borough Council required distance correction during 2022.

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Annual Status Report Appraisal Report

The Report sets out the Annual Status Report, which forms part of the Review & Assessment process required under the Environment Act 1995 and subsequent Regulations.

Wokingham District Council (WDC) have declared three Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) across the district: The Wokingham AQMA declared in 2001 and amended in 2004, The Twyford Crossroads AQMA, declared in 2015 and the Wokingham Town Centre AQMA declared in 2015. All of the AQMAs are declared for exceedances of the annual mean NO₂ objective with the Wokingham AQMA also declared for the 1-hour mean objective for NO₂.

WDC have reviewed all three AQMAs and the potential to revoke the AQMA's. The ASR states that data in 2020 and 2021 should be removed due to COVID-19. As LAQM.TG22 states AQMAs should be considered following three consecutive years of compliance, WOK state that due to the 2020 and 2021 data being effected by COVID-19 only 1 year of the three consecutive years below the 36 µg/m³ limit can be considered and that two further years of data is needed before revoking the AQMAs. This is sufficient for the Wokingham Town Centre AQMA as it has only 3 years of compliance, two of which are during 2020 and 2021. However, for Wokingham AQMA and Twyford Crossroads AQMA, NO₂ concentrations have been below the AQO since 2018 and have shown a downward trend into 2022.

The revocation of an AQMA should be considered following three consecutive years of compliance with the relevant objective as evidenced through monitoring. Where there have been no exceedances for the past five years, local authorities must proceed with plans to revoke the AQMA. The LAQM Technical Guidance 2022 is clear in this respect:

"There should not be any declared AQMAs for which compliance with the relevant objective has been achieved for a consecutive five-year period." (Point 3.57, page 50).

Please be aware that unless a likely exceedance has been identified in the area, Defra will not appraise AQAPs for AQMAs that have been in compliance for five years. Local Authorities will instead be advised to revoke the AQMA.

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AQMAs should identify areas where air quality objectives are not being met or are likely to be at risk of not meeting them. Keeping AQMAs in place longer than required risks diluting their meaning and impacting public trust in LAQM.

Local authorities that do not have an AQMA should continue to monitor for exceedances and should still have a local Air Quality Strategy in place to ensure air quality remains a high-profile issue, thereby enabling a quick response should there be any deterioration in condition. See LAQM Statutory Policy Guidance 2022 for more information. The LAQM Covid Guidance note states: Where 2020 is one of many (i.e. at least three) consecutive years of compliance, this may still be considered for revocation where the supporting evidence is considered suitably robust. If authorities wish to make any changes to AQMAs, whether declaration, amendment or revocation, based upon 2020 data, please contact the LAQM Helpdesk to discuss your approach.

Wokingham District Council undertakes automatic monitoring at two sites one within the Wokingham Town Centre AQMA, the other the Twyford AQMA. Monitoring is undertaken for NO₂. None of these sites recorded exceedances of relevant AQOs. Wokingham District Council also carry out monitoring by 'Low Cost Sensor' (Vortex) at 14 selected schools between February 2022 and 2023 for a minimum of 3 months. While these low cost sensors provide a useful indication of pollutant concentrations, as they are not an established reference method sensor, they cannot be used to inform LAQM decisions which is referenced in the report. It is recommended that results from this monitor are included as a separate appendix. Further information on the use of Low Cost Sensors is included within this FAQ:

<https://laqm.defra.gov.uk/faqs/faq140/>

Non-automatic (passive) monitoring of NO₂ was conducted at 47 sites during 2022, including two sites where a colocation triplicate study was undertaken at each automatic monitor. No exceedances of the annual mean objective were recorded. The ASR states that overall, there has been a slight increase in annual mean concentrations of NO₂ in 2022 compared to 2021 bar one monitoring site. However, all 2022 concentrations were below the pre-pandemic 2019 concentrations except for one site.

Some QA/QC procedures have been applied with details of automatic monitoring QAQC procedures as well as passive monitoring. A local bias adjustment factor was used, with detailed justification behind this. The report provides a clear breakdown of historical data

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(and maps) of each monitoring site in detail. Annualisation has also been undertaken at all required sites.

There are some discrepancies for the naming of AQMAs particularly the Wokingham AQMA as detailed on the LAQM portal and the M4 AQMA as referenced in the ASR. Additionally some diffusion tube monitoring sites are not consistent in the site classification of kerbside or roadside given the distance to kerb values.

There is an appropriate level of detail on the Progress and Impact of Measures to address air quality, though this could be more specific to the measures taken during 2022 to tackle air quality within table 2.2 which replicates much of the data in the 2022 ASR. Although sufficient information on the ongoing measures and measures to be progressed and discussed outside of Table 2.2. Priorities during the next reporting year are clearly outlined.

The report contains discussion on existing measures to improve air quality that would also act to reduce PM_{2.5} emissions.

The ASR has been signed off by the director of public health.

On the basis of the evidence provided by the local authority the conclusions reached are **acceptable** for all sources and pollutants. Following the completion of this report, Wokingham District Council should submit an annual status report for 2024.

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Commentary

The report is well structured, detailed, and provides some information specified in the Guidance. The following comments are designed to help inform future reports.

1. There is justification to revoke the Wokingham and Twyford Crossroads AQMA despite the ASR stating a further two years of data is required. Although TG.22 states three consecutive years, WDC have stated that data from 2020 and 2021 should be excluded in this period. This would still give three years below the AQO, however the trends in data showing a decrease from 2018 at all monitoring sites in the AQMA. As such there is considered sufficient evidence to suggest that NO₂ concentrations will not be exceeded in the Wokingham and Twyford Crossroads AQMA. Although there is merit in the exclusion of data from 2020 and 2021 due to COVID, given the concentrations within the Wokingham and Twyford Crossroads AQMA prior 2020 and the increase between 2022, 2021 and 2020 with all results still well below the AQO, there is sufficient data to revoke the AQMA. It is considered that three consecutive years of data from 2022 is not necessary to revoke the AQMA. The 2024 ASR should look to revoke the Wokingham and Twyford Crossroads AQMA or discuss the data with the LAQM Helpdesk for support.
2. WDC should confirm if the information on UK-Air regarding their AQMAs is up to date however this should be reviewed as the description of the AQMA on the LAQM portal and in the 2023 ASR compared to UK-Air differs slightly.
3. WDC have used a different name for the Wokingham AQMA in the ASR, referring it to the M4 AQMA despite the LAQM portal and UK-Air stating the Wokingham AQMA. This should be clarified and consistent in future reports.
4. Table 2.2 Progress on measures should be regularly updated, the details within the 2023 ASR are similar to the 2022 ASR despite many measures being progressed. It should also be noted that WDC AQAP is to be developed over the next year, this is welcomed.
5. There are some formatting errors and incorrect links within the report, these should be reviewed in future reports.
6. WOK841 is stated to be 0.2m from the kerb. This would classify the site as a kerbside site not a roadside site which is currently states in the ASR in Table A.2. this is also the case for WOK870. WOK874 states the distance to kerb and relevant exposure is 0 for both. Exceedances of the AQO in Table A.4 should be in bold. These should be clarified in future reports.

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7. Detailed justification over the bias adjustment factor is provided, this is welcomed.
8. Trends of annual mean NO₂ concentrations are clearly presented in detail and discussed and a robust comparison with air quality objectives is provided.
9. Maps of the diffusion tube network are clear and comprehensive, showing the AQMA boundaries and monitoring undertaken in this area.
10. Measures to address PM_{2.5} are detailed within the ASR.
11. Monitoring of PM_{2.5} at 14 schools was undertaken in 2022, although this was undertaken using 'low cost sensors' the results would be welcomed in an additional appendix in future reports.
12. It is not clearly stated whether Diffusion Tubes have been deployed in line with the Defra Calendar. Please clearly state this in future ASRs.
13. The ASR has been signed off by a director of public health, this is welcomed.

This commentary is not designed to deal with every aspect of the report. It highlights a number of issues that should help the local authority either in completing the Progress Report adequately (if required) or in carrying out future Review & Assessment work.

Issues specifically related to this appraisal can be followed up by returning the attached comment form to Defra, Welsh Assembly Government, Scottish Government or DOE.

For any other queries please contact the Local Air Quality Management Helpdesk:
 Telephone: 0800 0327 953
 Email: LAQMHelpdesk@uk.bureauveritas.com

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Appraisal Response Comment Form

Contact Name:	
Contact Telephone number:	
Contact email address:	

Comments on appraisal/Further information:

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LAQM Guidance Notes – 2023

Changes to the Local Air Quality Management Framework

Through the Environment Act 2021 and updated Local Air Quality Management Statutory Policy Guidance 2022, the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) framework has been considerably strengthened. This page highlights some of the changes for delivery to help you prioritise action for improved air quality:

1. Strengthened Criteria for Air Quality Action Plans (AQAPs)

Where a Local Authority is not meeting air quality objectives, they must create an AQAP setting out their intentions to improve air quality in the area. Without current action plans in place, Local Authorities risk negatively impacting their communities by not proactively working to reduce air pollution in the area.

The requirements and guidance around AQAPs were recently strengthened under the Environment Act 2021 and revised LAQM Statutory policy guidance, which Local Authorities must have regard to. The key criteria for action plans are that they:

- set out the measures they will take to secure the achievement, and maintenance, of air quality standards and objectives
- specify a date by which each measure will be carried out
- are revised no later than every five years

2. New Escalation Process for Reporting

Government is committed to increasing transparency by requiring timely and accurate publication of Annual Status Reports (ASRs) and AQAPs by local authorities, as set out in the [Environmental Improvement Plan 2023](#). These documents are public-facing and serve to keep local communities informed of the steps being taken by their local authority to improve air quality.

To ensure ASRs and AQAPs are delivered on time, Defra has introduced a new reminder and warning letter system for Local Authorities. This system was set out in the [LAQM Statutory Policy Guidance 2022](#) and started to apply from 30 June 2023.

Local Authority:	Wokingham District Council
Reference:	ASR23-1649
Date of issue	July 2023

If reporting requirements continue to be missed, the matter can be escalated to a Section 85 Secretary of State direction to the relevant Local Authority Chief Executive specifying action. You are therefore advised to ensure all statutory reporting duties for LAQM are met on time.

3. Public Bodies Required to Contribute to Action Plans

The Environment Act 2021 amended the Environment Act 1995 to increase the number of public bodies that have a duty to co-operate with Local Authorities for LAQM. Air quality partners are certain other public bodies that a Local Authority identifies as having responsibility for a source of emissions contributing to an exceedance of local air quality objectives. This could be a neighbouring authority, National Highways, or the Environment Agency. Once identified, there is a statutory requirement for such public bodies to engage and to contribute actions they will take to secure achievement of the local air quality objective and to maintain achievement thereafter.

All tiers of local Government are also now required by law to collaborate to address exceedances of Air Quality Objectives. County councils, the Mayor of London and combined authorities have similar duties to air quality partners. The difference is that, when requested, they must contribute to an action plan being prepared by a Local Authority, regardless of whether the local authority has identified them as being responsible for a source of emissions.

Under the new legislation, you may choose to request the support of another public body in the development of an AQAP and the same may be requested of your organisation.

Please refer to the LAQM Statutory Policy Guidance 2022 for more information. Should you require further assistance, please contact the LAQM Helpdesk: <https://laqm.defra.gov.uk/air-quality/featured/england-exc-london-policy-guidance/>

Web: <http://laqm.defra.gov.uk/helpdesks.html>

FAQs: <http://laqm.defra.gov.uk/laqm-faqs/>

Tel: 0800 032 7953

Email: laqmhelpdesk@uk.bureauveritas.com

The Air Quality Hub also provides free online information and is a knowledge sharing resource for local authority air quality professionals: <https://www.airqualityhub.co.uk/>

Local Authority:	Wokingham District Council
Reference:	ASR23-1649
Date of issue	July 2023

Appraisal Response Comment Form

Contact Name:	
Contact Telephone number:	
Contact email address:	UKLAQMAppraisals@aecom.com

Comments on appraisal/Further information:

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WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

2023 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR)

In fulfilment of Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 Local Air Quality
Management

Date: June, 2023

Information	Wokingham Borough Council Details
Local Authority Officer	Residential & Environmental Team
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Report Reference Number	WOKASR2023
Date	June 2023 Report prepared by Public Protection Partnership on behalf of Wokingham Borough Council

Executive Summary: Air Quality in Our Area

Air Quality in Wokingham Borough Council

Air pollution is associated with a number of adverse health impacts. It is recognised as a contributing factor in the onset of heart disease and cancer. Air Pollution can be harmful to everyone, it mainly affects particularly affects the most vulnerable in society: children, the elderly, and those with existing heart and lung conditions. There is also often a strong correlation with equalities issues because areas with poor air quality are also often less affluent areas^{1,2}.

Poor Air Quality is also a contributory role in mortality. The mortality burden of air pollution within the UK is equivalent to 29,000 to 43,000 deaths at typical ages³, with a total estimated healthcare cost to the NHS and social care of £157 million in 2017⁴.

The major source of air quality pollutants in Wokingham Borough is road transport, and the main pollutant of concern is nitrogen dioxide (NO₂). Three Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) have been declared for exceedances of the Annual Mean NO₂ Objective. These are located in Wokingham Town Centre, Twyford Centre Crossroads, and 60m either side of, the M4 throughout the whole of the borough ([Local Authority Details - Defra, UK](#)). (See Appendix D).

The 47 diffusion tube sites of NO₂ levels in Wokingham borough have shown a decreasing trend since the 2018. No diffusion tube sites located within Wokingham exceeded the Annual Mean Objective. No diffusion tube results were recorded above 60µg/m³, indicating no exceedances of the 1 hour NO₂ objective.

The continuous monitoring unit in Peach Street Wokingham, within the Wokingham AQMA, recorded an Annual Mean NO₂ level of 27.1µg/m³, which meets the Annual Mean NO₂

¹ Public Health England. Air Quality: A Briefing for Directors of Public Health, 2017

² Defra. Air quality and social deprivation in the UK: an environmental inequalities analysis, 2006

³ Defra. Air quality appraisal: damage cost guidance, January 2023

⁴ Public Health England. Estimation of costs to the NHS and social care due to the health impacts of air pollution: summary report, May 2018

Objective ($40\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) was not exceeded. The continuous monitoring also met the 1 hour NO_2 objective.

Within the Twyford AQMA the continuous monitoring recorded an Annual Mean NO_2 level of $23.6\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, which also met the objective. The continuous monitoring also met the 1 hour NO_2 objective.

Furthermore, there were no exceedances of the Annual Mean NO_2 Objective from the monitoring sites within the M4 AQMA.

Based on the all the NO_2 readings gathered in 2022 no extensions or amendments to the AQMAs are required nor any new AQMAs to be declared.

The Air Quality Action Plans (AQAPs) for the Wokingham AQMA's were published in March 2018, and are currently in the to be started or implementation stage. Some areas have been completed, and some are still unfortunately waiting for funding. A review is currently under way for updating the AQAP, and a working group of stakeholders has been working towards developing a new AQAP plan.

Environmental Health Public Protection Partnership (PPP) has continued to work in conjunction with the Transport Policy Team with the implementation of Local Transport Plan 3 (2011 – 2026). The Local Transport Plan (LTP) acknowledges the link with the M4 AQMA and any future AQAPs. A key objective of the Strategic Environmental Assessment for LTP3 was to improve air quality. LTP Strategies continue to be reviewed and the LTP 4 is due to be published in the 2023/24. The Local Plan Update (2026-2036) has commenced following which the next Transport Vision review will take place along with the next LTP.)([Wokingham Local Transport Plan Vision.pdf](#))

Actions to Improve Air Quality

Whilst air quality has improved significantly in recent decades, there are some areas where local action is still needed to protect people and the environment from the effects of air pollution.

The Environmental Improvement Plan⁵ sets out actions that will drive continued improvements to air quality and to meet the new national interim and long-term $\text{PM}_{2.5}$

⁵ Defra. Environmental Improvement Plan 2023, January 2023

targets. The National Air Quality Strategy, due to be published in 2023, will provide more information on local authorities' responsibilities to work towards these new targets and reduce PM_{2.5} in their areas. The Road to Zero⁶ details the approach to reduce exhaust emissions from road transport through a number of mechanisms. This is extremely important given that the majority of AQMAs are designated due to elevated concentrations heavily influenced by transport emissions.

The 2019 Clean Air Strategy⁷ sets out the case for action, with goals to reduce exposure to harmful pollutants. The Road to Zero⁸ sets out the approach to reduce exhaust emissions from road transport through a number of mechanisms which are extremely important given that the majority of Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) are designated due to elevated concentrations heavily influenced by transport emissions.

All planning applications are scrutinised for their air quality impact (dust, fires and vehicles) and potential to introduce new receptors into areas of existing poor air quality in the Borough. Air quality assessments have been provided where necessary and appropriate mitigation requested. Applications have included several major residential and mixed use residential and commercial schemes, traffic flow changes to road schemes, new relief road schemes and any other applications which may have an impact to the AQMAs and other hotspot locations.

Environmental Health Officers have received appropriate training in fulfilling their LAQM duties and are part of appropriate internal working groups to ensure that air quality impacts in specific projects or areas of highways works are considered.

A joint application with Bracknell Forest and West Berkshire Councils to the Air Quality Grant Scheme 2020 was made and we were successful in securing grant funding of £259,000 for the project of creating an anti-idling campaign, measuring PM_{2.5} at the schools located near/within the AQMAs and looking at the behaviour change of our residents. In 2021 an Air Quality Officer was appointed and successfully ran the "Bumper Stickers Competition", (Figure S.4), where children were asked to create a sticker to put in the rear of a car to

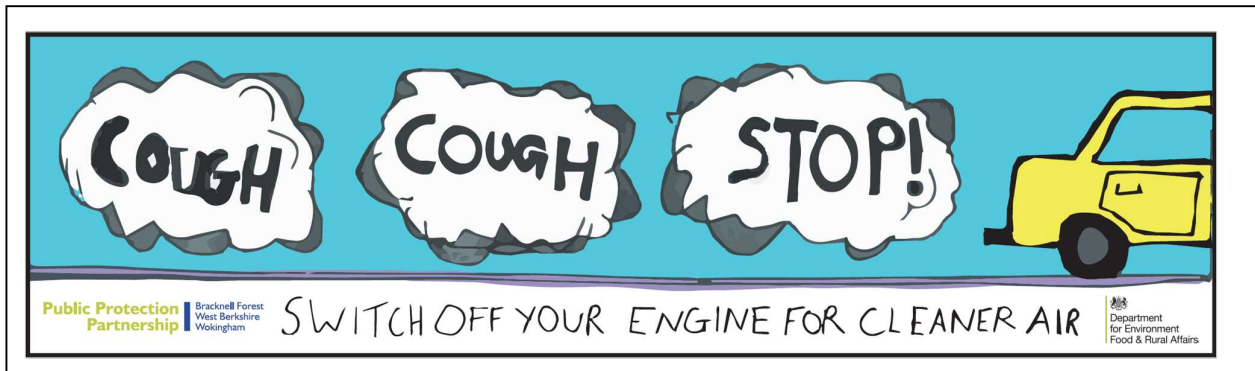
⁶ DfT. The Road to Zero: Next steps towards cleaner road transport and delivering our Industrial Strategy, July 2018

⁷ Defra. Clean Air Strategy, 2019

⁸ DfT. The Road to Zero: Next steps towards cleaner road transport and delivering our Industrial Strategy, July 2018

remind the people behind to switch off their engines. (<https://publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk/environmental-health/air-quality/anti-idling-bumper-sticker-schools-competition/>). In 2022 the PM_{2.5} School monitoring and Behaviour Change project started and the results for the PM_{2.5} project can be seen in Appendix C The results of the behaviours change project will be available in the 2024 ASR.

Figure S.1-The Bumper Sticker



MyJourney within Wokingham Borough was successful and awarded a DEFRA Grant in both 2020, 2021 & 23 which is being put towards measures 10, 20, & 38 on the AQAP.

During Clean Air Day in 2019 Wokingham Borough erected highway banners in both Wokingham and Twyford to ask drivers to cut their engines and stop idling (see Figure S.2). There are also several Green Lamp Posts in Twyford (see Figure S.3).

An anti-idling competition was run by MyJourney in 2020, along with PPP to help the children become aware of idling and how it can cause pollution. . As the banners were so popular with Schools and the Local Parishes this was continued by re-erecting them during 2021 outside schools and areas where traffic idles such as the Twyford Railway station. (See Figure S.1.) As these banners were so popular, competitions continued to be run in 2022 and more banners were produced and continue to be displayed at the winning schools or outside areas where there is idling.

Conclusions and Priorities

In conclusion there were no exceedances in the last 12 months within the Twyford Cross Roads, Wokingham Town Centre and M4 AQMAs, and there has not been for 5 years in the M4 AQMA, 3 years in both the Wokingham Town Centre and Twyford AQMAs. According

to DEFRA it is not appropriate to revoke any of the AQMAs as of yet as we will need 3 consecutive years of, pandemic free NO₂ data below the level of 36µg/m³. The data collected indicated that no further extension are needed to be made to the AQMAs and we do not need to look at declaring anymore.

The Air Quality Action Plan is currently being implemented with more being progressed each year, which can be seen in Table 2.2. This is also in the process of being re-written with a stakeholder group.

One of Wokingham Borough Council's priorities is to "tackle traffic congestion in specific areas of the Borough" and one of its underpinning principles is to "improve health, wellbeing and quality of life".

The following local priorities have been set in Wokingham Borough:

- Continuing the joint working between the Public Health and Environmental Health teams and links within the local Public Health Shared Team, considering the inclusion of air quality in the Public Health Work Plan and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy;
- Continuing to work within the unitary authority with the Transport Policy and Highways Teams;
- Continue the implementation of the AQAP for the Wokingham Town Centre and Twyford Crossroads, where funding allows;
- Increase the community awareness of air pollution through involvement in Clean Air Day;
- Continue the continuous monitoring in both Twyford and Peach Street and passive air quality monitoring programmes, also looking at alternative methods for reducing the NO₂;
- Working with new companies to start the innovative project to help reduce NO₂ in 2022/2023;

The following challenges have been identified:

- Budget allocation for progressing measures in the AQAP and actions however funding applications will be applied for where possible/appropriate; and
- Linking of the Public Health Outcome Framework and health profiles to air quality in order to show any causal relationship.
- The pandemic.

Local Engagement and How to get involved

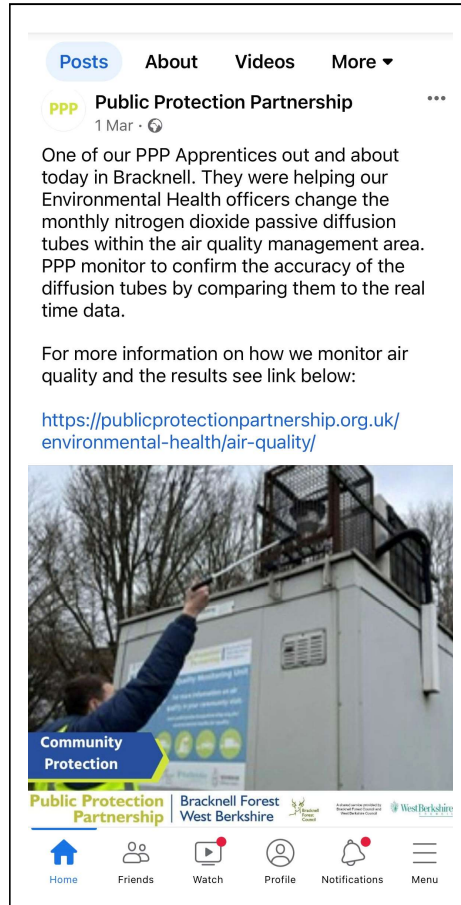
For further details on air quality in Wokingham Borough, please refer to our website

at <https://publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk/environmental-health/air-quality>

- Public Protection Partnership [Vehicle Idling - PPP \(publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk\)](https://publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk)
- Domestic Fuel information [Air Quality \(Domestic Solid Fuels Standards\) \(England\) Regulations 2020 - PPP \(publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk\)](https://publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk/air-quality-domestic-solid-fuels-standards-england-regulations-2020-ppp)
- Visit our MyJourney website - Your one stop destination for travel information and advice in and around Wokingham borough: <http://www.myjourneywokingham.com/>
- Individuals or members of local groups are invited to share any ideas they have to cut NO₂ levels in Wokingham Borough by emailing:
environmental.health@wokingham.gov.uk
- Other useful websites include:
[Home - Defra, UK](#)
[JSNA \(Joint Strategic Needs Assessment\) \(wokingham.gov.uk\)](https://wokingham.gov.uk/jsna)
- There are a number of ways members of the public can help to improve local air quality:
Walk or cycle short distances of less than one or two miles rather than driving
- Search for car sharing opportunities using the Liftshare UK <https://liftshare.com/uk> or Faxi (<https://fazi.co.uk/>)
- Use the bus or train regularly and keep up-to-date with the latest bus routes timetables.

We are also on Social Media including Twitter and **Facebook** [@PublicProtectionPartnershipUK](#), **Twitter** [@PublicPP_UK](#)

Figure S.2 - A Social media Facebook post about the AQ



Local Responsibilities and Commitment

This ASR was prepared by the Environmental Quality Team of Public Protection Partnership for Wokingham Borough Council with the support and agreement of the following officers and departments:

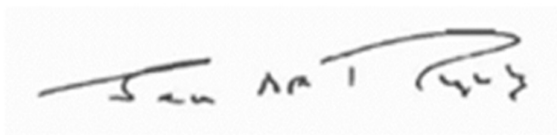
Highways Authority,

Environmental Health & Public Health,

Planning Authority

This ASR has been approved by: Sean Murphy

This ASR has been signed off by the manager of Public Protection Partnership

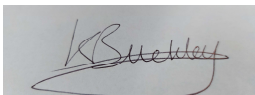


Sean Murphy

Public Protection Manager

This ASR has been approved by: Karen Buckley

This ASR has been signed off by the Head of Public Health.



Karen Buckley

Head of Public Health

If you have any comments on this ASR please send them to Environmental Health at:

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Local Air Quality Management

This report provides an overview of air quality in Wokingham Borough Council during 2022. It fulfils the requirements of Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) as set out in Part IV of the Environment Act (1995), as amended by the Environment Act (2021), and the relevant Policy and Technical Guidance documents.

The LAQM process places an obligation on all local authorities to regularly review and assess air quality in their areas, and to determine whether or not the air quality objectives are likely to be achieved. Where an exceedance is considered likely the local authority must declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and prepare an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) setting out the measures it intends to put in place in order to achieve and maintain the objectives and the dates by which each measure will be carried out. This Annual Status Report (ASR) is an annual requirement showing the strategies employed by Wokingham Borough Council to improve air quality and any progress that has been made.

The statutory air quality objectives applicable to LAQM in England are presented in Table E.1.

1 Actions to Improve Air Quality

Air Quality Management Areas

Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) are declared when there is an exceedance or likely exceedance of an air quality objective. After declaration, the authority should prepare an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) within 18 months. The AQAP should specify how air quality targets will be achieved and maintained, and provide dates by which measures will be carried out.

A summary of AQMAs declared by Wokingham Borough Council can be found in Table 1.1. The table presents a description of the 3 AQMAs that are currently designated within Wokingham Borough Council Appendix D: Map(s) of Monitoring Locations and AQMAs provides maps of AQMAs and also the air quality monitoring locations in relation to the AQMAs. The air quality objectives pertinent to the current AQMA designations are as follows:

- NO₂ annual mean.

We have looked into proposing to revoke the AQMAs however the DEFRA Guidance LAQM.TG22 states *“The revocation of an AQMA should be considered following **three consecutive years of compliance** with the relevant objective as evidenced through monitoring. Where NO₂ monitoring is completed using diffusion tubes, to account for the inherent uncertainty associated with the monitoring method, it is recommended that revocation of an AQMA should be considered following **three consecutive years** of annual mean NO₂ concentrations being lower than 36µg/m³ (i.e. within 10% of the annual mean NO₂ objective). There should not be any declared AQMAs for which compliance with the relevant objective has been achieved for a consecutive five-year period.”* We cannot use COVID year data for 2020 and 2021 therefore Wokingham have achieved 1 year so far under the limit of 36 µg/m³ for both the M4 and Twyford AQMA's as all the tubes within these areas were below 36 µg/m³, however in the Wokingham Town Centre AQMA diffusion tube (WOK838) Giggling Spring was 37.2 µg/m³. See Table 2.0 for the successful years to date post COVID.

Table 2.0 – Maximum NO₂ level reached in each AQMA (µg/m³)

AQMA	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	Total consecutive years below 36 (µg/m³)
M4	21.5					1
Twyford Cross Roads	32.8					1
Wokingham Town Centre	37.2					0

Table 1.1 – Declared Air Quality Management Areas

AQMA Name	Date of Declaration	Pollutants and Air Quality Objectives	One Line Description	Is air quality in the AQMA influenced by roads controlled by Highways England?	Level of Exceedance: Declaration	Level of Exceedance: Current Year	Number of Years Compliant with Air Quality Objective	Name and Date of AQAP Publication	Web Link to AQAP <i>(Page 12)</i>
M4 AQMA	Declared 2001, Amended 2004 (WOK841)	NO2 Annual Mean	Zone 60m either side of the M4 from the Councils boundaries with RBC & RBW&M throughout the borough and 10m either side of the A329 (M)/A3290. The AQMA was reduced to the Councils boundaries with RBC & RBW&M throughout the borough and 10m either side of the A329(M)/A3290 including an extended area along the A329 Reading Rd where it underpasses the M4.	YES	69 (2001) 56 (2004)	24.4	5 years (2018 to 2022)	Refer to the LTP3	Microsoft Word - WOK ASR 2022 v2.0 (publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk)

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M4 AQMA	Declared 2001, Amended 2004 (WOK841)	NO ₂ 1 Hour Mean	Zone 60m either side of the M4 from the Councils boundaries with RBC & RBW&M throughout the borough and 10m either side of the A329 (M)/A3290.	YES	228 (percentile of hourly mean)	n/a	n/a	WBC AQAP 2017	Microsoft Word - WOK ASR 2022 v2.0 (publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk)
Twyford Crossroads AQMA	Declared November 2015 (WOK 850)	NO ₂ Annual Mean	Residential and commercial properties along parts of High St in the west, Wargrave Rd in the northwest, London Rd in the north-east and Church St the south-east	NO	54	32.8	5 years (2018 to 2022)	WBC AQAP 2017	Microsoft Word - WOK ASR 2022 v2.0 (publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk)
Wokingham Town Centre AQMA	Declared 2015 (WOK838)	NO ₂ Annual Mean	Residential and commercial properties along a small part of Reading Rd and Station Rd in the northwest, along Shute End and into Broad St and Denmark St in the south-west and Peach St into London Rd in the west.	NO	52	37.2	3 years (2020 to 2023)	WBC AQAP 2017	Microsoft Word - WOK ASR 2022 v2.0 (publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk)

Wokingham Borough Council **confirm the information on UK-Air regarding their AQMA(s) is up to date.**

Wokingham Borough Council **confirm that all current AQAPs have been submitted to Defra.**

Progress and Impact of Measures to address Air Quality in Wokingham Borough Council

DEFRA's appraisal of last year's ASR concluded that the 2021 report was well structured, detailed, and provides the information specified in the Guidance.

DEFRA's comments are as follows:

1. Both the annual mean and 1-hour mean Air Quality Objectives for NO₂ were complied with at all monitoring locations within 2021.
2. Comments from last year's ASR have been mentioned and addressed. This is welcomed and encouraged for future ASRs.
3. The Council has an extensive NO₂ monitoring strategy. As recommended in the appraisal of last year's report, monitoring of other pollutants such as PM₁₀/PM_{2.5} while not compulsory, could be considered to better inform how to tackle PM_{2.5} pollution. The report includes detailed discussion of the measures the council are taking to address PM_{2.5}. Links are provided and discussed in regard to the Public Health Outcomes Framework and the fraction of mortality attributable to PM_{2.5} emissions (percentage proportion), which is welcomed. Comparisons to the regional and national average would be beneficial to include in future reports.

Actioned: See Table 2.3 for this information.

4. Sufficient detail is included in the QA/QC procedures for both the automatic analysers and the NO₂ diffusion tubes. Calculations for local bias adjustment and annualisation are outlined in detail. Distance correction was not required. Data showing the choice of bias adjustment factors for previous years, and discussion around the choice to apply the local factor this year, has been included. Derivation of and a direct comparison against the national factor has not been demonstrated. It would be beneficial to include this in future reports. A figure showing the national bias adjustment factor determination would be welcomed.

Actioned: See Appendix C for both the 2022 national (0.83) and local bias correction value (0.87).

5. The Council have provided clear mapping of their automatic and diffusion tube monitoring network in relation to their AQMAs, as well as detailed trend graphs, which is commendable. However, graphs appear to only be included for monitoring sites that are within the AQMAs. In future years, it is recommended that the Council also include

another graph to present trends at the monitoring locations outside of the AQMAs. *For all graphs see Appendix A.*

6. The Council has included a discussion and review of its AQMAs, which is well informed due to its extensive monitoring network. Total revocation of the Wokingham/M4 AQMA (for both objectives) has been considered and decisions has been made to keep the AQMA in place for now. This is supplemented by commentary around compliance data through 2018 - 2021 likely having been affected by a mix of COVID-19 restrictions and the M4 Smart Motorway conversion. This is accepted, and if further years of compliance with the relevant objectives are monitored, full revocation of the AQMA should be considered. As exceedances of the annual mean NO₂ AQO were monitored in the other two AQMAs as recently as 2019, it is understood and welcomed that these are to remain in force at this time.

Actioned: See Section 2.1 for more details.

7. The Council should ensure consistency between future reports and their AQMA records on the LAQM Portal. The 2022 ASR refers to the 'M4 AQMA', however this is recorded as 'Wokingham AQMA' on the LAQM Portal. Graph A.1. within the 2022 ASR also refers incorrectly to 'Wokingham AQMA' as it presents data for Wokingham Town Centre AQMA. This should be amended in future ASRs. In addition, the 2022 ASR also sets out that the Wokingham/M4 AQMA is declared for both the annual mean and hourly NO₂ AQO, however the LAQM Portal record shows declaration for the annual mean AQO only. The Council should update their LAQM Portal records accordingly.

Actioned: The portal has been updated.

8. The Council has taken forward a number of important measures and the progress being made on other measures is very detailed, which is commendable. However, information for certain measures (category, funding status, estimated cost, and measure status) is missing within Table 2.2. This should be provided, where possible, in future reports.

Actioned: Please see the completed Table 2.2

9. Table 2.1 does not include a link to the relevant AQAP for each AQMA, a link is instead included to the AQMA webpages on the UK AIR website. A link to the relevant AQAP documents themselves or a note as to how members of public can access these should be provided in future reports.

[Microsoft Word - WOK ASR 2022 v2.0 \(publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk\)](#)

10. An Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) that applies to the Wokingham/M4 AQMA is not referenced within the 2022 ASR. It is noted that the latest AQAP for the Wokingham Town Centre and Twyford Crossroads AQMAs was published in 2017. The Environment Act requires that a local authority must, for the purpose of achieving AQOs in an AQMA designated by that authority, prepare an action plan in relation to that area. The Act also requires that Action Plans be periodically reviewed. While no time limit is explicitly set within the Act, ideally this is expected to occur no later than every five years.

Actioned: A stakeholder working group has been set up and is reviewing/creating a new action plan for the AQMA's. This will continue in 2023/2024 with the involvement of the Local Authority Health and Well-being Team.

11. The report is well structured, detailed, and provides the information specified in the Guidance.

Wokingham Borough Council has taken forward a number of direct measures during the current reporting year of 2022 in pursuit of improving local air quality. Details of all measures completed, in progress or planned are set out in Table 1.2.

43 measures are included within Table 1.2, with the type of measure and the progress Wokingham Borough Council have made during the reporting year of 2022 presented. Where there have been, or continue to be, barriers restricting the implementation of the measure, these are also presented within Table 1.2.

More detail on these measures can be found in their respective Action Plans LTP3. Key completed measures are:

- Construction on phase two of the Winnersh Relief Road to connect the B3030 King Street Lane to the A329 Reading Road, was completed in early 2022. This is part of the Council's multi million-pound strategic new roads programme, which is being built to assist in improving network resilience to support the growth of the borough. The project has reduced the level of traffic passing through Winnersh Crossroads.
- Active Travel Fund Tranche 2 has been developed further with the selected scheme (Woodley to Reading Active Travel Route) consulted on in February 2022. Following consultation further design work is required to deliver a scheme more acceptable to the public.

- Active Travel Fund Tranche 3 has awarded £2.95m to the borough to enable us to complete the route from Woodley to Reading. As described above, we are currently redesigning the scheme but hope to complete implementation of some of the scheme in the next 12 months.
- Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for Wokingham Borough is underway with consultation on public views regarding walking and cycling in the borough completed. As part of the LCWIP outputs are cycling and walking network plans which identify preferred routes and core zones for further development and a prioritised schedule of infrastructure was in June 2022.
- In 2022 we complete personalised travel planning for new communities and delivered these enhanced PTP projects covering two development sites in 2022.
- Our Electric Vehicle (EV) charge points have continued to be expanded with the addition of 64 new publicly available charge points made available in 2022 bringing the total to 318. In addition, the Council's Executive approved on-street and in public car park charge point provision using the DfT's Office for Zero Emission Vehicles' On-street Residential Chargepoint Scheme. The bid document for this has been prepared though needs amendment following a change in the bidding criteria; once completed this should add approximately 60 charge points (locations to be confirmed) <https://app.vendelectric.com/>
- My Journey Promotion of active travel and travel choices website is on-going. There were 79,821 visitors to the website. We have continued to promote active travel through our social media feeds, and our followers increased to 1,978 (Facebook) and 1,048 (Twitter) in 2022/23 (financial year) with our top Facebook post reaching 10,878 people.
- MyJourney has continued to partner with Love to Ride and once again ran four cycling campaigns across the borough from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023. They achieved the following
 - 30,892 rides logged
 - 407,943 miles
 - 12,546 transport trips
 - 65,375 transport miles
 - 268 new user accounts

- During the Cycle September Event, they also had an excellent turn out and saved 6,335 lbs of CO2.
 - 42 workplaces participated
 - 494 riders registered for the challenge
 - 46,259 miles logged
 - 3,754 trips logged
 - 1,814 trips for transport
 - 9,892 transport miles

- Bikeability figures for 2022 – 2023 :
 - Bikeability Level 1 courses (training off road): April 2022 – February 2023: **161 places** delivered (0 booked for March)
 - Bikeability Level 1/Level 2 courses (on road): April 2022 – Feb 2023: 1360 places + 225 booked for March = **1585 places**
 - Bikeability Level 3 (advanced) courses: April 2022 – February 2023: 56 places delivered + 41 booked in March = **97 places**
 - Bikeability Learn to Ride (teaching younger children to ride): 236 places delivered + 30 in March = **266 children trained**
 - Also new - Bikeability Family training: **15 families trained** (included 19 adults + 27 children.)

- Wokingham have also been awarded a larger Bikeability Grant by the Department for Transport for 2022 – 2023: a grant of £77,500 to train 1,800 children on Bikeability Courses + £5,832 for Learn to Ride training, making a total of **£83,332**.

- Bus services are continuing to suffer significantly from reduced patronage due to Covid-19. Reading Buses are continuing to operate services, though we have seen some reduced in frequency or cancelled completely due to lack of use. We continue to work with the bus operators to try to maintain a good level of service.

- WBC has just completed the Coppid Beech Park and Ride facility and continue to expand the Winnersh Triangle Park and Ride site. In addition, the Thames Valley Park and Ride site is also available for use. Despite this, there are currently only buses serving the Thames Valley Park and Ride due to this low usage and low expected uptake in the near future.

- We have completed our Local Bus Service Improvement Plan as required by the new national bus strategy. This will help us to enable increases in bus use and better, more reliable.

In 2022 WBC was awarded funding by DEFRA to MyJourney to complete Air Quality education work in school in and around its AQMA's. The borough has appointed an Air Quality Active Travel Officer who has been working with schools to raise awareness of the issues and encourage increased active travel. As part of the initiative, they were to use an Innovation Valley Reward app [Innovation Valley Rewards - My Journey Wokingham Challenge!](#) Since My Journey Wokingham launched the app in March 2022:

- 1,926 people have joined the challenge.
- £5,200 worth of ValleyCoins have been earned or won.
- 686,000 miles of active or sustainable travel have been recorded.
- 294,000 walks, 48,000 cycles and 26,000 bus journeys have been recorded.
- 171,000kgs of CO2 has been avoided, which is equivalent to an average petrol car being driven approximately 420,000 miles.
- 33,400,000 calories have been burned.

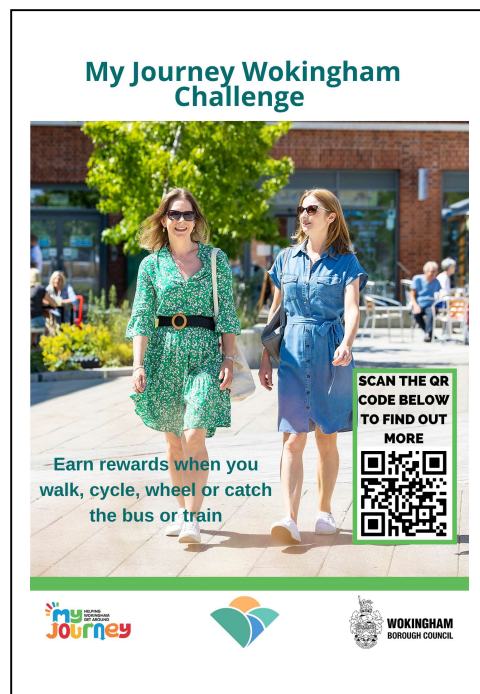


Figure 2.1 - A MyJourney promotion poster for the Innovation Valley App.

Wokingham Borough Council expects the following measures to continue to be completed over the course of the next reporting year.

- Completion of the LCWIP for the whole borough. <https://wokinghamlcwip.commonplace.is/about>
- Development of our new Local Transport Plan (LTP4) in conjunction with a new Local Plan to 2038 which will define the locations of major development in the borough.
- MyJourney's extension of their DEFRA funded Eco-Travel Officer role. They will continue to work with schools in AQMAs. One of the main aspects of the project is to work closely with primary schools that are near Wokingham's AQMA's to monitor their Nitrogen Dioxide, assist with travel plans to aim for Modeshift Stars accreditations, deliver lesson packs, competitions, activities, assemblies, and events. Though this has been difficult with COVID-19 schools know how important the health and safety of their pupils is and therefore, with the individual school, the project adapts. Monitoring only outside the school and delivering resources digitally. There are 10 schools involved in the project and following a recent funding announcement we will now be aiming increase the number of schools working with us next year.
- Continued promotion of Active Travel through the MyJourney platforms.
- Development of EV Strategy to help increase the uptake of EV in the borough (this was completed in the summer 2022).
- Development of a Low Emission Transport Strategy to assist with both improved air quality and reduced Carbon emissions.
- Continual working with Public Health Colleagues, MyJourney Colleagues, Climate Change Colleagues, and Transport & Planning Officers.
- Winnersh Triangle Park and Ride, is expanding the decking of the existing site to provide a minimum of 160 additional spaces on the site, works started in March 2021, via LEP funding and will continue this year. <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/business-and-licensing/business-and-growth/local-enterprise-partnership-lep/>

Wokingham Borough Council worked to implement these measures in partnership with the following stakeholders during 2022:

- Neighbouring local authorities;
- The Highways Authority;

- The Planning Authority
- MyJourney
- The Public
- Local Schools
- Public Protection Partnership

The principal challenges and barriers to implementation that Wokingham Borough anticipates facing are related to resources and lack of funding to progress and implement more actions.

Progress on some measures has been slower than expected due to the lack of funding available to complete the projects.

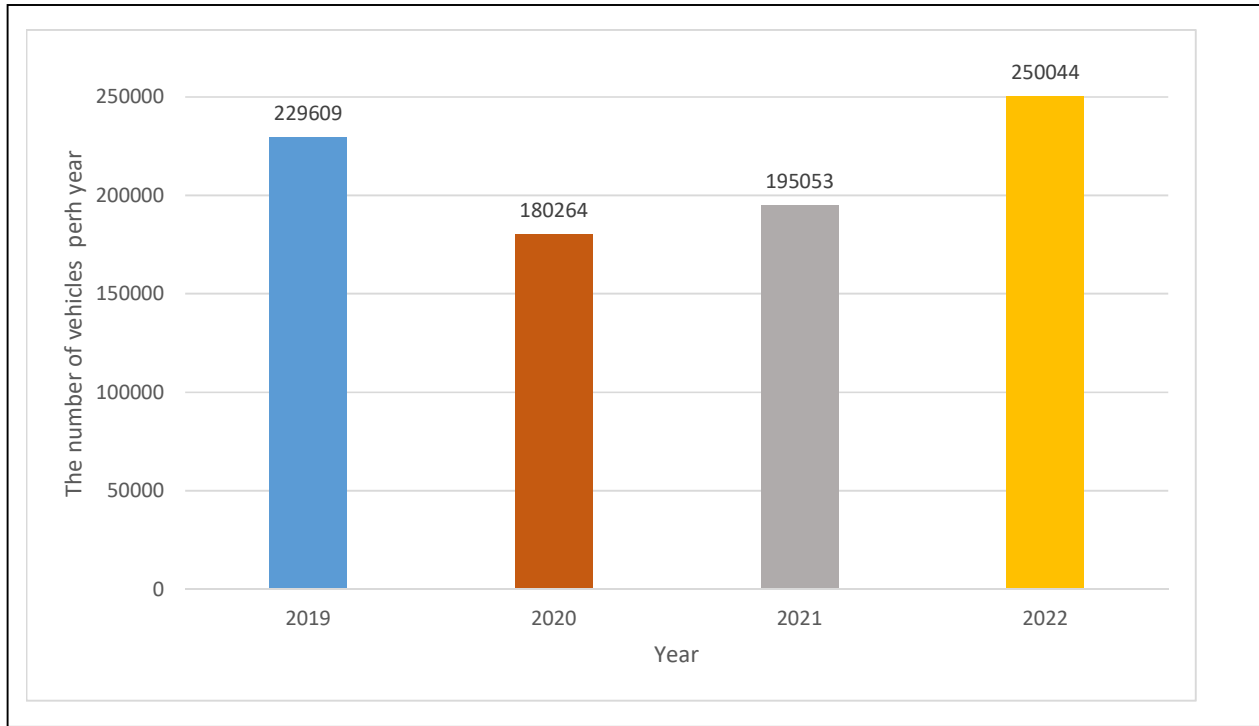
Whilst the measures stated above and in Table 1.2 will help to contribute towards compliance, Wokingham Borough Council anticipates that further additional measures not yet prescribed will be required in subsequent years to achieve compliance and enable the revocation of the Twyford Crossroads, M4 and Wokingham Town Centre AQMAs.

Traffic Data for Wokingham Borough Council

The traffic is monitored at two places in Wokingham Borough Council A4 Bath Road and the A329 Reading Road.

The A329 Reading Road (between Albany Park Drive & Arbor Lane), sensor data could not provide a comparison this year, due to technical problems, however the A4 Bath Road (between B4446 Sonning Lane and Parkway Drive), was working well and shows an increase in traffic since 2019. See graphs 2.1 and 2.2.

**Graph 2.1 – A4 Bath Road (between B4446 Sonning Lane and Parkway Drive)
Annual Traffic Flow Comparison between 2019 - 2022**



**Graph 2.2 – A4 Bath Road (between B4446 Sonning Lane and Parkway Drive)
Monthly Traffic Flow Comparison between 2019 - 2022**

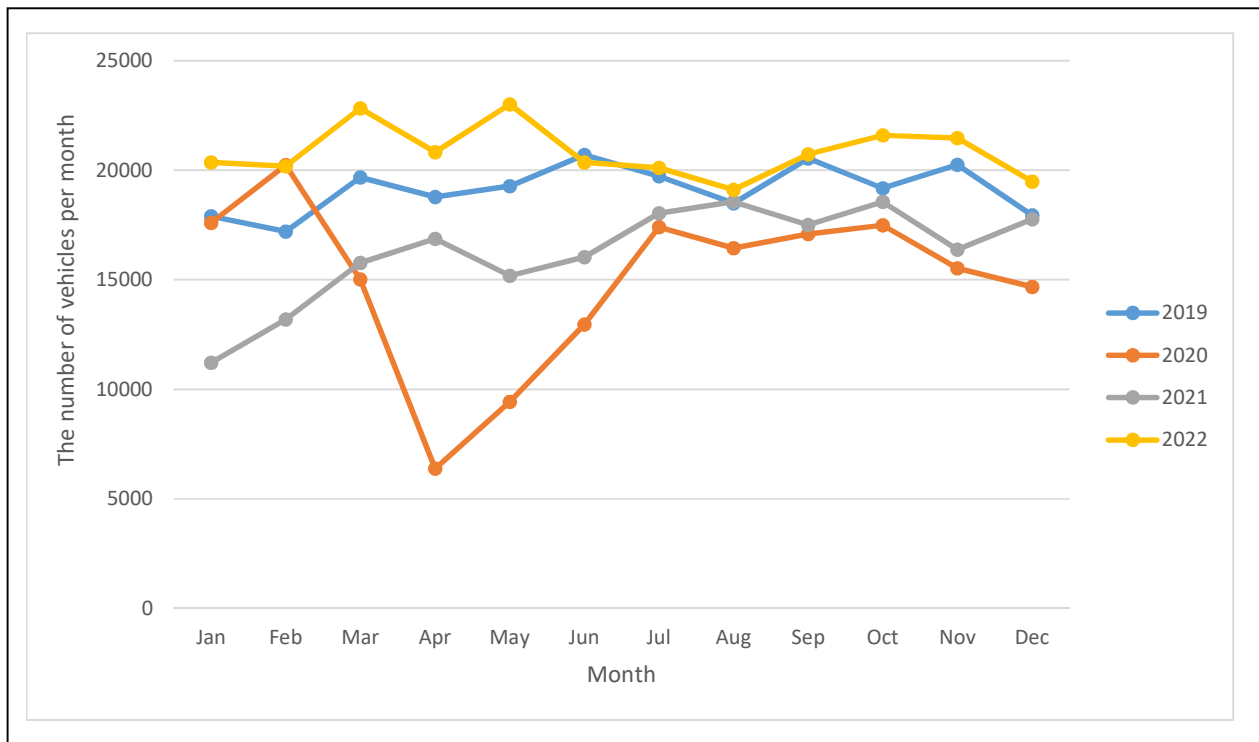


Table 1.2 – Progress on Measures to Improve Air Quality

Measure No.	Measure	Category	Classification	Year Measure Introduced in AQAP	Estimated / Actual Completion Date	Organisations Involved	Funding Source	Defra AQ Grant Funding	Funding Status	Estimated Cost of Measure	Measure Status	Reduction in Pollutant / Emission from Measure	Key Performance Indicator	Progress to Date	Comments / Barriers to Implementation
1 AQAP Twyford 1	Investigate the feasibility of alternative traffic routes around Twyford	Traffic Management	Strategic highway improvements, Re-prioritising road space away from cars, including Access management, Selective vehicle priority, bus priority, high vehicle occupancy lane	2017	2019	WBC	WBC	NO	Fully funded	£100k - £500k	Planning	12.1 µg/m3	Feasibility study carried out.	Local Plan update is ongoing. This will make recommendation regarding development and supporting infrastructure needs.	Aim for some through traffic avoided through AQMA.
2 AQAP Twyford 2	Twyford Railway station 1. Consider access for vehicles, taxis, cyclists and pedestrians. 2. Consider integration of public transport. 3. consider car parking and cycling provisions	Transport Planning and Infrastructure	Other	2017	2025	WBC, GWR, Twyford PC	WBC, GWR, Twyford PC	NO	Partially Funded	£1 million - £10 million	Planning	12.1 µg/m3	Changes incorporated.	Some cycle parking added in 2020 however, there is now a feasibility study underway with a view to make improvements using Station Improvement Funding from DfT	To work with all partners to further promote and encourage sustainable transport to and from stations, this includes soft measures as well as infrastructure delivery.
3 AQAP Twyford 3	Review cycle paths	Promoting Travel Alternatives	Promotion of cycling	2016	2025	WBC	WBC	NO	Partially Funded	£1 million - £10 million	Implementation	12.1 µg/m3	Increase in usage.	Cycle paths are continually reviewed, however, a strategic LCWIP is underway which help us identify measures and prioritise improvements for future years. To be published March 2023.	Cycleway delivery is part of the yearly capital programme
4 AQAP Twyford 4	Investigate options of A4 and A3032 junction at Hare Hatch	Traffic Management	Strategic highway improvements, Re-prioritising road space away from cars, including Access management, Selective vehicle priority, bus priority, high vehicle occupancy lane	2018	2019	WBC	WBC	NO	Not Funded	tbc	Planning	12.1 µg/m3	Investigation carried out.	No progress to date. Budget needs to be agreed and allocated.	Traffic more likely to travel east of village so avoiding AQMA
5 AQAP Twyford 5	Continue to monitor traffic lights and crossings to	Traffic Management	Strategic highway improvements, Re-prioritising	2016	2030	WBC	WBC	NO	Not Funded	tbc	Planning	12.1 µg/m3	Review of phases with traffic flow data	Ongoing investigation into whether this would work	Determine effect on air quality with different phases. Linked with traffic

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Measure No.	Measure	Category	Classification	Year Measure Introduced in AQAP	Estimated / Actual Completion Date	Organisations Involved	Funding Source	Defra AQ Grant Funding	Funding Status	Estimated Cost of Measure	Measure Status	Reduction in Pollutant / Emission from Measure	Key Performance Indicator	Progress to Date	Comments / Barriers to Implementation
	maximum efficiency and consider their functionality including left turns and peak hour use		road space away from cars, including Access management, Selective vehicle priority, bus priority, high vehicle occupancy lane										and real time air quality data		monitoring to be set up and new continuous monitoring commence January 2019.
6 AQAP Twyford 6	Carry out feasibility study for Low Emission Zone for the crossroads	Promoting Low Emission Transport	Low Emission Zone (LEZ)	2023	2025	WBC	WBC	NO	Not Funded	£100k - £500k	Planning	12.1 µg/m3	Feasibility study carried out.	Ongoing investigation into whether this would work. LTP considering this in 2024. Looking into vehicle admission parking related fees.	
7 AQAP Twyford 7	Review of bus fleet and consider alternative fuels.	Vehicle Fleet Efficiency	Promoting Low Emission Public Transport	2016	2040	Bus companies as contracted by WBC	Bus companies as contracted by WBC	NO	Partially Funded	< £10k	Implementation	12.1 µg/m3	Increase in number of buses run on alternative fuels.	2017 RTL run hybrid buses. CNG all low emission. Courtney Buses Contract to be retendered in 2022 for implementation 2023.	
8 AQAP Twyford 8	Install "Cut Pollution. Turn off your engine" signs when queuing traffic at traffic lights.	Public Information	Other	2018	2023	WBC	WBC	NO	Not Funded	< £10k	Completed	12.1 µg/m3	Drivers to follow advice.	Completed	
9 AQAP Twyford 9	Consider feasibility of Park and Ride strategy for Twyford	Alternatives to private vehicle use	Rail based Park & Ride	2017	2025	WBC	WBC	NO	Partially Funded	£1 million - £10 million	Planning	12.1 µg/m3	Feasibility study carried out.	Potential to connect to existing P&R though no viable bus service currently due to low patronage following Covid.	
10 AQAP Twyford 10	School Travel Plans (Mode Shift Stars)	Promoting Travel Alternatives	School Travel Plans	2016	2040	WBC	WBC	YES	Funded	£10k - 50k	Implementation	12.1 µg/m3	Continue to be developed and reviewed.	Ongoing – DEFRA funding awarded to employ an Eco-Travel officer for schools in October 2023 and to accelerate mode shift. The Eco-Travel Officer role will continue for a further year.	27 % of primary schools carried out school travel survey with Modeshift STARS 21/22
11 AQAP Wok TC 1	Intelligent traffic signals at Shute End	Traffic Management	Strategic highway improvements, Re-prioritising road space away from	2020	2030	WBC	WBC	NO	Funded	£100 - £500k	Implementation	15.5µg/m3	Installation of MOVA.	Currently under review	

Measure No.	Measure	Category	Classification	Year Measure Introduced in AQAP	Estimated / Actual Completion Date	Organisations Involved	Funding Source	Defra AQ Grant Funding	Funding Status	Estimated Cost of Measure	Measure Status	Reduction in Pollutant / Emission from Measure	Key Performance Indicator	Progress to Date	Comments / Barriers to Implementation
			cars, including Access management, Selective vehicle priority, bus priority, high vehicle occupancy lane												
12 AQAP Wok TC 2	Consider speed reduction through town centre	Traffic Management	Reduction of speed limits, 20mph zones	2017	2027	WBC Highways,	WBC Highways,	NO	Not Funded	£100k - £500k	Planning	15.5µg/m3	tbc	Currently the scheme is on hold potentially to be reviewed again in 2024.	There is no political demand for it or funding.
13 AQAP Wok TC 3	Review traffic routes in town centre and consider if any roads require restricted access	Traffic Management	Strategic highway improvements, Re-prioritising road space away from cars, including Access management, Selective vehicle priority, bus priority, high vehicle occupancy lane	2022	2027	WBC	WBC	NO	Not Funded	£100k - £500k	Implementation	15.5µg/m3	Review carried out.	Looking in LTP	Temporary banners were installed ahead of Clean Air Day in June 2019.
14 AQAP Wok TC 4	North Wokingham Distributor Road	Traffic Management	Strategic highway improvements, Re-prioritising road space away from cars, including Access management, Selective vehicle priority, bus priority, high vehicle occupancy lane	2020	2022	WBC	WBC/Developers	NO	Not Funded	> £10 million	Completed	15.5µg/m3	Completion.	Finished May 2022	
15 AQAP Wok TC 5	South Wokingham Distributor Road	Traffic Management	Strategic highway improvements, Re-prioritising road space away from cars, including Access management, Selective vehicle priority, bus priority, high vehicle occupancy lane	2023	2027	WBC	WBC/Business Rates Retention Fund/Developer funding	NO	Funded	> £10 million	Implementation	15.5µg/m3	Completion.	Commenced at Montague Park, new rail bridge completed, full SWDR will be completed as developers come forward and commence house building	Phase 1 completed.
16 AQAP Wok TC 6	Reconfiguration of Shute End / Broad Street / Rectory Road junction	Traffic Management	Strategic highway improvements, Re-prioritising road space away from cars, including Access management,	2020	tbc	WBC	WBC	NO	Not Funded	tbc	Planning	15.5µg/m3	Reduction in NO2	Design underway, but on hold.	

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Measure No.	Measure	Category	Classification	Year Measure Introduced in AQAP	Estimated / Actual Completion Date	Organisations Involved	Funding Source	Defra AQ Grant Funding	Funding Status	Estimated Cost of Measure	Measure Status	Reduction in Pollutant / Emission from Measure	Key Performance Indicator	Progress to Date	Comments / Barriers to Implementation
			Selective vehicle priority, bus priority, high vehicle occupancy lane												
17 AQAP Wok TC 7	Consider outcome of feasibility study of improvements to Rectory Road / Wiltshire Road	Traffic Management	Strategic highway improvements, Re-prioritising road space away from cars, including Access management, Selective vehicle priority, bus priority, high vehicle occupancy lane	2020	2023	WBC	WBC	NO	Funded	tbc	Implementation	15.5µg/m3	Feasibility study carried out.	Design underway, but on hold.	Requires TRO supported by TVP. Consider design speed as well as speed limit. Traffic travels at approx. 20mph.
18 AQAP Wok TC 8	Active management of car parking	Traffic Management	Workplace Parking Levy, Parking Enforcement on highway	2017	2018	WBC	WBC	NO	Not Funded	£10k - 50k	Implementation	15.5µg/m3	Implementation.	Introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement 2018.	This action requires a major remodelling of the highway. Scenarios will have to be modelled to ensure that the problem is not simply transferred to another part of the network.
19 AQAP Wok TC 9	Alternative arrangement for access to car parks	Traffic Management	Other	2017	2023	WBC	WBC	NO	Not Funded	£1 million - £10 million	Implementation	15.5µg/m3	Implementation (some of regen completed, more planned in future).	This is part of the Town Centre regeneration process	Includes bus stops and cycle ways.
20 AQAP Wok TC 10	Workplace and School travel planning	Promoting Travel Alternatives	School Travel Plans	2017	2030	WBC	WBC	YES	Funded	£10k - 50k	Implementation	15.5µg/m3	Continue to implement number of plans.	Long standing programme of school travel plans, DEFRA funding awarded for Eco-Travel Officer and Better Points in Wokingham AQAP.	Modal shift starts programme. COVID-19 and phased return to schools and workplaces.
21 AQAP Wok TC 11	Residential travel planning	Promoting Travel Alternatives	Personalised Travel Planning	2022	2030	WBC	S106 (developer)	NO	Partially Funded	£10k - 50k	Implementation	15.5µg/m3	Continue to implement number of plans.	Continuing in 2023	Personalised travel planning promoting the benefits of sustainable travel.
22 AQAP Wok TC 12	Carry out feasibility study for Low Emission Zone	Promoting Low Emission Transport	Low Emission Zone (LEZ)	tbc	tbc	WBC	DEFRA AQ Grant	YES	Not Funded	£100k - £500k	Planning	15.5µg/m3	Feasibility study carried out.	No progress to date, business case needs to be developed, no progress 2022.	Business case for a LEZ needs developing.
23 AQAP Wok TC 13	Park and Ride for Wokingham Town Centre	Alternatives to private vehicle use	Bus based Park & Ride	2016	2022	WBC	WBC	NO	Funded	£1 million - £10 million	Completed	15.5µg/m3	Installation and number of journeys.	Coppid Beech P&R completed but awaiting better conditions before launch of service, lack of demand v's	This actively manages car parking in the town centre and across the borough.

Measure No.	Measure	Category	Classification	Year Measure Introduced in AQAP	Estimated / Actual Completion Date	Organisations Involved	Funding Source	Defra AQ Grant Funding	Funding Status	Estimated Cost of Measure	Measure Status	Reduction in Pollutant / Emission from Measure	Key Performance Indicator	Progress to Date	Comments / Barriers to Implementation
														costs. Park and ride reduction of 40% since covid.	
24 AQAP generic 1	Review locations and publication of EV charging points and increase provision	Promoting Low Emission Transport	Procuring alternative Refuelling infrastructure to promote Low Emission Vehicles, EV recharging, Gas fuel recharging	2018	2023	WBC	DfT (OZEV)	NO	Partially Funded	£1 million - £10 million	Implementation	15.5µg/m3	Number of charging points	Bid documents for ORCS bid completed, BID successful and will be installing 38 points by the end of 2023. Car parks, and residential streets.	This will be the initial phase, further works planned as an ongoing programme. Encouraging residents and commuters to consider EV vehicle.
25 AQAP generic 2	Consider implementation of parking charge related to vehicle type e.g. free for electric	Promoting Low Emission Transport	Company Vehicle Procurement - Prioritising uptake of low emission vehicles	2022	2024	WBC	WBC	NO	Not Funded	£10k - 50k	Planning	15.5µg/m3	Policy under consultation internally in 2023	No progress to date	Requirements to have low and zero emission vehicles and plant need to be included in any new WBC let contract.
26 AQAP generic 3	Low emission vehicles - consider implementation in Council contracts / fleet cars etc. EV pool cars for WBC staff	Promoting Low Emission Transport	Company Vehicle Procurement - Prioritising uptake of low emission vehicles	2016	2040	WBC	WBC	NO	Not Funded	£1 million - £10 million	Implementation	15.5µg/m3	Vehicle usage.	WBC EH and TP/WSP have zero emission and hybrid company vehicles. Meetings/ Reports - Energy saving trust – recommending the best way forward for the Council (2022) “Green Fleet review – green mileage”	
27 AQAP generic 4	Consider removal of on street parking to provide more space for cycle lanes, EVs, Car clubs, provision of on street charging points	Traffic Management	Strategic highway improvements, Re-prioritising road space away from cars, including Access management, Selective vehicle priority, bus priority, high vehicle occupancy lane	tbc	tbc	WBC	WBC	NO	Not Funded	£500k - £1 million	Planning	15.5µg/m3	tbc	Car Clubs strategy under development, draft car park strategy in the LCWIP.	LCWIP now adopted by council and makes recommendations for segregated cycle paths which will reduce parking availability in place
28 AQAP generic 5	No idling signs - for buses and taxis in waiting areas and at level crossings	Traffic Management	Anti-idling enforcement	2022	2023	WBC	WBC	YES	Partially Funded	£10k - 50k	Implementation	15.5µg/m3	Number of signs installed.	Installed as part of DEFRA grant behaviour change project in 2023 at Taxi ranks, results to be in 2024 ASR.	No physical enforcement and FPN have been issued as the borough has not adopted this regulation from the secretary of state; also Wokingham would prefer to educate than enforce.

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Measure No.	Measure	Category	Classification	Year Measure Introduced in AQAP	Estimated / Actual Completion Date	Organisations Involved	Funding Source	Defra AQ Grant Funding	Funding Status	Estimated Cost of Measure	Measure Status	Reduction in Pollutant / Emission from Measure	Key Performance Indicator	Progress to Date	Comments / Barriers to Implementation
29 AQAP generic 6	Roadside emission testing, detecting and fining polluting vehicles	Traffic Management	Testing Vehicle Emissions	2017	2032	WBC	WBC	NO	Not Funded	£10k - 50k	Planning	15.5µg/m3	Number of vehicles failed.	No progress	Using RTLs existing hybrid buses (Lion 4).
30 AQAP generic 7	Improvement of cycle routes to ensure continuous and integrated	Transport Planning and Infrastructure	Cycle network	2017	2018	WBC	WBC	NO	Not Funded	> £10 million	Implementation	15.5µg/m3	Length of cycle ways provided.	LCWIP due to be completed in 2022, and adopted March in 2023, and implemented over the next 10/15 years	
31 AQAP generic 8	Residential Travel Planning	Promoting Travel Alternatives	Personalised Travel Planning	2016	2035	WBC	WBC	NO	Funded	£500k - £1 million	Implementation	15.5µg/m3	Number of plans.	Programmed started 2017/18, and is ongoing. Travel Packs sent to all new developments	Ongoing
32 AQAP generic 9	Encourage WBC staff to travel more sustainably	Promoting Travel Alternatives	Workplace Travel Planning	2017	2035	WBC	WBC	NO	Not Funded	£50k - £100k	Implementation	15.5µg/m3	Increase in commuting by alternative means.	WBC offices have adopted a travel plan. DST report.	
33 AQAP generic 10	Secure and sheltered bike parking provision	Promoting Travel Alternatives	Promotion of cycling	2017	2035	WBC	WBC	YES	Funded	£100k - £500k	Implementation	15.5µg/m3	Provided	Ongoing. 6 green roof, secure bike lockers carnival added in 2022	Work planned in schools
34 AQAP generic 11	Partnership with MyJourney	Promoting Travel Alternatives	Promotion of cycling	2016	2028	WBC	WBC	NO	Not Funded	£500k - £1 million	Implementation	15.5µg/m3	Number of events.	MyJourney Wokingham continuing to promote sustainable and active travel. Ongoing on 2022	Ongoing – cost of MJ as a whole is around £350k/yr but could be covered over many of the actions in this plan
35 AQAP generic 12	Promoting active travel via MyJourney website	Promoting Travel Alternatives	Intensive active travel campaign & infrastructure	2017	2028	WBC	WBC	YES	Funded	£500k - £1 million	Implementation	15.5µg/m3	Opening of scheme.	Completed 2021 access for hospital staff only in 2022, expanding to Public in 2023.	Link with work by Trading Standards re overloaded vehicles, will require implementation of legislation.
36 AQAP generic 13	Thames Valley Park and Ride	Alternatives to private vehicle use	Bus based Park & Ride	2016	2019	WBC/RBC	WBC	NO	Not Funded	£1 million - £10 million	Completed	Opening of scheme.	Completed 2021 access for hospital staff only in 2022, expanding to Public in 2023.	Link with work by Trading Standards re overloaded vehicles, will require implementation of legislation.	
37 AQAP generic 14	Provision of car clubs with or without EVs	Alternatives to private vehicle use	Car Clubs	2015	2023	WBC	WBC/Developers	NO	Not Funded	£100k - £500k	Implementation	15.5µg/m3	Usage of vehicles.	1 car club operational at Montague Park (pulled out in Oct 2022). Car Clubs strategy under development.	Strategy to be delivered in 2023
38 AQAP generic 15	Awareness campaign for the risks of poor air quality and promoting active and	Public Information	Via other mechanisms	2017	2035	WBC PH	WBC/RBC	YES	Funded	£50k - £100k	Implementation	15.5µg/m3	Increased awareness.	MyJourney Wokingham promoting active travel and using social media to raise awareness	PTP promoting the benefits of sustainable transport through MyJourney project.

Measure No.	Measure	Category	Classification	Year Measure Introduced in AQAP	Estimated / Actual Completion Date	Organisations Involved	Funding Source	Defra AQ Grant Funding	Funding Status	Estimated Cost of Measure	Measure Status	Reduction in Pollutant / Emission from Measure	Key Performance Indicator	Progress to Date	Comments / Barriers to Implementation
	sustainable travel													of Clean Air Day – DEFRA funding secured to add air quality page to MyJourney website in 2020/21	Linked to future development.
39 AQAP generic 16	Air Quality included in to JSNA and Health and Wellbeing Strategy	Policy Guidance and Development Control	Other policy	2016	2018	WBC, PH Berkshire	WBC	NO	Not Funded	£10k - 50k	Completed	15.5µg/m3	Inclusion in JSNA reviews and Health and Wellbeing Strategy.	JSNA published in March 2019 and considers air quality. Active transport is a priority for the HWBS.	
40 AQAP generic 17	New Local Plan and LTP4 - Sustainable Transport, include EV charging points for new developments	Policy Guidance and Development Control	Other policy	2019	2035	WBC Planning and PH	WBC PH	NO	Funded	£100k - £500k	Implementation	15.5µg/m3	Implementation.	Public Health and Planning teams working together on Local Plan and LTP4, draft in 2023, adopted in 2024.	2019 - Aside from Travel Plan requirements there is a planning policy requirement to provide parking – including cycle storage – in line with standards so all development will include appropriate provision (including shelter for long-term storage - i.e. residential, employee.)
41 AQAP generic 18	Linking with Highway Asset Management Plans	Policy Guidance and Development Control	Other policy	-	-	WBC	WBC, PH Berkshire	NO	Not Funded	-	Planning	15.5µg/m3	tbc	No progress	Active Travel Officer promotes all forms of sustainable transport doing public demonstrations and events.
42 AQAP generic 19	Neighbourhood Development Plans to consider air quality	Policy Guidance and Development Control	Air Quality Planning and Policy Guidance	2017	2040	WBC with Town and Parish Councils	WBC Planning & EH	NO	Not Funded	£10k - 50k	Implementation	15.5µg/m3	Inclusion in plans.	All applications commented on	Ongoing, PPP comment on all planning applications where necessary with regard to AQ.
43 AQAP generic 20	Freight Management Plan	Freight and Delivery Management	Delivery and Service plans	-	-	WBC	WBC	NO	Not Funded	tbc	Planning	15.5µg/m3	Review and implementation.	No progress to date, business case needs to be developed.	Delivered in partnership with RBC and funded through the Local Growth Fund.

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PM_{2.5} – Local Authority Approach to Reducing Emissions and/or Concentrations

As detailed in DEFRA’s Policy Guidance LAQM.PG22 (Chapter 8), local authorities are expected to work towards reducing emissions and/or concentrations of PM_{2.5} (particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter of 2.5µm or less). There is clear evidence that PM_{2.5} has a significant impact on human health, including premature mortality, allergic reactions, and cardiovascular diseases.

The latest PM_{2.5} data available (2018) from DEFRA show that Wokingham Borough has a maximum level of 11.24 µg/m³ (co-ordinates x 477500 y170500), and the average level of 9.46 µg/m³. [Background Mapping data for local authorities - 2018 - Defra, UK](#). Figure 1.2 below shows that 0.81% of PM_{2.5} is produced by Road & Transport, the other 99.19% is from other factors.

The fraction of all-cause mortality in those aged 30 years and older attributable to particulate air pollution indicator’ value for Wokingham Borough and other Berkshire Local Authorities in 2021 can be seen in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3: Fraction of all-cause mortality (aged 30 years and older) attributable to particulate air pollution indicator value within Berkshire, 2021.

National England Average	South East Region	West Berkshire	Reading	Wokingham	Bracknell Forest	Windsor & Maidenhead	Slough
5.5%	5.4%	5.4%	5.9%	5.9%	5.9%	5.9%	6.3%

[\(Public health profiles - OHID \(phe.org.uk\)\)](#)

Wokingham Borough Council is taking the following measures to address PM_{2.5}:

- Work in implementing the actions in the Local Transport Plan and the Local Development Framework Core Strategy, as well as looking at Planning applications and the District Plan. For example, a new housing development might contribute to alterations to nearby junctions to increase capacity whilst also improving cycle and pedestrian links and the provision of an electric vehicle charging infrastructure, also contributing to bus services so that the site is served by public transport and thereby linking many other measures together in a site travel plan to encourage people to choose sustainable travel.

- Wokingham Borough continually gives out advice, including via social media, regarding bonfires and commercial burning throughout the year and the website is regularly updated to assist public information and understanding. [Smoke and bonfires - PPP \(publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk\)](http://publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk),
- The Council also give advice on Domestic Burning and Trading Standards inspect the suppliers to ensure they comply with the regulations for the consumer. [Air Quality \(Domestic Solid Fuels Standards\) \(England\) Regulations 2020 - PPP \(publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk\)](http://publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk)
- In 2022 there was no statutory requirement for the Council to monitor and report on PM_{2.5}, however we monitored the schools near the AQMA's for a three-month period to ascertain a “snap shot” of the PM levels and looked at each school individually. This was completed following the DEFRA grant 2020/21 award of £259,000 (which is split between the PPP Authorities). See Appendix C for more details of the project.
- Through the planning process dust production & dispersion on industrial sites is managed; as is the burning of any waste.

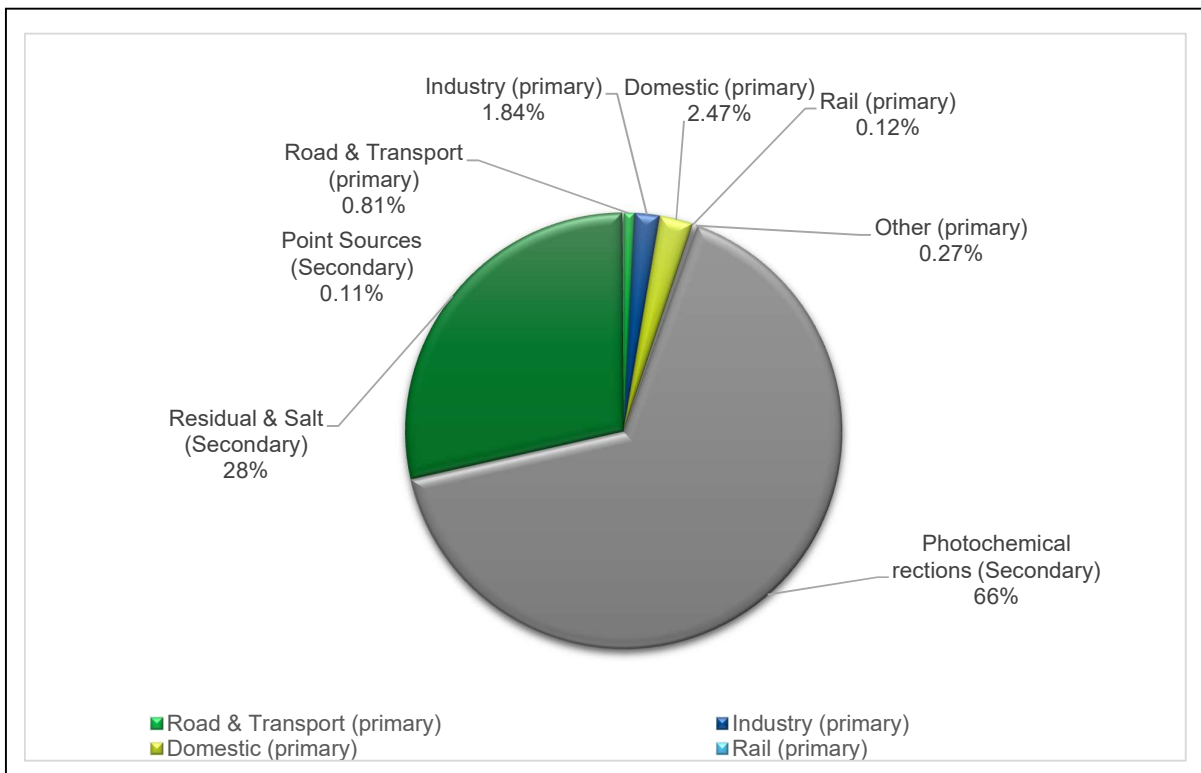


Figure 1.2 - A Pie Chart showing both the Primary and Secondary sources of PM_{2.5}

2 Air Quality Monitoring Data and Comparison with Air Quality Objectives and National Compliance

This section sets out the monitoring undertaken during 2022 by Wokingham Borough Council and how it compares with the relevant air quality objectives. In addition, monitoring results are presented for a five-year period between 2018 and 2022 to allow monitoring trends to be identified and discussed.

Summary of Monitoring Undertaken

2.1.1 Automatic Monitoring Sites

Wokingham Borough Council undertook automatic (continuous) monitoring at 2 sites during 2022. Table A.1 in Appendix A shows the details of the automatic monitoring sites. NB. Local authorities do not have to report annually on the following pollutants: 1,3 butadiene, benzene, carbon monoxide and lead, unless local circumstances indicate there is a problem.

Maps showing the location of the monitoring sites are provided in Appendix D. Further details on how the monitors are calibrated and how the data has been adjusted are included in Appendix C.

2.1.2 Non-Automatic Monitoring Sites

Wokingham Borough Council undertook non- automatic (i.e. passive) monitoring of NO₂ at 2 sites during 2022. Table A.2 in Appendix A presents the details of the non-automatic sites.

Maps showing the location of the monitoring sites are provided in Appendix D. Further details on Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) for the diffusion tubes, including bias adjustments and any other adjustments applied (e.g. annualisation and/or distance correction), are included in Appendix C.

Individual Pollutants

The air quality monitoring results presented in this section are, where relevant, adjusted for bias, annualisation (where the annual mean data capture is below 75% and greater than 25%), and distance correction. Further details on adjustments are provided in Appendix C.

2.1.3 Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂)

Table A.3 and Table A.4 in Appendix A compare the ratified and adjusted monitored NO₂ annual mean concentrations for the past five years with the air quality objective of 40µg/m³. Note that the concentration data presented represents the concentration at the location of the monitoring site, following the application of bias adjustment and annualisation, as required (i.e. the values are exclusive of any consideration to fall-off with distance adjustment).

For diffusion tubes, the full 2022 dataset of monthly mean values is provided in Appendix B. Note that the concentration data presented in Table B.1 includes distance corrected values, only where relevant.

Table A.5 in Appendix A compares the ratified continuous monitored NO₂ hourly mean concentrations for the past five years with the air quality objective of 200µg/m³, not to be exceeded more than 18 times per year.

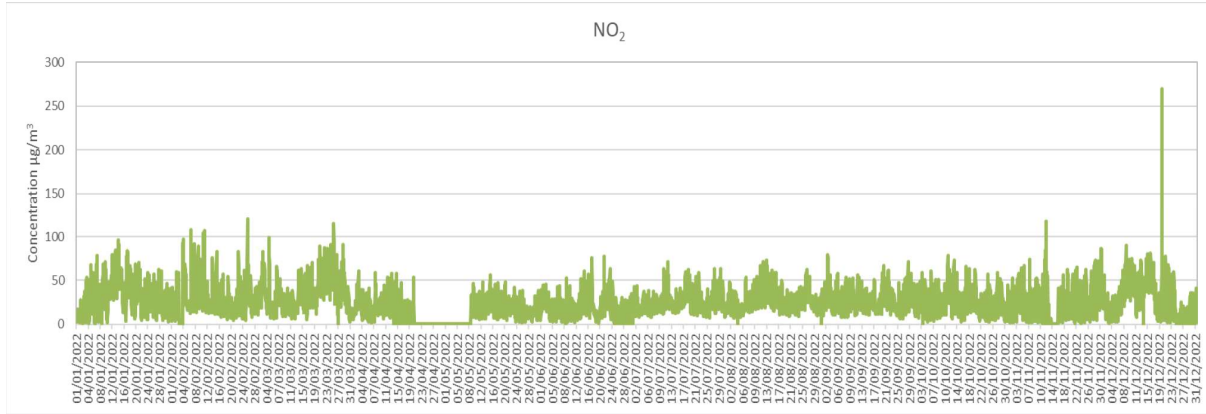
2.1.4 Continuous Monitoring Wokingham – Peach Street

An Annual Mean NO₂ concentration of 27.1µg/m³ was recorded by the Wokingham automatic monitoring (CM2) unit in 2022. This shows that within the Wokingham Town Centre AQMA, NO₂ levels were not exceeding the objective limit at the CM2. This is a decrease on the 2019 result (33.0µg/m³) pre-pandemic years, and the data capture was a good rate of 92.2%. However as expected it has increased slightly from 22.3µg/m³ in 2020, when the country had 2 major lockdowns. This evidence helps indicate that traffic is the main contributor to NO₂ in Wokingham Town Centre, and that perhaps the hybrid working that some companies are carrying out is contributing to help reduce the NO₂ along with newer cars.

The results have been compared to other nearby sites. Seasonal data trends seen at Wokingham Continuous Monitor are similar to those at comparable AURN monitoring sites at Oxford and Reading New Town. The results always increase in the colder weather due to the temperature inversions, and this trend was apparently at all the sites.

Figure 3.1 shows the annual trend over the last year. The 200µg/m³ hourly mean objective was met, so we had no exceedances and this is also a decrease from the 15 in 2018.

Graph 2.1 Wokingham Daily NO₂ 2022



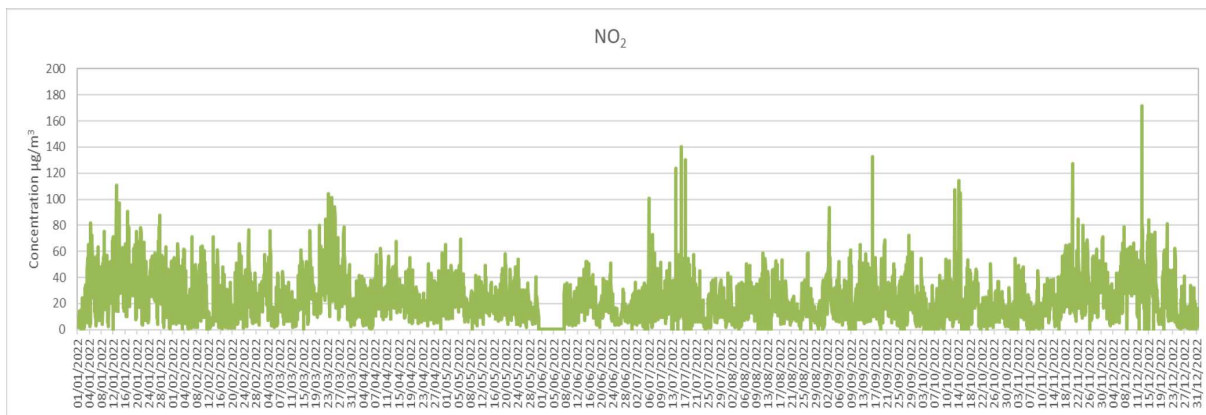
2.1.5 Continuous Monitoring Twyford – Cross Roads

An Annual Mean NO₂ concentration of 23.6 µg/m³ was recorded by the Twyford automatic monitoring unit (CM3) in 2022. This is a decrease from the NO₂ recorded in 2019 (29.9µg/m³) when it was installed, and has decreased further from 26.0µg/m³ measured in 2021. This shows that within the Twyford Cross Roads AQMA, the NO₂ levels were not exceeding the objective limit (40 µg/m³). The data capture was a good rate of 95.7%. This NO₂ data once again indicates that traffic is the main contributor to NO₂ at the Twyford Cross Roads.

There were 0 exceedances of the 200µg/m³ hourly mean objective recorded, which is below the Air Quality Objective of 18 exceedances per year.

The Twyford and Wokingham continuous monitors also presented good correlation between Diffusion Tubes (passive data) and the continuous monitoring.

Graph 2.2 Twyford Daily NO₂ 2022



2.1.6 Wokingham Borough Diffusion Tube Data

The Annual Mean Objective of $40\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ was not exceeded at any of the monitoring sites, within the Borough. The 1 site within Wokingham Town Centre AQMA, WOK838 Giggling Spring, Shute End, which exceeded in 2018 & 2019. This year (2022) measured $37.2\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ so has increased from $36.5\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ in 2021, but reduced from $41.8\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ in 2019. All the sites within the Twyford Crossroads AQMA were below the objective including, WOK850, 887, 888 - 19 High Street, which exceeded in 2018 ($44.0\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) and 2019 ($42.8\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) measured $32.5\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ in 2021 and $32.8\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ in 2022. Therefore, there has only been a slight increase this year compared to 2021 and remains below the AQ objective. All mean concentrations were less than $60\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ which therefore indicates no exceedances of the 1-hour NO_2 objective.

2.1.7 M4 AQMA Diffusion Tube Data

There were no exceedances of the Annual Mean Objective within the AQMA, and all sites decreased in NO_2 . All the sites within the AQMA had reduced this year mainly due to the pandemic. The NO_2 at all 7 of the sites has increased slightly since 2021, see Graph 3.1.

Table 3.1 - Marginal increases of NO_2 in the M4 AQMA

Tube Location	2021	2022
WOK53	$14.7\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$	$16.0\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$
WOK70	$16.1\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$	$17.4\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$
WOK98	$15.3\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$	$16.1\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$
WOK602	$15.6\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$	$17.7\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$
WOK836	$18.7\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$	$21.5\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$
WOK846	$15.2\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$	$16.2\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$
WOK861	$14.8\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$	$17.8\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$

The M4 has become a smart motorway and during the construction had a speed limit of 50/60/70mph in place during much of 2018 to 2021 which may also account for the reduction in levels. The works finished in 2022 and the levels have continued to stay well below the AQO in the AQMA. We have evidence from 2018 to demonstrate that the NO₂ around the M4 AQMA has constantly been meeting the AQO, see Graph 3.1. However we need three years of continuous data (discounting 2020 & 2021) before we can revoke an AQMA.

Monitoring within and outside this AQMA will continue in 2023 and until the site is revoked.

2.1.8 Wokingham Town Centre AQMA Diffusion Tube Data

8 Diffusion Tubes sites are located within the Wokingham AQMA, and one of the sites is a triplicate and co-located with the Continuous Monitor. Within this AQMA no site exceeded the Annual Mean (40µg/m³) Objective in 2022, however 5 years ago (2018) 1 location did, and this site was:

WOK838 Giggling Spring, Shute End –This site represents relevant exposure and the NO₂ at the site has decreased from 41.0µg/m³ in 2018 to 37.2/m³ 2022, (which is an increased from 36.5µg/m³ in 2021).

All apart from one site (WOK844, Buckingham Court) which decreased by 0.1 µg/m³) in this AQMA increased in NO₂ in 2022, however none of the sites have increase past the pre COVID pandemic levels of 2019. The NO₂ was expected to rise this year due to the increase of traffic, and this data also helps us correlate NO₂ to traffic fumes.

It is positive to see that after a full years' worth of pandemic/lock down free monitoring that all the NO₂ levels remain below the 2019 ones. Monitoring within and outside this AQMA will continue in 2023.

2.1.9 Twyford Crossroads AQMA Diffusion Tube Data

The Twyford Crossroads AQMA has 5 Diffusion Tubes sites, 3 of the sites are triplicated and one these is co-located with a Continuous Monitor. Within this AQMA no site exceeded the Annual Mean Objective in 2022.

In 2022 WOK (850, 887 & 888) 19 High Street has decreased in concentration since 2018 when the NO₂ exceeded the AQO, from a triplicated average of 44.0µg/m³, to 32.8µg/m³ in 2022, at the road side, relevant exposure site. The NO₂ at this site has increase marginally from 32.5µg/m³ in 2021 to 32.8µg/m³ in 2022, which may demonstrate that people are now working in a hybrid fashion as the new normal.

Within the Twyford AQMA all of the sites decreased in NO₂ from 2019 (pandemic free year), one of which was a triplicate. However, all of the sites have increased slightly from 2021 to 2022, apart from the (WOK 871, 875 876), which decreased (21.5µg/m³ in 2021 decreased to 20.8µg/m³ in 2022).

The general increase was to be expected as the traffic has increased.

The WOK864 1 Waltham Road site is not within the Twyford Crossroads AQMA but is only 22m to the south east, located to enable determination as to whether the AQMA boundary needs to be altered. This location decreased from 26.9 µg/m³ in 2021 to 26.8µg/m³ in 2022. However, the site has reduced over all from 37.0µg/m³ in 2019, therefore the AQMA boundary does not need to be extended at this time.

It is positive to see that after a full years' worth of pandemic/lock down free monitoring that all the NO₂ levels remain below the 2019 ones. Monitoring within and outside this AQMA will continue in 2023.

2.1.10 Outside of the AQMAs

Within the rest of Wokingham Borough, the sites met the NO₂ Annual Mean Objective of 40µg/m³. All of the sites have decreased from the last none pandemic year 2019 NO₂ levels. Since 2022 6 of the sites have decreased, and 1 has stayed the same and 39 sites have increased. This is suspected to be linked to the increase of traffic in the borough and reduction of lock downs.

None of the passive monitoring sites within the Borough were recorded above 60µg/m³ which would indicate no exceedances of the 1 hour objective.

2.1.11 Particulate Matter (PM₁₀)

Currently indicative or reference PM₁₀ monitoring is not carried out in Wokingham Borough Council in line with the DEFRA LAQM guidance. Further funding is required to carry out this monitoring.

2.1.12 Particulate Matter (PM_{2.5})

Currently indicative or reference PM_{2.5} monitoring is not carried out in Wokingham Borough Council in line with the DEFRA LAQM guidance. Further funding is required to carry out this monitoring.

2.1.13 Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂)

SO₂ monitoring is not required in Wokingham Borough Council by DEFRA.

Appendix A: Monitoring Results

Table A.1 – Details of Automatic Monitoring Sites

Site ID	Site Name	Site Type	X OS Grid Ref (Easting)	Y OS Grid Ref (Northing)	Pollutants Monitored	In AQMA? Which AQMA?	Monitoring Technique	Distance to Relevant Exposure (m) ⁽¹⁾	Distance to kerb of nearest road (m) ⁽²⁾	Inlet Height (m)
CM2	Peach Street Wokingham	Roadside	481348	168603	NO ₂	YES Wokingham	Chemiluminescent	3	1.5	1.5
CM3	Twyford Cross Roads	Kerbside	332200	433540	NO ₂	YES Twyford	Chemiluminescent	0	N/A	1.5

Notes:

(1) 0m if the monitoring site is at a location of exposure (e.g. installed on the façade of a residential property).

(2) N/A if not applicable

Table A.2 – Details of Non-Automatic Monitoring Sites

Diffusion Tube ID	Site Name	Site Type	X OS Grid Ref (Easting)	Y OS Grid Ref (Northing)	Pollutants Monitored	In AQMA? Which AQMA?	Distance to Relevant Exposure (m) ⁽¹⁾	Distance to kerb of nearest road (m) ⁽²⁾	Tube Co-located with a Continuous Analyser?	Tube Height (m)
WOK11	Direction Grp, Robinhood Lne,	Roadside	478133	170598	NO ₂		4.0	2.4	No	2.3
WOK19	Thames St, Sonning	Roadside	475583	175704	NO ₂		22.0	2.0	No	2.3
WOK52	Westende Flats, Peach St	Roadside	481521	168750	NO ₂	Wokingham Town Centre AQMA	3.0	1.9	No	2.4
WOK53	Dunt Lane, Hurst	Roadside	479771	171093	NO ₂	M4 AQMA	28.0	1.2	No	2.0
WOK70	Longdon Rd, Winnersh	Roadside	478011	170135	NO ₂	M4 AQMA	25.0	1.7	No	2.4
WOK71	38 King St Lane, Winnersh	Roadside	477907	170191	NO ₂		20.0	3.1	No	2.4
WOK98	309 Reading Road	Roadside	478611	170225	NO ₂	M4 AQMA	0.0	11.8	No	1.7
WOK505	Church Road	Roadside	474444	172062	NO ₂		10.0	1.8	No	2.2
WOK509	Henley Bridge	Roadside	476414	182648	NO ₂		7.0	4.7	No	2.3
WOK602	Green Lane	Roadside	478739	170107	NO ₂	M4 AQMA	3.0	1.7	No	1.7
WOK803	3 Wellington Road	Roadside	480651	168544	NO ₂		3.0	1.1	No	2.3

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Diffusion Tube ID	Site Name	Site Type	X OS Grid Ref (Easting)	Y OS Grid Ref (Northing)	Pollutants Monitored	In AQMA? Which AQMA?	Distance to Relevant Exposure (m) ⁽¹⁾	Distance to kerb of nearest road (m) ⁽²⁾	Tube Co-located with a Continuous Analyser?	Tube Height (m)
WOK805	18 Barkham Road	Roadside	480547	168543	NO ₂		0.0	5.7	No	1.9
WOK817	London Rd (298)	Roadside	483231	168817	NO ₂		11.5	2.1	No	2.2
WOK825	54 High St Wargrave	Roadside	478541	178634	NO ₂		0.0	2.2	No	2.1
WOK827	Station Rd, Twyford	Kerbside	479047	175831	NO ₂		3.0	1.0	No	2.3
WOK829	Long Acre Thames St	Roadside	475806	175577	NO ₂		0.0	1.7	No	2.3
WOK835	14 Robinhood Lane	Roadside	478192	170672	NO ₂		8.0	1.5	No	2.2
WOK836	349 Old Whitley Wood Ln	Roadside	472346	168684	NO ₂	M4 AQMA	7.5	1.2	No	2.3
WOK838	Giggling Spring, Shute End	Roadside	480995	168726	NO ₂	Wokingham Town Centre AQMA	0.0	2.8	No	2.3
WOK841	Lane End Villas	Roadside	473130	168783	NO ₂		4.5	0.2	No	2.4
WOK844	Buckingham Court	Roadside	481492	168775	NO ₂	Wokingham Town Centre AQMA	1.3	1.2	No	2.4

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Diffusion Tube ID	Site Name	Site Type	X OS Grid Ref (Easting)	Y OS Grid Ref (Northing)	Pollutants Monitored	In AQMA? Which AQMA?	Distance to Relevant Exposure (m) ⁽¹⁾	Distance to kerb of nearest road (m) ⁽²⁾	Tube Co-located with a Continuous Analyser?	Tube Height (m)
WOK846	4 Hatch Farm Cottages	Roadside	477131	170019	NO ₂	M4 AQMA	0.0	39.0	No	1.8
WOK857	Rectory Rd, Wokingham	Roadside	481031	168725	NO ₂	Wokingham Town Centre AQMA	0.3	1.2	No	2.4
WOK861	Mill Lane (by bridge)	Roadside	476997	170107	NO ₂	M4 AQMA	0.0	2.0	No	1.8
WOK863	3 Wargrave Rd, Twyford	Roadside	478768	176012	NO ₂	Twyford Crossroads AQMA	12.6	1.0	No	2.4
WOK866	58 Denmark Street	Roadside	481033	168300	NO ₂		0.0	3.4	No	2.4
WOK867	21 Denmark St, Wok	Roadside	481104	168444	NO ₂	Wokingham Town Centre AQMA	0.0	5.0	No	1.8
WOK869	Mullie (26) High Street	Roadside	478681	175998	NO ₂		0.5	1.4	No	2.5
WOK870	Hunt & Nash Church St	Roadside	478813	175975	NO ₂	Twyford Crossroads AQMA	0.5	0.5	No	2.5
WOK872	Registry Office, Reading Rd	Roadside	480816	168793	NO ₂	Wokingham Town Centre AQMA	0.8	1.6	No	2.5

Diffusion Tube ID	Site Name	Site Type	X OS Grid Ref (Easting)	Y OS Grid Ref (Northing)	Pollutants Monitored	In AQMA? Which AQMA?	Distance to Relevant Exposure (m) ⁽¹⁾	Distance to kerb of nearest road (m) ⁽²⁾	Tube Co-located with a Continuous Analyser?	Tube Height (m)
WOK873	27 The Terrace	Roadside	480863	168787	NO ₂		0.3	2.6	No	2.5
WOK874	Broad St, Wokingham	Roadside	481182	168603	NO ₂	Wokingham Town Centre AQMA	0.0	0.0	No	2.4
WOK871 WOK875 WOK876	15 London Rd, Twyford 3	Roadside	478830	176025	NO ₂	Twyford Crossroads AQMA	0.8	1.6	No	2.5
WOK 877	Almshouses, London Rd	Roadside	478904	176060	NO ₂		0.8	1.6	No	2.4
WOK 878	17 Wargrave Rd Twyford	Roadside	478719	176100	NO ₂		1.7	3.2	No	2.5
WOK 882	Sign Whitley Wd Ln	Roadside	472299	168677	NO ₂		4.2	2.0	No	2.5
WOK 883	Evendons Pri Sch	Roadside	480483	167011	NO ₂		3.0	1.0	No	2.5
WOK 850 WOK 887 WOK 888	19 High St Twyford 3	Roadside	478733	175985	NO ₂	Twyford Crossroads AQMA	0.3	1.2	No	2.2
WOK 864 WOK 889 WOK 890	1 Waltham Rd 3	Roadside	478887	175945	NO ₂		0.0	3.4	No	2.2

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Diffusion Tube ID	Site Name	Site Type	X OS Grid Ref (Easting)	Y OS Grid Ref (Northing)	Pollutants Monitored	In AQMA? Which AQMA?	Distance to Relevant Exposure (m) ⁽¹⁾	Distance to kerb of nearest road (m) ⁽²⁾	Tube Co-located with a Continuous Analyser?	Tube Height (m)
WOK 891	6 Budd Grove	Roadside	477498	170218	NO ₂		0.0	3.4	No	2.2
WOK 892	3A Wellington Rd	Roadside	480547	168543	NO ₂		10.0	1.0	No	2.4
WOK 893	6 Barkham Rd	Roadside	480571	168569	NO ₂		0.0	2.5	No	2.4
WOK 894	181 Outfield Crescent	Roadside	480737	168442	NO ₂		0.0	2.5	No	2.4
WOK 895	47 Barkham Road	Roadside	480375	168399	NO ₂		0.0	1.0	No	2.4
WOK 896	1A Alderman Wiley Close, Wokingham	Roadside	480703	168682	NO ₂		0.0	8.0	No	2.4
WOK 879 WOK 880 WOK 881	Peach Street CM Unit 3	Roadside	481359	168606	NO ₂	Wokingham Town Centre AQMA	3.0	1.5	Yes	2.0
WOK 884 WOK 885 WOK 886	Twyford CM Unit 3	Roadside	478765	175999	NO ₂	Twyford Crossroads AQMA	3.0	1.5	Yes	2.0

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Notes:

(1) 0m if the monitoring site is at a location of exposure (e.g. installed on the façade of a residential property).

(2) N/A if not applicable.

Table A.3 – Annual Mean NO₂ Monitoring Results: Automatic Monitoring (µg/m³)

Site ID	X OS Grid Ref (Easting)	Y OS Grid Ref (Northing)	Site Type	Valid Data Capture for Monitoring Period (%) ⁽¹⁾	Valid Data Capture 2022 (%) ⁽²⁾	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
CM2 Peach Street Wokingham	481348	168603	Roadside	92.2	100	32.9	33	22.3	24.2	27.1
CM3 Twyford Cross Roads	478765	176003	Kerbside	95.7	100		29.9	22.1	26.0	23.6

Annualisation has been conducted where data capture is <75% and >25% in line with LAQM.TG22.

Reported concentrations are those at the location of the monitoring site (annualised, as required), i.e. prior to any fall-off with distance correction.

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Notes:

The annual mean concentrations are presented as µg/m³.

Exceedances of the NO₂ annual mean objective of 40µg/m³ are shown in **bold**.

All means have been “annualised” as per LAQM.TG22 if valid data capture for the full calendar year is less than 75%. See Appendix C for details.

Concentrations are those at the location of monitoring and not those following any fall-off with distance adjustment.

(1) Data capture for the monitoring period, in cases where monitoring was only carried out for part of the year.

(2) Data capture for the full calendar year (e.g. if monitoring was carried out for 6 months, the maximum data capture for the full calendar year is 50%).

Table A.4 – Annual Mean NO₂ Monitoring Results: Non-Automatic Monitoring (µg/m³)

Diffusion Tube ID	X OS Grid Ref (Easting)	Y OS Grid Ref (Northing)	Site Type	Valid Data Capture for Monitoring Period (%) ⁽¹⁾	Valid Data Capture 2022 (%) ⁽²⁾	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
WOK11	478133	170598	Roadside	92.6	92.6	28.0	32.0	20.9	20.3	23.9
WOK19	475583	175704	Roadside	90.1	90.1	22.0	28.9	18.7	19.9	22.2
WOK52	481521	168750	Roadside	100.0	100.0	26.0	30.3	21.4	22.8	23.2
WOK53	479771	171093	Roadside	100.0	100.0	23.0	21.1	15.4	14.7	16.0
WOK70	478011	170135	Roadside	67.9	67.9	25.0	25.5	16.8	16.1	17.4
WOK71	477907	170191	Roadside	90.4	90.4	25.0	31.9	21.2	21.4	22.6
WOK98	478611	170225	Roadside	92.3	92.3	31.0	25.4	16.5	15.3	16.1
WOK505	474444	172062	Roadside	100.0	100.0	29.0	36.5	31.0	29.2	28.9
WOK509	476414	182648	Roadside	100.0	100.0	21.0	23.9	16.4	16.7	17.8
WOK602	478739	170107	Roadside	100.0	100.0	25.0	21.2	13.4	15.6	17.7
WOK803	480651	168544	Roadside	100.0	100.0	27.0	30.7	19.5	22.0	18.4
WOK805	480547	168543	Roadside	100.0	100.0	24.0	25.0	17.1	18.3	18.5
WOK817	483231	168817	Roadside	92.3	92.3	24.0	21.6	14.0	15.3	15.5
WOK825	478541	178634	Roadside	83.0	83.0	30.0	31.1	21.3	23.2	23.8
WOK827	479047	175831	Kerbside	100.0	100.0	20.0	20.6	14.6	15.2	15.6
WOK829	475806	175577	Roadside	80.8	80.8	28.0	28.6	20.7	23.1	24.0
WOK835	478192	170672	Roadside	65.7	65.7	26.0	26.6	19.3	21.2	20.3

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Diffusion Tube ID	X OS Grid Ref (Easting)	Y OS Grid Ref (Northing)	Site Type	Valid Data Capture for Monitoring Period (%) ⁽¹⁾	Valid Data Capture 2022 (%) ⁽²⁾	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
WOK836	472346	168684	Roadside	100.0	100.0	24.0	27.0	19.3	18.7	21.5
WOK838	480995	168726	Roadside	92.3	92.3	41.0	41.8	28.6	36.5	37.2
WOK841	473130	168783	Roadside	100.0	100.0	27.0	33.3	20.7	23.0	24.4
WOK844	481492	168775	Roadside	100.0	100.0	36.0	38.6	25.9	31.2	31.1
WOK846	477131	170019	Roadside	91.8	91.8	26.0	21.6	14.0	15.2	16.2
WOK857	481031	168725	Roadside	100.0	100.0	39.3	39.9	29.0	31.9	32.4
WOK861	476997	170107	Roadside	91.8	91.8	21.0	23.2	14.9	14.8	17.8
WOK863	478768	176012	Roadside	92.6	92.6	31.0	30.7	21.7	22.8	24.0
WOK866	481033	168300	Roadside	83.0	83.0	24.0	25.3	15.9	17.7	18.9
WOK867	481104	168444	Roadside	100.0	100.0	23.6	23.7	13.4	18.1	19.2
WOK869	478681	175998	Roadside	100.0	100.0	27.0	27.1	18.9	19.4	21.9
WOK870	478813	175975	Roadside	100.0	100.0	29.0	29.0	20.2	22.0	22.2
WOK872	480816	168793	Roadside	100.0	100.0	33.0	32.4	23.0	25.5	26.4
WOK873	480863	168787	Roadside	90.4	90.4	25.0	24.7	17.3	19.3	19.4
WOK874	481182	168603	Roadside	100.0	100.0	25.0	28.9	20.0	21.7	22.4
WOK871 , WOK875 , WOK876	478830	176025	Roadside	92.6	92.6	31.0	27.3	13.0	21.5	20.8
WOK 877	478904	176060	Roadside	100.0	100.0	22.0	22.9	14.9	16.6	16.7
WOK 878	478719	176100	Roadside	91.8	91.8	23.0	27.5	17.4	18.3	19.5

Diffusion Tube ID	X OS Grid Ref (Easting)	Y OS Grid Ref (Northing)	Site Type	Valid Data Capture for Monitoring Period (%) ⁽¹⁾	Valid Data Capture 2022 (%) ⁽²⁾	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
WOK 882	472299	168677	Roadside	90.1	90.1	29.0	32.6	20.7	23.8	24.9
WOK 883	480483	167011	Roadside	90.4	90.4	27.0	29.1	19.6	22.4	22.2
WOK 850, WOK 887, WOK 888	478733	175985	Roadside	100.0	100.0	44.0	42.8	31.3	32.5	32.8
WOK864, WOK 889 , WOK890	478887	175945	Roadside	100.0	100.0	35.6	37.0	24.4	26.9	26.8
WOK 891	477498	170218	Roadside	100.0	100.0		22.2	14.3	16.9	18.5
WOK 892	480547	168543	Roadside	100.0	100.0			15.4	18.7	22.5
WOK 893	480571	168569	Roadside	100.0	100.0			18.5	20.4	20.4
WOK 894	480737	168442	Roadside	100.0	100.0			13.3	14.4	14.9
WOK 895	480375	168399	Roadside	90.4	90.4			13.5	16.4	16.6
WOK 896	480703	168682	Roadside	100.0	100.0				14.9	16.6
WOK 879, WOK 880, WOK 881	481359	168606	Roadside	100.0	100.0	33.0	22.2	24.0	27.6	28.0
WOK 884, WOK 885, WOK 886	478765	175999	Roadside	100.0	100.0		30.5	21.9	22.6	23.1

Annualisation has been conducted where data capture is <75% and >25% in line with LAQM.TG22.

Diffusion tube data has been bias adjusted.

Reported concentrations are those at the location of the monitoring site (bias adjusted and annualised, as required), i.e. prior to any fall-off with distance correction.

Notes:

The annual mean concentrations are presented as $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$.

Exceedances of the NO_2 annual mean objective of $40\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ are shown in **bold**.

NO_2 annual means exceeding $60\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, indicating a potential exceedance of the NO_2 1-hour mean objective are shown in **bold and underlined**.

Means for diffusion tubes have been corrected for bias. All means have been “annualised” as per LAQM.TG22 if valid data capture for the full calendar year is less than 75%. See Appendix C for details.

Concentrations are those at the location of monitoring and not those following any fall-off with distance adjustment.

(1) Data capture for the monitoring period, in cases where monitoring was only carried out for part of the year.

(2) Data capture for the full calendar year (e.g. if monitoring was carried out for 6 months, the maximum data capture for the full calendar year is 50%).

Figure A.1 – Trends in Annual Mean NO₂ Concentrations in the Wokingham Town Centre AQMA 2018-2022

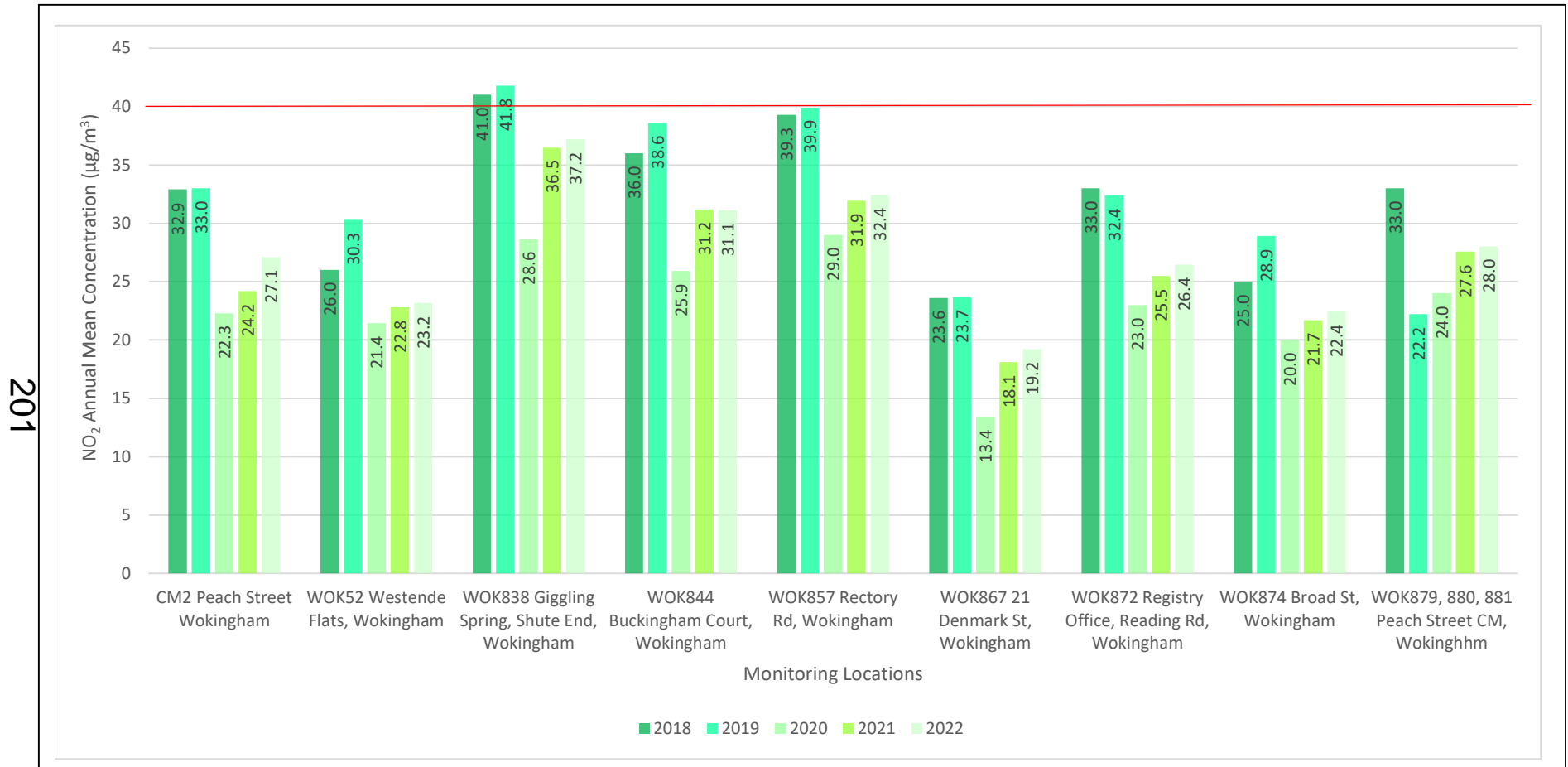


Figure A.1 presents NO₂ annual mean concentrations for sites within the Wokingham AQMA between years 2018 to 2022. There are no exceedances of the annual mean objective in 2022 and there is a general trend of reduction experienced across the sites since 2019.

Figure A.2 – Trends in Annual Mean NO₂ Concentrations in the Twyford Crossroads AQMA 2018-2022

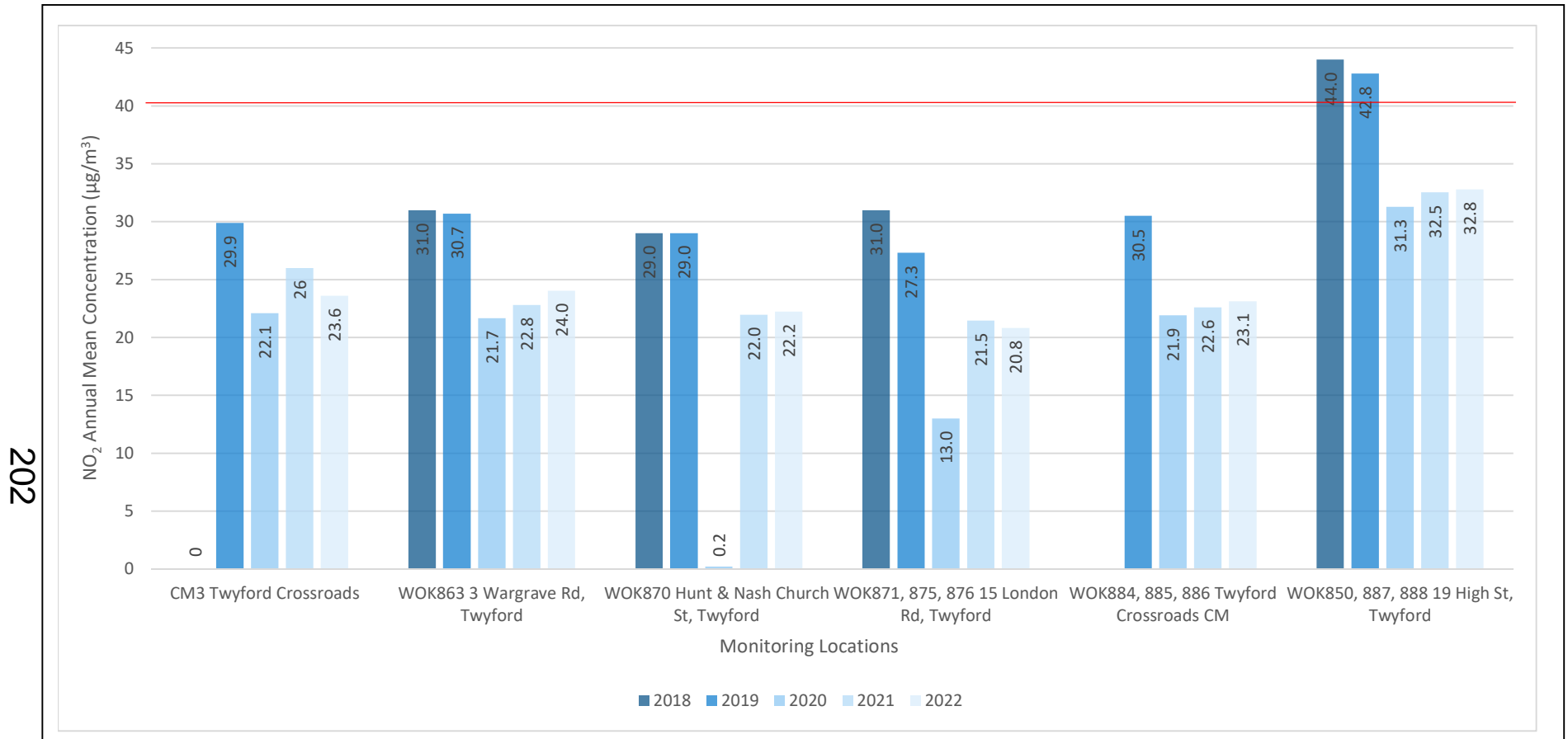


Figure A.2 presents NO₂ annual mean concentrations for sites within the Twyford Crossroad AQMA between years 2018 to 2022. There are no exceedances of the annual mean objective in 2022 and there is a general trend of reduction experienced across the sites since 2019.

Figure A.3 – Trends in Annual Mean NO₂ Concentrations in the M4 AQMA 2018-2022

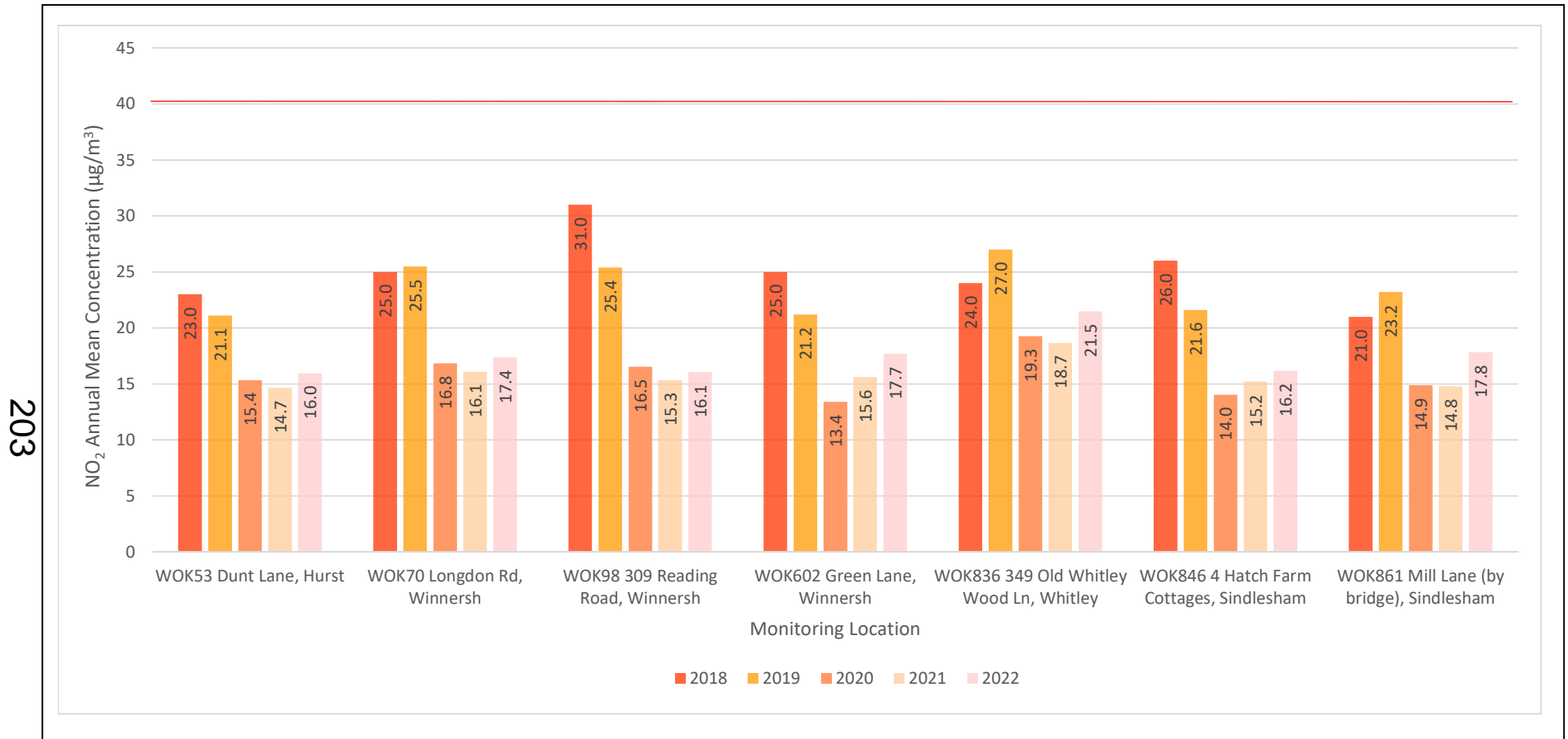


Figure A.3 presents NO₂ annual mean concentrations for sites located near the M4 AQMA between years 2018 to 2022. There are no exceedances of the annual mean objective in 2022 and there is a general trend of reduction experienced across the sites since 2018, and has continually been below the air quality objective since 2018.

Figure A.4 – Trends in Annual Mean NO₂ Concentrations within Wokingham (outside the AQMAs) 2018-2022

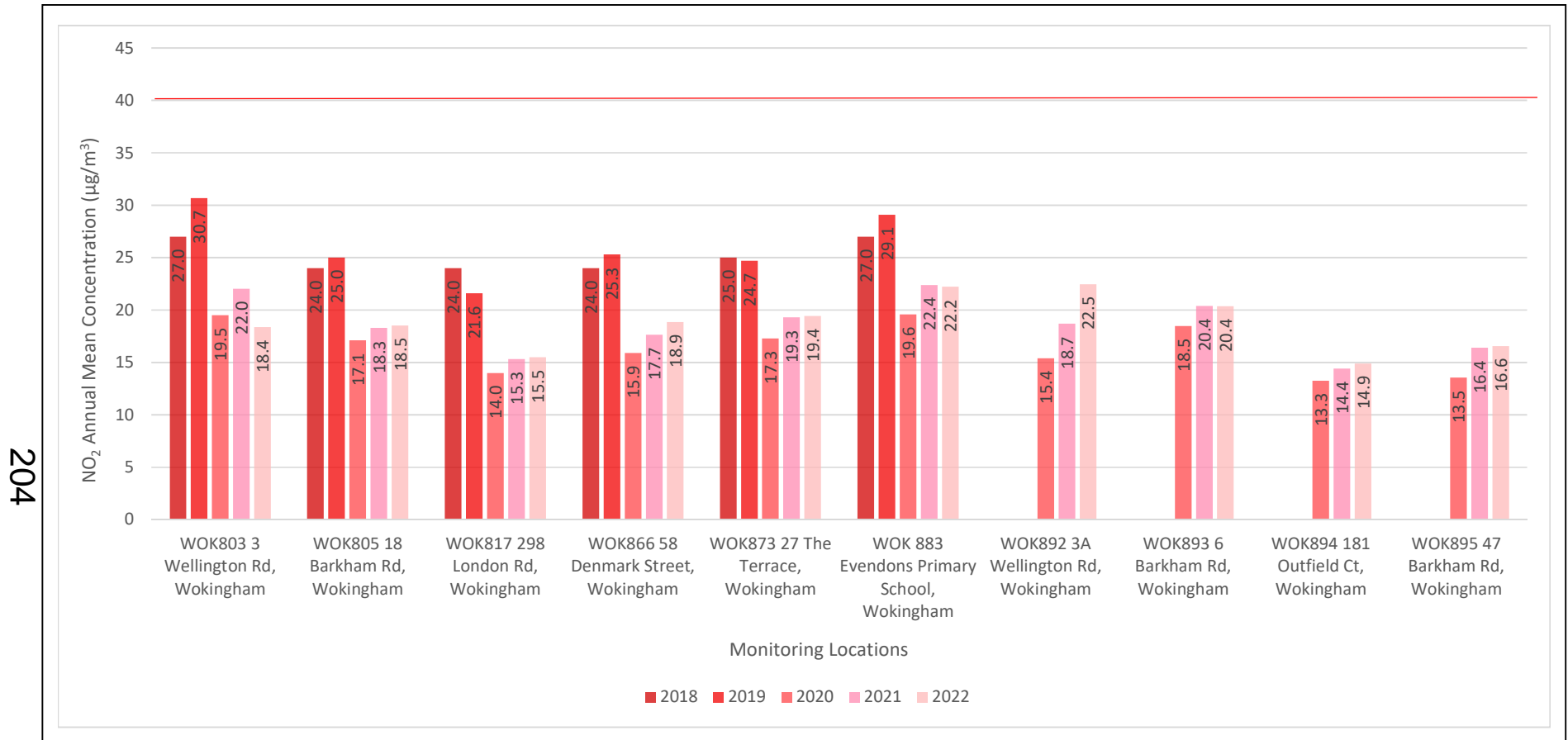


Figure A.4 presents NO₂ annual mean concentrations for sites located in Wokingham outside the AQMA in the years 2018 to 2022. There have been no exceedances of the annual mean objective since 2018 and the tubes located near the Rail Crossing WOK892, WOK893 and WK895 are securely within the objectives.

Figure A.5 – Trends in Annual Mean NO₂ Concentrations within Winnersh, Earley & Shinfield (outside AQMAs) 2018-2022

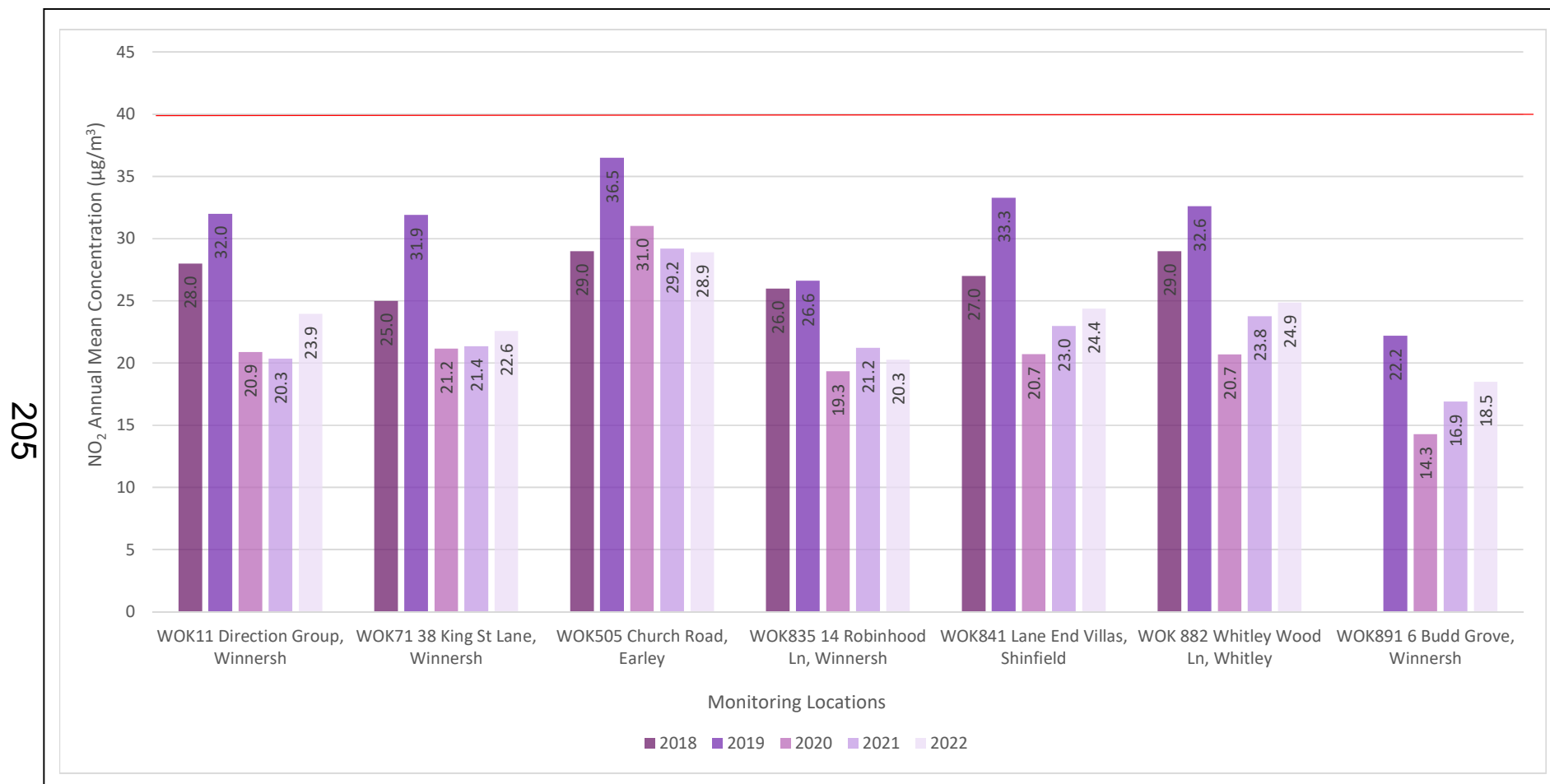


Figure A.5 presents NO₂ annual mean concentrations for sites located in Wokingham outside the AQMA in the years 2018 to 2022. There have been no exceedances of the annual mean objective since 2018 and the tubes NO₂ levels are securely within the objectives.

Figure A.6 – Trends in Annual Mean NO₂ Concentrations within Twyford, Sonning, Wargrave & Henley (outside AQMAs) 2018-22

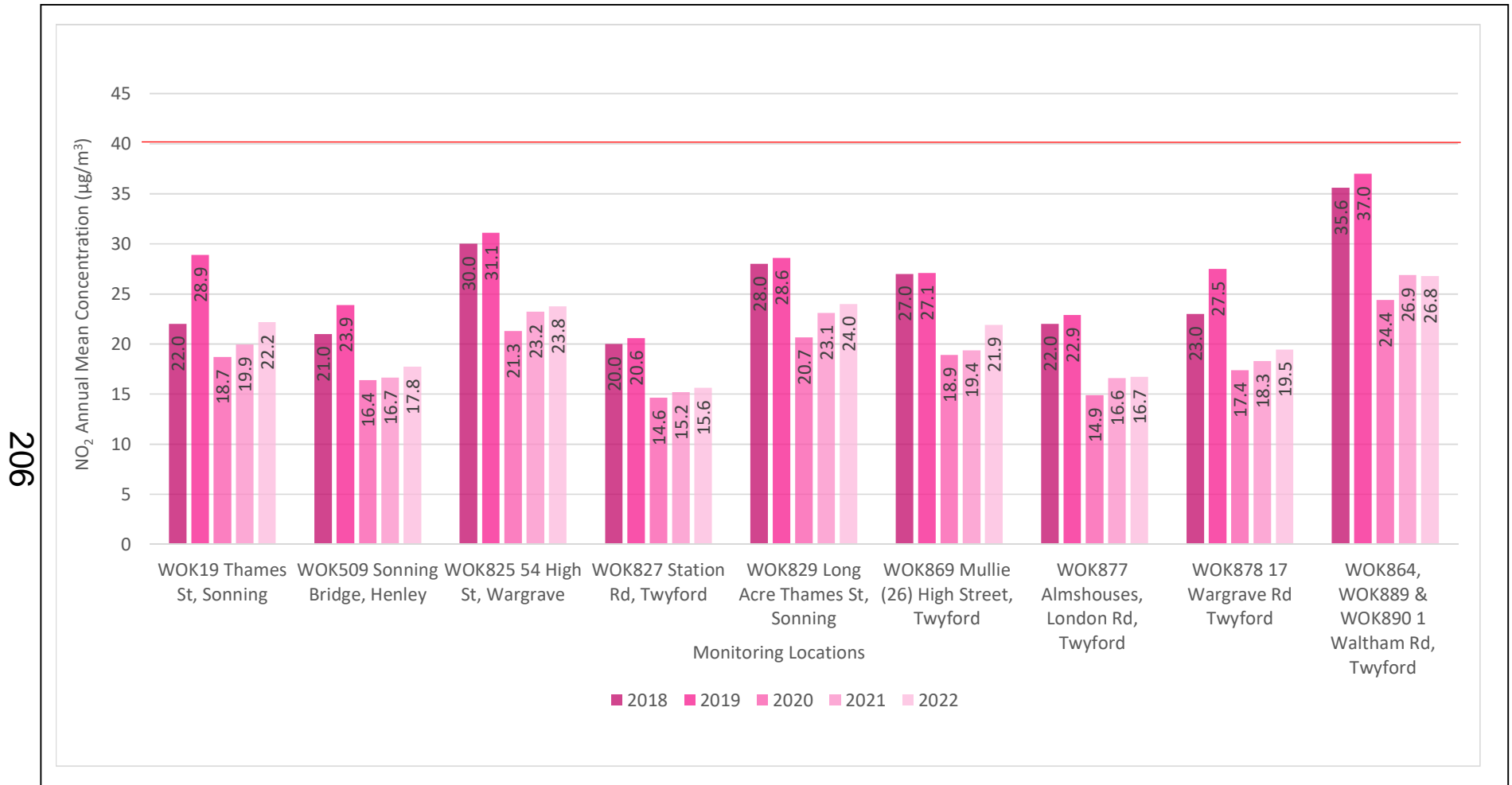


Figure A.6 presents NO₂ annual mean concentrations for sites located in Wokingham outside the AQMA in the years) 2018 to 2022. There have been no exceedances of the annual mean objective since 2018 and the tubes NO₂ levels are securely within the objectives.

Figure A.7 – Trends in Monthly Average NO₂ Concentrations from Wokingham Continuous Monitor for 2019-2022

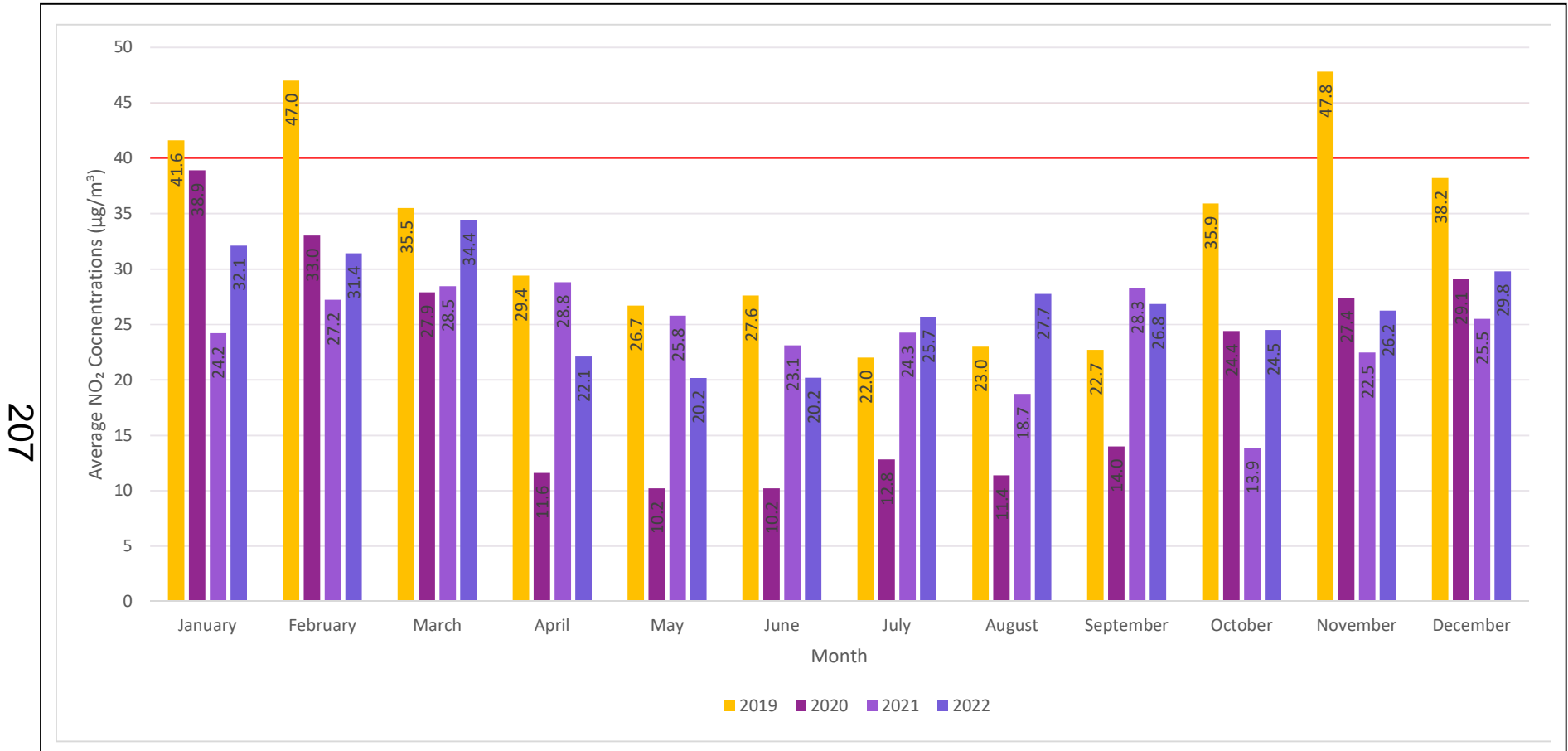


Figure A.7 presents NO₂ monthly trends for the Continuous monitor in Wokingham Town Centre from 2019 to 2022. There have been no exceedances of the annual mean objective since before 2018 this year the annual average was 21.1 µg/m³. You can see the typical NO₂ trend clearly represented by the change in the weather, as the NO₂ increases in the typically colder months due to the temperature inversions.

Figure A.8 – Trends in Monthly Average NO₂ Concentrations from Twyford Continuous Monitor for 2019-2022



Figure A.8 presents NO₂ monthly trends for the Continuous monitor in Twyford from 2019 to 2022. There have been no exceedances of the annual mean objective since starting monitoring in 2018 this year the annual average was 23.6 µg/m³. You can see the typical NO₂ trend clearly represented by the change in the weather, as the NO₂ increases in the typically colder months due to the temperature inversions.

Table A.5 – 1-Hour Mean NO₂ Monitoring Results, Number of 1-Hour Means > 200µg/m³

Site ID	X OS Grid Ref (Easting)	Y OS Grid Ref (Northing)	Site Type	Valid Data Capture for Monitoring Period (%) ⁽¹⁾	Valid Data Capture 2022 (%) ⁽²⁾	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
CM2 Peach Street Wokingham	481348	168603	Roadside	92.2	100	15	0	0 (112.34)	0	0
CM3 Twyford Cross Roads	478765	176003	Kerbside	95.7	100		0	0	13	0

Notes:

Results are presented as the number of 1-hour periods where concentrations greater than 200µg/m³ have been recorded.

209 Exceedances of the NO₂ 1-hour mean objective (200µg/m³ not to be exceeded more than 18 times/year) are shown in **bold**.

If the period of valid data is less than 85%, the 99.8th percentile of 1-hour means is provided in brackets.

(1) Data capture for the monitoring period, in cases where monitoring was only carried out for part of the year.

(2) Data capture for the full calendar year (e.g. if monitoring was carried out for 6 months, the maximum data capture for the full calendar year is 50%).

Appendix B: Full Monthly Diffusion Tube Results for 2022

Table B.1 – NO₂ 2022 Diffusion Tube Results (µg/m³)

DT ID	X OS Grid Ref (Easting)	Y OS Grid Ref (Northing)	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual Mean: Raw Data	Annual Mean: Annualised and Bias Adjusted 0.87	Annual Mean: Distance Corrected to Nearest Exposure	Comment
WOK 11	478133	170598	36.4	21.8	33.5	21.5	19.1	38.1		23.0	25.3	25.6	27.8	32.1	27.7	23.9		
WOK 19	475583	175704	34.0	24.1	31.5	20.8	20.5	23.7	23.0	22.3	26.8	26.6	28.8		25.6	22.2		
WOK 52	481521	168750	38.9	22.1	39.1	13.0	21.2	20.2	24.2	26.2	26.9	26.8	30.4	31.9	26.8	23.2		
WOK 53	479771	171093	29.4	17.5	25.1	14.1	12.7	14.3	12.9	16.1	17.6	16.6	21.9	23.0	18.4	16.0		
WOK 70	478011	170135	30.5		28.1	17.5				19.3	20.0	22.2	23.4	24.6	23.2	17.4		
WOK 71	477907	170191	33.0	23.3	33.6		19.0	22.5	21.0	25.4	26.4	26.4	27.2	29.1	26.1	22.6		
WOK 98	478611	170225		15.9	27.1	15.6	14.9	15.3	14.0	16.3	17.5	20.5	23.2	23.9	18.6	16.1		
WOK 505	474444	172062	42.0	32.0	40.8	32.2	25.9	28.4	31.5	22.7	35.3	32.6	38.0	39.2	33.4	28.9		
WOK 509	476414	182648	27.1	20.1	21.8	16.0	17.2	21.0	19.3	19.2	16.8	20.2	25.6	21.8	20.5	17.8		
WOK 602	478739	170107	26.5	12.7	28.7	21.4	14.6	14.4	18.8	32.6	22.5	15.1	14.3	23.5	20.4	17.7		
WOK 803	480651	168544	26.2	14.4	34.4	19.9	16.2	16.0	18.4	20.2	22.1	20.2	20.8	25.8	21.2	18.4		
WOK 805	480547	168543	29.3	12.8	32.6	21.1	15.7	18.1	17.5	20.0	18.0	21.4	23.9	26.5	21.4	18.5		
WOK 817	483231	168817		14.3	25.6	16.0	15.0	15.1	15.8	17.2	18.2	18.5	17.9	23.3	17.9	15.5		
WOK 825	478541	178634	39.4		28.6		20.5	23.7	25.8	26.1	26.1	25.9	27.4	31.3	27.5	23.8		
WOK 827	479047	175831	24.9	17.3	23.4	15.6	14.6	14.9	12.8	14.6	15.3	17.9	21.7	23.6	18.0	15.6		
WOK 829	475806	175577	36.5	25.3	32.5			20.8	25.3	26.7	27.9	26.3	28.6	27.2	27.7	24.0		
WOK 835	478192	170672	33.0		30.1				16.8	23.7	23.8	25.8	27.8	30.9	26.5	20.3		
WOK 836	472346	168684	30.8	27.4	36.7	19.2	18.8	21.8	21.2	22.3	21.9	25.0	25.8	27.0	24.8	21.5		
WOK 838	480995	168726		81.9	50.0	40.4	30.9	31.6	36.3	42.7	42.2	34.3	36.5	46.1	43.0	37.2		

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DT ID	X OS Grid Ref (Easting)	Y OS Grid Ref (Northing)	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual Mean: Raw Data	Annual Mean: Annualised and Bias Adjusted 0.87	Annual Mean: Distance Corrected to Nearest Exposure	Comment
WOK 841	473130	168783	40.5	28.9	31.8	27.4	21.5	23.3	24.3	25.0	29.6	25.2	27.4	33.1	28.2	24.4		
WOK 844	481492	168775	48.6	28.8	42.8	33.5	29.2	28.6	33.7	33.7	36.2	34.0	38.0	44.2	35.9	31.1		
WOK 846	477131	170019	26.1	14.7	26.9	21.4	14.7	13.6	15.4			16.3	15.0	22.9	18.7	16.2		
WOK 857	481031	168725	48.5	31.5	52.0	33.3	31.1	31.4	35.3	36.7	36.7	35.3	37.4	40.3	37.4	32.4		
WOK 861	476997	170107	26.1	18.0	28.0	17.8	15.9	17.5	19.1			18.4	20.6	24.6	20.6	17.8		
WOK 863	478768	176012	37.2		30.3	24.8	23.5	22.7	24.9	25.5	27.7	26.0	30.6	32.4	27.8	24.0		
WOK 864	478887	175945	40.9	28.9	38.5	25.2	26.2	29.9	28.3	26.3	30.9	32.4	36.6	30.5	-	-		Triplicate Site with WOK864, WOK 889 and WOK890 - Annual data provided for WOK890 only
WOK 866	481033	168300	28.9		26.8	19.1		19.2	17.2	18.3	19.4	21.1	21.6	26.3	21.8	18.9		
WOK 867	481104	168444	31.3	16.7	32.1	21.2	17.9	15.5	17.6	20.9	22.4	20.1	21.4	29.2	22.2	19.2		
WOK 869	478681	175998	29.7	20.8	28.3	20.0	20.5	21.2	21.4	23.2	23.8	26.9	28.2	39.7	25.3	21.9		
WOK 870	478813	175975	32.9	23.8	33.1	22.2	21.0	22.1	23.6	22.8	26.3	26.0	26.2	28.4	25.7	22.2		
WOK 871	478830	176025	37.6	22.5	29.1	19.5	20.3	18.3	21.2	20.7	25.5	23.3		28.7	-	-		Triplicate Site with WOK871 , WOK875 and WOK876 - Annual data provided for WOK876 only
WOK 872	480816	168793	37.2	28.3	37.4	26.2	25.5	25.5	28.3	27.6	31.5	31.1	32.7	35.3	30.5	26.4		
WOK 873	480863	168787	30.0	17.0	32.5	22.2		14.8	17.9	21.5	22.9	18.8	21.2	28.0	22.4	19.4		
WOK 874	481182	168603	37.3	23.1	33.4	25.9	20.4	18.3	21.9	24.3	25.0	22.2	26.8	32.7	25.9	22.4		
WOK 875	478830	176025	31.8	22.5	29.4	21.2	20.8	18.6	20.6	20.5	24.3	23.1		26.3	-	-		Triplicate Site with WOK871 , WOK875 and WOK876 - Annual data provided for WOK876 only
WOK 876	478830	176025	35.2	23.7		22.0				21.7	25.0	23.4			24.0	20.8		Triplicate Site with WOK871 , WOK875 and WOK876 - Annual data provided for WOK876 only

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DT ID	X OS Grid Ref (Easting)	Y OS Grid Ref (Northing)	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual Mean: Raw Data	Annual Mean: Annualised and Bias Adjusted 0.87	Annual Mean: Distance Corrected to Nearest Exposure	Comment
WOK 877	478904	176060	26.6	19.3	24.6	17.1	14.1	14.9	13.6	15.9	17.5	20.0	22.7	25.8	19.3	16.7		
WOK 878	478719	176100	30.2	17.7	32.0	18.7	17.1	18.0	19.4		22.4	21.6	22.9	27.4	22.5	19.5		
WOK 882	472299	168677	39.2	21.9	28.5	24.3	25.1	26.8	28.1	30.8	31.8		30.8	28.8	28.7	24.9		
WOK 883	480483	167011	32.3	21.6	32.5		19.2	22.3	21.5	23.0	26.1	25.4	28.0	30.7	25.7	22.2		
WOK 850	478733	175985	45.2	3.0	45.3	35.2	34.9	36.5	38.3	36.2	39.2	36.8	44.2	40.1	-	-		Triplicate Site with WOK 850, WOK 887 and WOK 888 - Annual data provided for WOK 888 only
WOK 887	478733	175985	75.9	38.9	40.7	32.8	32.7	35.1	39.8	37.9	35.8	38.4	41.2	30.4	-	-		Triplicate Site with WOK 850, WOK 887 and WOK 888 - Annual data provided for WOK 888 only
WOK 888	478733	175985	42.7	39.2	40.7	31.9	33.3	37.1	38.4	38.7	40.4	38.5	42.5	25.6	37.9	32.8		Triplicate Site with WOK 850, WOK 887 and WOK 888 - Annual data provided for WOK 888 only
WOK 889	478887	175945	35.4	28.8	39.7	24.3	24.6	29.7	26.8	25.1	26.7		32.6	34.0	-	-		Triplicate Site with WOK864, WOK 889 and WOK890 - Annual data provided for WOK890 only
WOK 890	478887	175945	42.7	29.9	40.8	23.7	25.4	28.7	28.1	26.7	30.9		35.2	34.6	30.9	26.8		Triplicate Site with WOK864, WOK 889 and WOK890 - Annual data provided for WOK890 only
WOK 891	477498	170218	30.4	16.4	26.2	18.6	16.4	17.3	16.5	19.5	20.7	22.4	24.7	27.4	21.4	18.5		
WOK 892	480547	168543	34.7	15.2	31.9	25.4	20.2	21.7	23.5	24.6	29.9	26.2	28.0	30.4	26.0	22.5		

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- All erroneous data has been removed from the NO₂ diffusion tube dataset presented in Table B.1.
- Annualisation has been conducted where data capture is <75% and >25% in line with LAQM.TG22.
- Local bias adjustment factor used.
- National bias adjustment factor used.
- Where applicable, data has been distance corrected for relevant exposure in the final column.
- Wokingham Borough Council confirm that all 2022 diffusion tube data has been uploaded to the Diffusion Tube Data Entry System.

Notes:

Exceedances of the NO₂ annual mean objective of 40µg/m³ are shown in **bold**.

NO₂ annual means exceeding 60µg/m³, indicating a potential exceedance of the NO₂ 1-hour mean objective are shown in **bold and underlined**.

See Appendix C for details on bias adjustment and annualisation.

Appendix C: Supporting Technical Information / Air Quality Monitoring Data QA/QC

New or Changed Sources Identified Within Wokingham Borough Council During 2022

Wokingham Borough Council has not identified any new sources relating to air quality within the reporting year of 2022.

Additional Air Quality Works Undertaken by Wokingham Borough Council During 2022

An additional study of PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} was initiated by Wokingham and is being carried out by TRL in from August 2021-23 across both Wokingham and Twyford. This project was developed as in 2020 Wokingham Borough Council Motion passed to monitor the level of PM_{2.5} across the borough. It was established that we have monitored for NO₂ across Wokingham over 20 years however we have not had an objective level for PM_{2.5}, until 2022, to try and achieve. Also as part of the Clean Air Strategy (2019), there is a commitment to move toward the lower limit of 10ug/m³ as set out in World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines by 2025.”

Due to budget constraints and what we were trying to monitor; MCERTS Osiris⁹ indicative instruments were chosen as best value for short term monitoring to ascertain whether there is a localised PM problem.

The monitors were situated at 4 locations across the Wokingham Borough which were Peach Street Wokingham, Winnersh, Lower Earley and Twyford. The 12 month monitoring commenced between August & October 2021 and finished in September 2022, as the data capture was not complete in some areas due to technical errors at several of the sites, further monitoring will continue into 2023. Table C.1 shows the results taken during the 2021 to 2022 which includes PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀. A further analysis will be provided in the 2023. However our findings to date show that the highest PM_{2.5} level recorded was 9.76 µg/m³ in Winnersh, and this is below the new Environmental Targets (Fine Particulate Matter)

⁹ <https://turnkey-instruments.com/product/osiris/>

(England) Regulations 2022, where by the annual level of PM_{2.5} must be below 10 µg/m³ in the target year of 2040. The highest PM₁₀ level recorded was 19.0 µg/m³ also located at the Winnersh monitor and remains well below the AQO of 40 µg/m³ per year. The findings so far conclude that both PM levels are within the objectives.

Table C.1 Statistics of period monitoring across Wokingham and Twyford for 12 months from 2021 to 2022.

Table C.1 – PM_{2.5} & PM₁₀ annual results from the Study in Wokingham

	Winnersh		Peach Street		Lower Earley		Twyford	
	PM ₁₀	PM _{2.5}	PM ₁₀	PM _{2.5}	PM ₁₀	PM _{2.5}	PM ₁₀	PM _{2.5}
Average	19.0	9.76	12.8	6.35	9.45	6.11	13.5	6.53
Exceedances of PM₁₀ National AQ objective of 24hour (50µg/m3)	11		0		0		0	
Period Data Capture (%)	75.3	68.9	86.1	86.1	100	100	78.9	47.0

That the highest PM_{2.5} level recorded was 9.76 µg/m³ in Winnersh, and this is below the new Environmental Targets (Fine Particulate Matter) (England) Regulations 2022, where by the annual level of PM_{2.5} must be below 10 µg/m³ in the target year of 2040. The highest PM₁₀ level recorded was 19.0 µg/m³ also located at the Winnersh monitor and remains well below the AQO of 40 µg/m³ per year. The findings so far conclude that both PM levels are within the objectives.

DEFRA Grant 2021

The grant awarded was £259,000 for the projects of creating an anti-idling campaign, measuring PM_{2.5} at the schools located near/within the AQMAs and looking at behaviour change of our residents with the aim of reducing exposure of children at school and raising awareness of parents /carers and children and the wider community.

PM_{2.5} Monitoring

AECOM, air quality consultants, were appointed to monitor PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ and weather at or close to 14 selected schools that were within or close to the AQMAs. Monitoring at the schools, took place between February 2022 to February 2023 for a minimum of 3 months to include term time and holiday period. This provided a snap shot of the levels around schools using a low-cost air quality sensor unit (Vortex) providing real-time measurements at 5 minute intervals. As the data was not ratified nor calibrated against a reference equivalent monitor, the data only provides an indicative measurement. The monitors were paired with weather sensors located close by to continuously measure parameters including wind speed and direction, temperature and rainfall. The air quality monitoring equipment was attached to a lamp post or street light and the weather station positions close by but on another lamp post or street light.

The data have not been annualised to represent an annual mean and are therefore the results are indicative only. However, the period means were all below the relevant air quality objectives. All the schools were within the Environmental Targets (Fine Particulate Matter) (England) Regulations 2023 for PM_{2.5} (i.e. the annual mean should not exceed 25 µg/m³ and the interim target of 12 µg/m³ to be met by end 2027 and long term target of 10 µg/m³ by 2040.)

Hourly, daily and weekly results were analysed for temporal distribution and also plotted to compare the difference between school term time and holiday. Lower concentrations seen in the daytime were due to warmer temperature allowing PM to disperse; the night time cooler temperatures reduce the atmospheric boundary layer and increase stability acting to trap PM closer to the ground. The concentrations did vary, weather clearly influenced concentrations such as rainfall acts to disperse and deplete pollution more readily. The winter higher concentrations from the continent were seen as opposed to the cleaner maritime air from the Atlantic. Patterns in road traffic flow effects but not as significant as weather conditions though. The morning rush hour increase in concentration was evident, as were higher concentrations recorded around 9am and then again around 4pm coinciding with the end of the school day. Concentrations seen to be higher in the middle of the week and then at the end of the week and weekends, these are due to changes in road traffic and commercial/industrial activity in the post-covid hybrid working pattern. Overall lower concentrations were noted in holiday periods.

The schools have all been sent their site-specific Particulate Monitoring Report and Action Plan. This detailed the details of the monitoring, the results and details analysis, a number of actions to further investigate the sources of pollution and to target air quality

improvements for children at the school and the surrounding area. It is recommended that an audit of sources around the school is considered before considering the most appropriate actions are taken forward. The audit could include looking at the age of boilers and where flues are positioned; considering the location of the playground to busy roads and does any screening exist; school travel plans and how accessibility for cycling/scooting to school; review of vehicle engine idling or traffic queuing outside the school. In addition a number of mitigation measures were identified, divided into generic which could be applicable across the district/borough and more specific to the school. For each measure an approximate timescale and cost was given based on the following criteria: potential air quality benefits; cost; deliverability; and wider benefits (e.g. improved safety, child health and promotion of sustainable transport). See Appendix A for an example of a generic and specific mitigation measure table.

While the study did not identify any significant health risks associated with exposure to PM_{2.5} recommendations have been made to reduce the levels of PM_{2.5} in the air wherever possible.

Biggest Loser

During 2022 the Biggest Loser section of the DEFRA Grant award was started and this involved using diffusion tubes to measure the NO₂ outside 14 Schools within Wokingham Borough Council which are located closest to the 3 AQMA's. The 2022 results will be compared against the 2023 results to see if the Behaviour change experiment of education children & carers and erecting signs asking for the guardians who drop off the children actually makes a difference outside a school.

QA/QC of Diffusion Tube Monitoring

Wokingham Borough Council uses GRADKO as the supplier used for diffusion tubes within 2022 and the method of preparation, e.g. 20% TEA in water. The monitoring that has been completed is in adherence with the 2022 Diffusion Tube Monitoring Calendar.

The Workplace Analysis Scheme for Proficiency (WASP) is an independent analytical performance testing scheme, operated by the Health and Safety Laboratory (HSL). WASP formed a key part of the former UK NO₂ Network's QA/QC and remains an important QA/QC exercise for laboratories supplying diffusion tubes to Local Authorities for use in the context

of Local Air Quality Management. The laboratory participants analyse four spiked tubes and report the results to HSL. HSL assign a performance score to each laboratory's result, based on their deviation from the known mass of nitrite in the analyte. The Performance criteria are due to be changed, at present the criteria are based on the z-score method, and equates to the following:

GOOD: Results obtained by the participating laboratory are on average within 13% of the assigned value. This equates to a Rolling Performance Index (RPI) of 169 or less.

ACCEPTABLE: Results obtained by the participating laboratory are on average within 13-26% of the assigned value. This equates to an RPI of 169 - 676.

WARNING: Results obtained by the participating laboratory are on average within 26 – 39% of the assigned value. This equates to an RPI of 676 - 1521.

FAILURE: Results obtained by the participating laboratory differ by more than 39% of the assigned value. This equates to an RPI of greater than 1521.

However, from April 2009, the criteria has been based upon the Rolling Performance Index (RPI) statistic and will be tightened to the following:

GOOD: Results obtained by the participating laboratory are on average within 7.5% of the assigned value. This equates to an RPI of 56.25 or less.

ACCEPTABLE: Results obtained by the participating laboratory are on average within 15% of the assigned value. This equates to an RPI of 225 or less.

UNACCEPTABLE: Results obtained by the participating laboratory differ by more than 15% of the assigned value. This equates to an RPI of greater than 225.

Wokingham Borough Council use Gradko International for the supply and analysis of the nitrogen dioxide diffusion tubes for their non-automatic monitoring programme. Gradko's performance for AIR PT please see Table C.2. Nitrogen Dioxide AIR PT 2019.

Diffusion Tube Annualisation

Both Sites WOK70 and WOK835 required annualisation as the data capture was less than 75% but greater than 25%. Both sites only captured 66.6 %. Details of the calculation method undertaken provided in Table C.1. WOK70 was missing the data due from the tubes being absent on change over day in February, May, June and July. WOK835 was also missing the data due from the tubes being absent in February, April, May and June. If both of these sites had continued to have data missing then they would have been relocated to

a new nearby receptor or lamppost. Three sites have been used for annualisation as the fourth nearest site Reading (URN REA1 2022) had insufficient (<85%) data capture and could not be used.

Table C.1 – Annualisation Summary (concentrations presented in µg/m³)

Site ID	Annualisation Factor Oxford URN Site OX8 2022	Annualisation Factor Swindon URN Site SWHO 2022	Annualisation Factor Chilbolton Observatory URN CHBO 2022	Average Annualisation Factor	Raw Data Annual Mean	Annualised Annual Mean
WOK70	0.8802	0.8446	0.8704	0.8651	23.2	20.1
WOK835	0.8808	0.8712	0.9002	0.8841	26.5	23.4

Diffusion Tube Bias Adjustment Factors

The diffusion tube data presented within the 2022 ASR have been corrected for bias using an adjustment factor. Bias represents the overall tendency of the diffusion tubes to under or over-read relative to the reference chemiluminescence analyser. LAQM.TG22 provides guidance with regard to the application of a bias adjustment factor to correct diffusion tube monitoring. Triplicate co-location studies can be used to determine a local bias factor based on the comparison of diffusion tube results with data taken from NO_x/NO₂ continuous analysers. Alternatively, the national database of diffusion tube co-location surveys provides bias factors for the relevant laboratory and preparation method.

Wokingham Borough Council have applied a local bias adjustment factor of **0.87** to the 2022 monitoring data. A summary of bias adjustment factors used by Wokingham Borough Council over the past five years is presented in Table C.2. The sites which were used were Peach Street in Wokingham Town Centre (AQMA) and Twyford Cross Roads (AQMA). Gradko International Ltd of St Martin’s House 77 Wales Street Winchester Hampshire is the supplier and analyst of the nitrogen dioxide diffusion tubes. The tubes are analysed by U.V. spectrophotometry. The limit of detection is 20% TEA/Water.

Factor from Local Co-location Studies and Discussion of Choice of Factor to Use

The local co-located sites combined are used as bias adjustment factor 0.83 was applied. A copy of the co-location spreadsheet used is provided below.

In determining the bias adjustment factor for the 2022 data the following was taken into consideration:

Cases where the locally obtained bias adjustment factor may be more representative:

- Where the diffusion tube exposure periods weekly or fortnightly – the Wokingham sites are town centre & Twyford Village Cross Roads, and the co-location study is monthly.
- For co-location sites with “good” precision for the diffusion tubes and with high quality chemiluminescence results – It can be seen from Figure C.4 below that both the Wokingham Town Centre & Twyford Village Cross Roads co-location study achieved “good” precision, and “good Data Capture” both at 95% & 96%. The chemiluminescence monitors results (automatic monitoring) are high quality (see the QA/QC of Automatic Monitoring section above).

Cases where the combined (national) bias adjustment factor may be more representative:

- Where the survey consists of tubes exposed over a range of settings, which differ from the co-location site – this is not the case for Wokingham Borough.
- Where the co-location study is for less than nine months, although the diffusion tube monitoring is for a longer period - The Wokingham town centre & Twyford Village Cross Roads co-location study and diffusion tube surveys are for a full calendar year (2020).
- Where the automatic analyser has been operated using local, rather than national, QA/QC procedures - The Wokingham town centre chemiluminescence results (automatic monitoring) are high quality, see the QA/QC of Automatic Monitoring section above.
- Where data capture from the automatic analyser is less than 90%, or there have been problems with data quality. Due to Data capture from the Wokingham Town centre automatic monitor was 95% in 2020 (Figure C.3) & the data capture from the Twyford Cross Roads automatic monitor was 96% in 2021 (Figure C.3).
- For co-location sites with “poor” precision or laboratories with predominately “poor” precision, as set out on the Review & Assessment Helpdesk website - It can be seen from the table below that both the Wokingham Town Centre & Twyford Village Cross Roads co-location study & achieved “good” precision and the laboratory precision was “good”. See the QA/QC of Diffusion Tube Monitoring section above.

In conclusion, it can be seen from the discussion above that due to the high data capture rate from the both the automatic analyser in Twyford (96%) and Wokingham (95%) that the combined back Local Bias Adjustment Factor was of 0.87 was used.

Table C.2 – Bias Adjustment Factor

Monitoring Year	Local or National	If National, Version of National Spreadsheet	Adjustment Factor
2022	Local		0.87
2021	Local	-	0.83
2020	National	-	0.81
2019	National	09/20	0.88
2018	Local	-	0.95

Table C.3 – Local Bias Adjustment Calculation

	Local Bias Adjustment Wokingham	Local Bias Adjustment Twyford
Periods used to calculate bias	11	11
Bias Factor A	0.85 (0.79 - 0.93)	0.89 (0.83 - 0.96)
Bias Factor B	18% (8% - 27%)	13% (5% - 21%)
Diffusion Tube Mean ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	32.7	26.2
Mean CV (Precision)	2.8%	3.1%
Automatic Mean ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	27.8	23.2
Data Capture	95%	96%
Adjusted Tube Mean ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	28 (26 - 30)	23 (22 - 25)

Notes:

A combined local bias adjustment factor of **0.87** has been used to bias adjust the 2022 diffusion tube results.

NO₂ Fall-off with Distance from the Road

Wherever possible, monitoring locations are representative of exposure. However, where this is not possible, the NO₂ concentration at the nearest location relevant for exposure has been estimated using the Diffusion Tube Data Processing Tool/NO₂ fall-off with distance calculator available on the LAQM Support website. Where appropriate, non-automatic annual mean NO₂ concentrations corrected for distance are presented in Table B.1. No diffusion tube NO₂ monitoring locations within Wokingham Borough Council required distance correction during 2022.

QA/QC of Automatic Monitoring

TRL carry out the QA/QC on behalf of Wokingham Borough Council, below is their QA/QC procedure.

Site operation

Routine instrument calibrations are conducted approximately once a month, which involve zero and span checks, a written record of the gas analyser diagnostics and a general visual inspection of all equipment is undertaken. There is a written operating procedure, and a calibration record sheet is completed at every site visit.

Data retrieval and daily data checking

Data from the monitoring station is retrieved and processed on a Campbell CR10x data logger as 15-minute mean data. The logger was interrogated via a Siemens TC35i GSM modem at 8-hourly intervals by the ENVIEW 2000 software hosted at TRL. This was used to retrieve, check and archive data. TRL's internal QA/QC procedures require all data to be backed up on a secure server and all documentation associated with each site to be uniquely identified and securely stored to provide an audit trail. Daily data inspections are undertaken during office hours using the facilities of the Data Management System. Initial observations of the Management System indicate whether the site has been contacted during its nominated 'poll time' overnight. If this has not been successful a manual poll of the site may be required. If this is not successful further investigation of the communications integrity will be required to establish contact with the site modem and data logger. Three-day plots of recorded data are viewed for the requested site, and these are inspected and assessed for continuity, validity, minimum and maximum values, date and time, power failures and general integrity. All anomalies are recorded on the Daily Check sheet, as required. Any anomalies or queries arising from daily inspection of data, or system operation, are brought to the attention of the Project Manager who will evaluate the situation and initialise any necessary action. In the event that the PM is not available, contact will be made with the next available senior person within the monitoring team. Any issues identified with equipment operation will be referred to the client for attention within 24 hours (excluding weekends). On a weekly basis, data are examined using summary statistics and outlier analysis to establish data validity. If unusual data episodes are recorded, these would be routinely examined over longer data periods to establish their impact on trends but would also be cross referenced with data peaks and troughs recorded at other national monitoring stations. In addition, integrity and validity of data logger clock times are checked, and any

significant errors recorded in the Data Management System logbook. All site data recorded through the Data Management System is archived on TRL's Network. The data is backed up daily, and the TRL IT Department maintains these data within their long-term and secure archives. This secures all data in the event of any system failure.

Data calibration and ratification

Data is ratified as per AURN recommended procedures. The calibration and ratification process for automatic gas analysers corrects the raw dataset for any drift in the zero baseline and the upper range of the instrument. This is done using Evista software-based calibration and ratification process which incorporates the zero and span check information from the calibration visits. The zero reading recorded during the calibration visits is used to adjust any offset of the baseline of the data. The difference between the span value obtained between one calibration visit and the next visit is used to calculate a factor. This change is assumed to occur at the same rate over the period between calibrations and as such the factor is used as a linear data scaler. This effectively results in the start of the period having no factor applied and the end of the period being scaled with the full factor with a sliding scale of the factor in-between. After applying the calibration factors, it is essential to screen the data, by visual examination, to see if they contain any unusual measurements or outliers. Errors in the data may occur as a result of equipment failure, human error, power failures, interference or other disturbances. Data validation and ratification is an important step in the monitoring process. Ratification involves considerable knowledge of pollutant behaviour and dispersion, instrumentation characteristics, field experience and judgement. On completion of this data correction procedure, the data set is converted to hourly means and a summary of the data is provided to Wokingham Borough Council at quarterly intervals and a calendar year annual report is prepared.

Independent Site Audits

In addition to these checks an independent site audit is carried out every 12 months to ensure the monitoring equipment is operating correctly. The audits that are carried out utilise procedures that are applied within DEFRA's National Automatic Air Monitoring Networks Quality Control Programme. The efficiency of the analyser's convertor is checked, and the analyser is also flow and leak tested. The gas bottle used for calibrations on site is also checked against the auditor's gas bottle to ensure the stability of the gas concentration.

Wokingham Town Centre

The site audit for the Wokingham Town Centre automatic monitoring unit was carried out on the 20th of December 2022 however, as the analyser exhibited a very unstable response to the site zero system, therefore repeated the audit took place for both monitors on 26th January 2023. The repeat visit using an audit zero cylinder gave a good steady state response in stark contrast to the site zero system. The equipment audits utilise procedures that are applied within the National Automatic Air Monitoring Network Quality Control Programme.

A major factor governing the analyser's performance is the NO_x analyser's converter and its ability to reduce the nitrogen dioxide to nitric oxide. The recommended range for instrumentation in the national automatic air monitoring network is in the range of 98% - 102% efficient. Our tests show the converter in the Wokingham analyser to be 98.4% efficient at an NO₂ concentration of 249ppb and 99.1% efficient at an NO₂ concentration of 118ppb. These are good results.

To ensure that the analyser was sampling only ambient air the instrument was leak checked. The result was satisfactory, indicating that the analyser sampling systems was free of significant leaks. The analyser exhibited good steady state responses to both zero and span (calibration) gases with acceptable levels of variation (noise).

The analyser flow rate was measured using a calibrated flow meter and compared against the analyser's flow rate sensor to evaluate its accuracy. The analyser's flow rate sensor was within $\pm 10\%$ of the calibrated flow meter and therefore passed this test.

Based on the NO_x analyser's response to the audit standard and audit zero, the concentrations of the stations NO cylinder have been reassessed. This provides an indication of the on-site standards stability (the gas concentration stabilities). For the purpose of these stability checks, the criteria adopted within the national network, and used here, is that the recalculated concentration should lie within 10% of the supplier's stated concentrations. The site cylinder was tested at all four TRL air quality monitoring stations and at each station the cylinder recalculation results were all within 3%. The results of the recalculations are presented in Table C.3

Table C.3 Wokingham Town Centres Recalculated Concentrations

TRL Wokingham – NO cylinder 21901300298589				
	NOx (ppb)	% change from stated	NO (ppb)	% change from stated
Manufacturers Stated Concentration	445	---	444	---
Recalculated concentration (26/01/23)	457	2.8	448	1.0

The recalculated results for the site NO cylinder 21901300298589 indicates the concentrations are stable, within the definition adopted above, and can therefore reliably be used to scale ambient data.

Twyford Village Cross Roads

The site audit for the Twyford Town Centre automatic monitoring unit was carried out on 26th January 2023. A major factor governing the analyser's performance is the NOx analyser's converter and its ability to reduce the nitrogen dioxide to nitric oxide. The recommended range for instrumentation in the national automatic air monitoring network is in the range of 98% - 102% efficient. Our tests show the converter in the Twyford analyser to be 99.5% efficient at an NO₂ concentration of 271 ppb. Our tests show the converter in the Twyford analyser to be 99.5% efficient at an NO₂ concentration of 138 ppb. These are good result.

To ensure that the analyser was sampling only ambient air the instrument was leak checked. The results were satisfactory, indicating that the analyser sampling systems were free of significant leaks. The analyser exhibited good steady state responses to both zero and span (calibration) gases with acceptable levels of variation (noise).

As mentioned in the introduction, the site zero system produced a very unstable response, therefore the audit zero cylinder was used to determine the zero response of the analyser. In order to provide reliable zero calibration results, we recommend the zero scrubber materials are changed at the next available opportunity.

The analyser flow rate was measured using a calibrated flow meter and compared against the analyser's flow rate sensor to evaluate its accuracy. The analyser's flow rate sensor was within $\pm 10\%$ of the calibrated flow meter and therefore passed this test.

Based on the NO_x analyser's response to the audit standard and audit zero, the concentrations of the stations NO cylinder have been reassessed. This provides an indication of the on-site standards stability (the gas concentration stabilities). For the purpose of these stability checks, the criteria adopted within the national network, and used here, is that the recalculated concentration should lie within 10% of the suppliers stated concentrations. The site cylinder was tested at all four TRL air quality monitoring stations and at each station the cylinder recalculation results were all within 3%. The results of the recalculations are presented in Table C.4.

Table C.4 Twyford Village Cross Roads Recalculated Concentrations

TRL Twyford – NO cylinder 21901300298589				
	NO_x (ppb)	% change from stated	NO (ppb)	% change from stated
Manufacturers Stated Concentration	445	---	444	---
Recalculated concentration (26/01/23)	457	2.8	448	1.0

The recalculated results for the site NO cylinder 21901300298589 indicates the concentrations are stable, within the definition adopted above, and can therefore reliably be used to scale ambient data.

Certificate of Calibration

Calibration factors and zeros have been produced on the basis of the audit calibrations conducted. All of these calibrations were conducted with transfer standards traceable to national metrology standards. The Certificate of Calibration provides the calibration and zero response factors for the oxides of nitrogen analysers under test on the day of the audits. It is available upon request from TRL.

Data Management

The following recommendations and comments can be made as a result of these audits:

- Compare the TRL database scaling factors for the day of the audit with the factors and zeros on the Certificate of Calibration. If a deviation greater than the uncertainty

associated with the calibration factor on the certificate is found, investigate the underlying reason and implement suitable data management actions.

Automatic Monitoring Annualisation

All automatic monitoring locations within Wokingham Borough Council recorded data capture of greater than 75% therefore it was not required to annualise any monitoring data.

NO₂ Fall-off with Distance from the Road

Wherever possible, monitoring locations are representative of exposure. However, where this is not possible, the NO₂ concentration at the nearest location relevant for exposure has been estimated using the NO₂ fall-off with distance calculator available on the LAQM Support website. Where appropriate, non-automatic annual mean NO₂ concentrations corrected for distance are presented in Table B.1.)

No automatic NO₂ monitoring locations within Wokingham Borough Council required distance correction during 2022.

Appendix D: Map(s) of Monitoring Locations and AQMAs

Figure D.1 – Map of Wokingham Town Centre AQMA

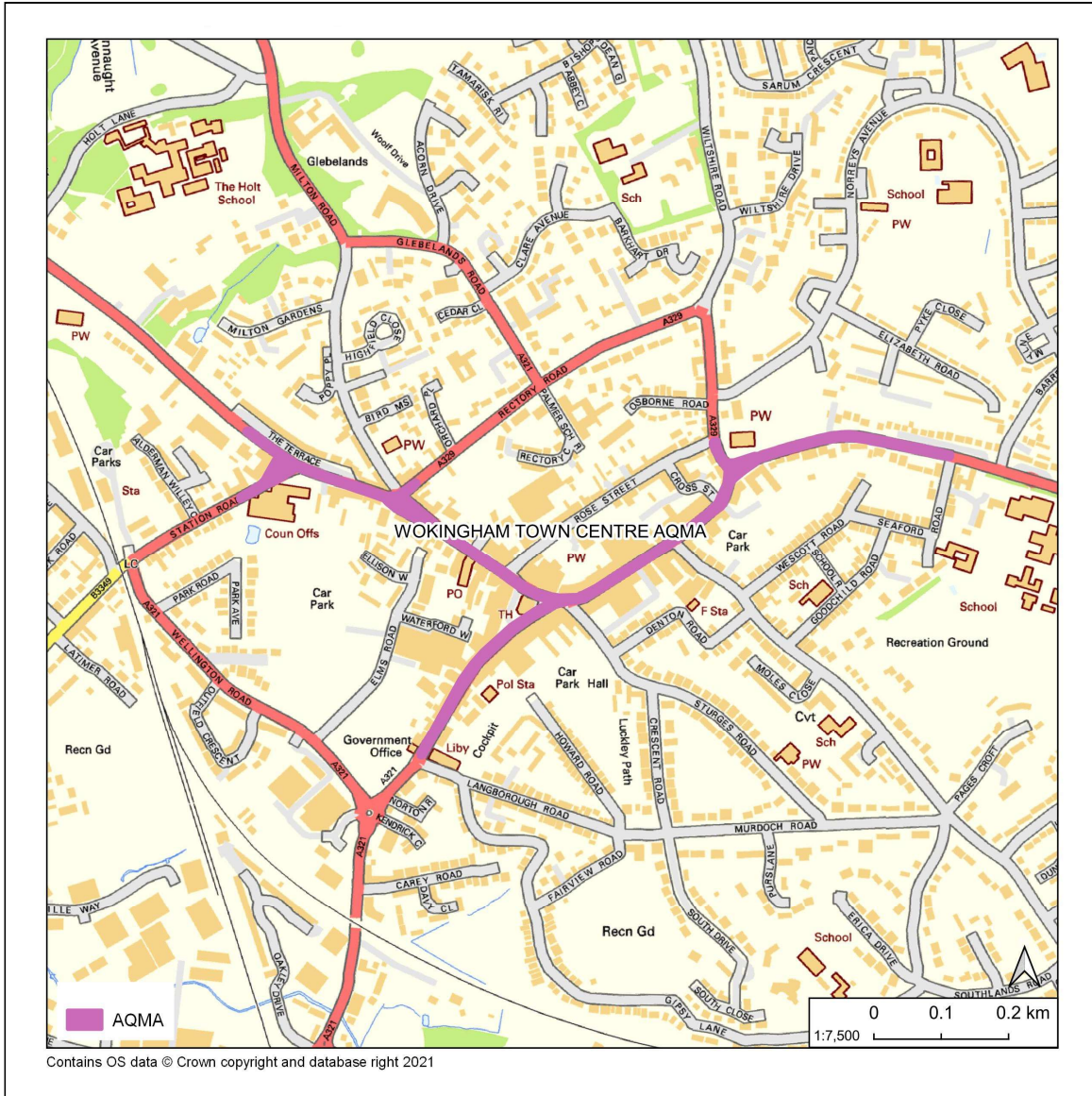


Figure D.2 – Map of Tywford Crossroads AQMA

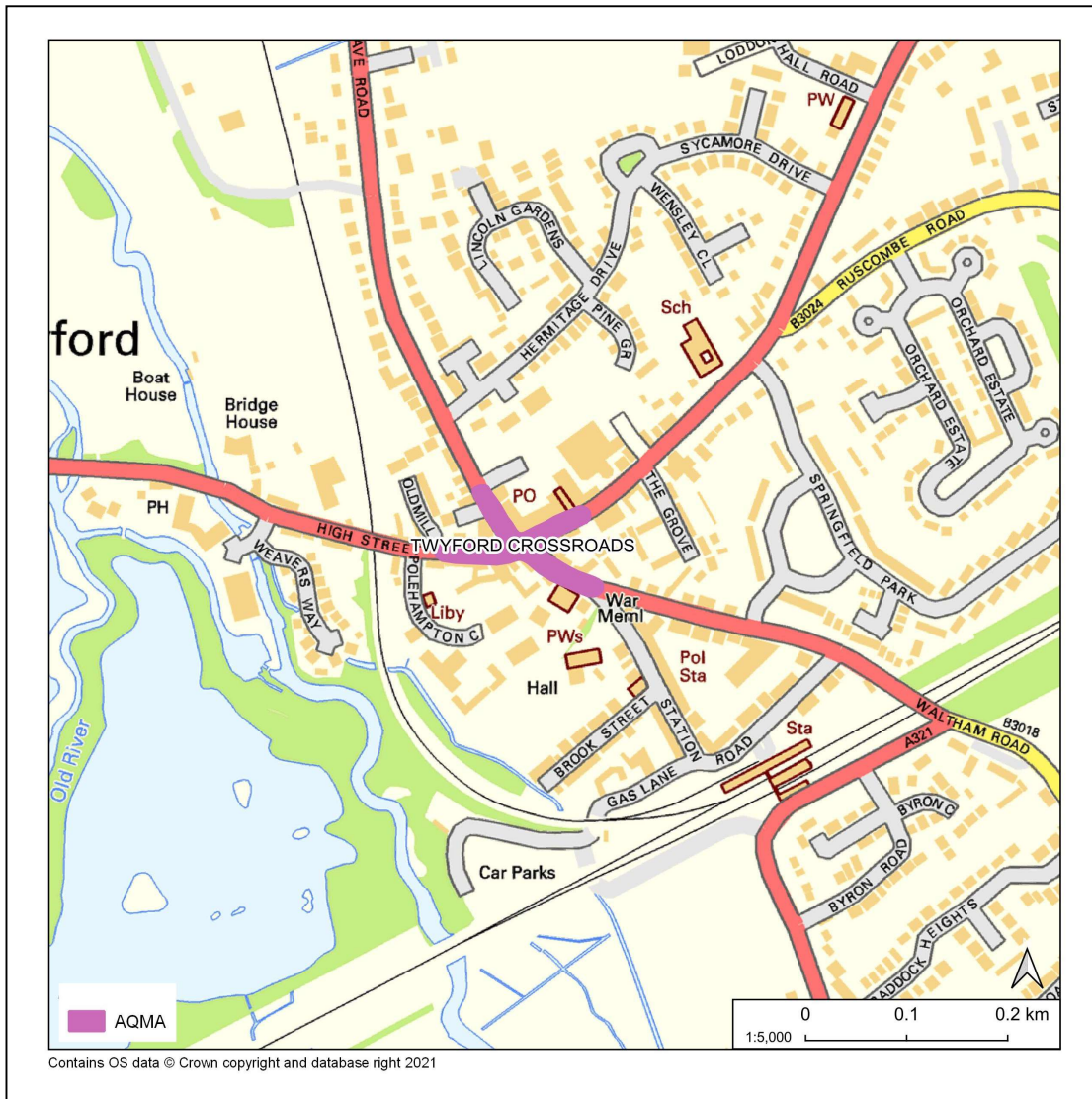


Figure D.3– Map of M4 AQMA

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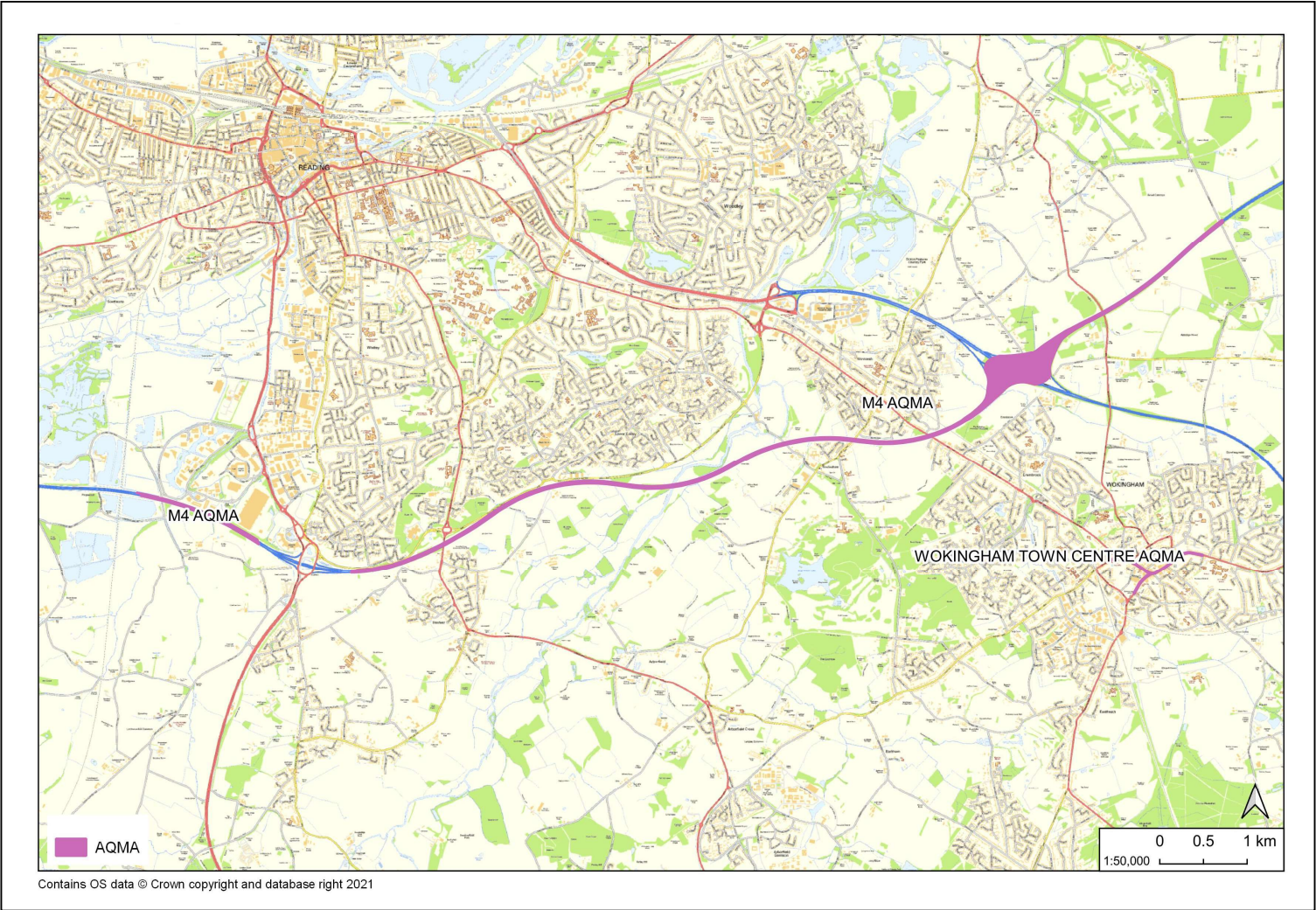


Figure D.4 – Map of M4 (East) Air Quality Monitoring Sites

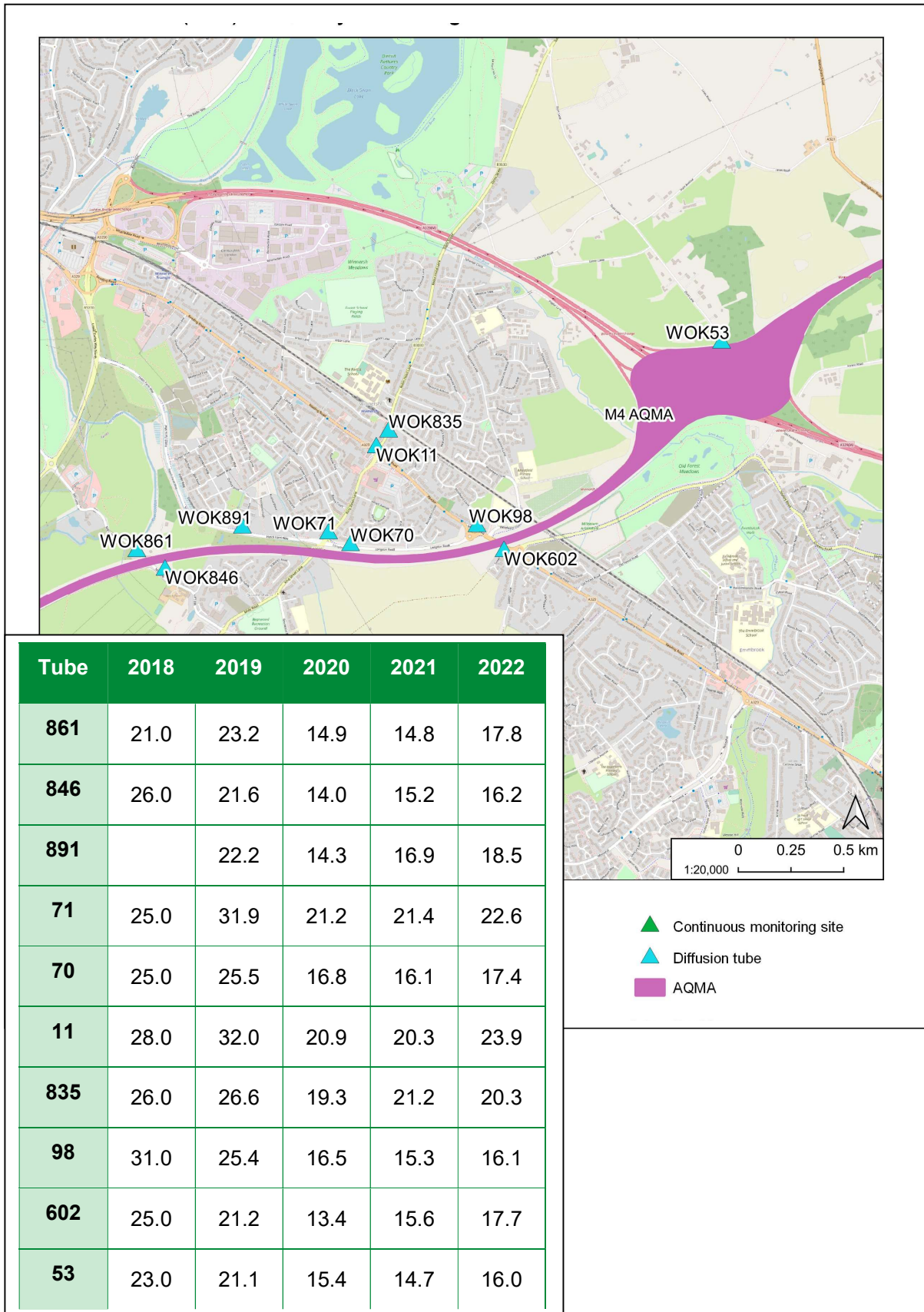


Figure D.5 – Map M4 (West) Air Quality Monitoring Sites

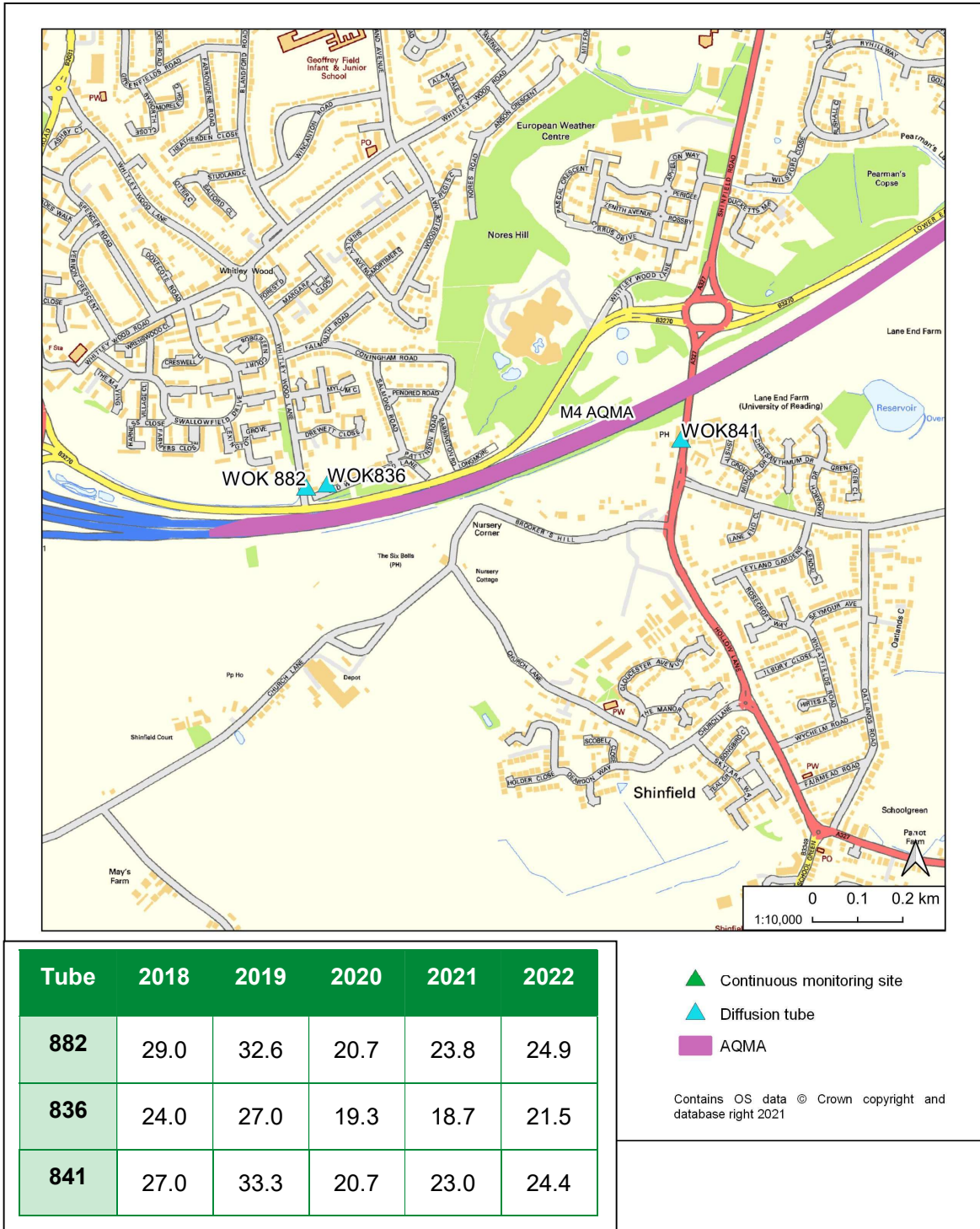


Figure D.6 – Map of Twyford Crossroads AQMA Air Quality Monitoring sites

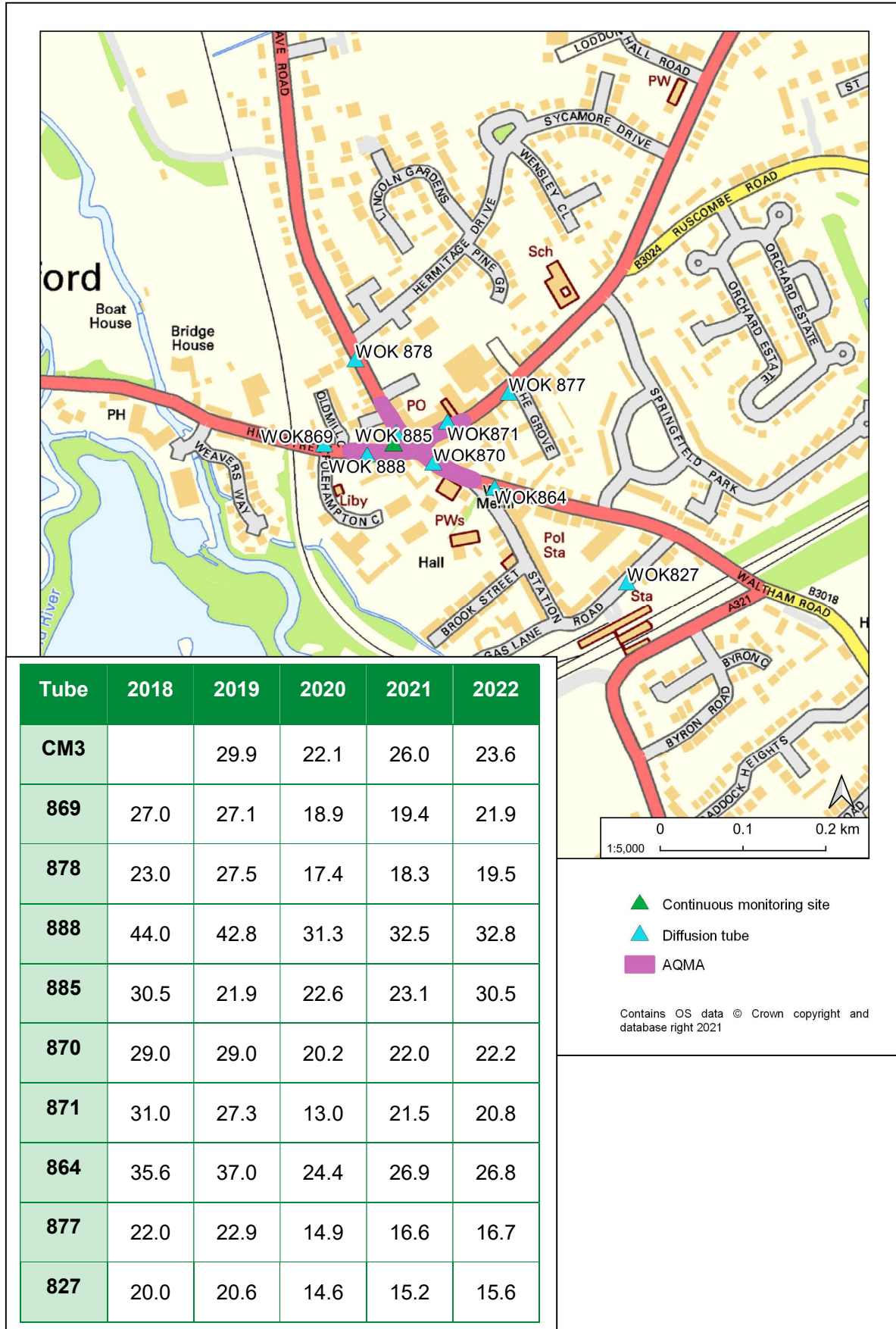
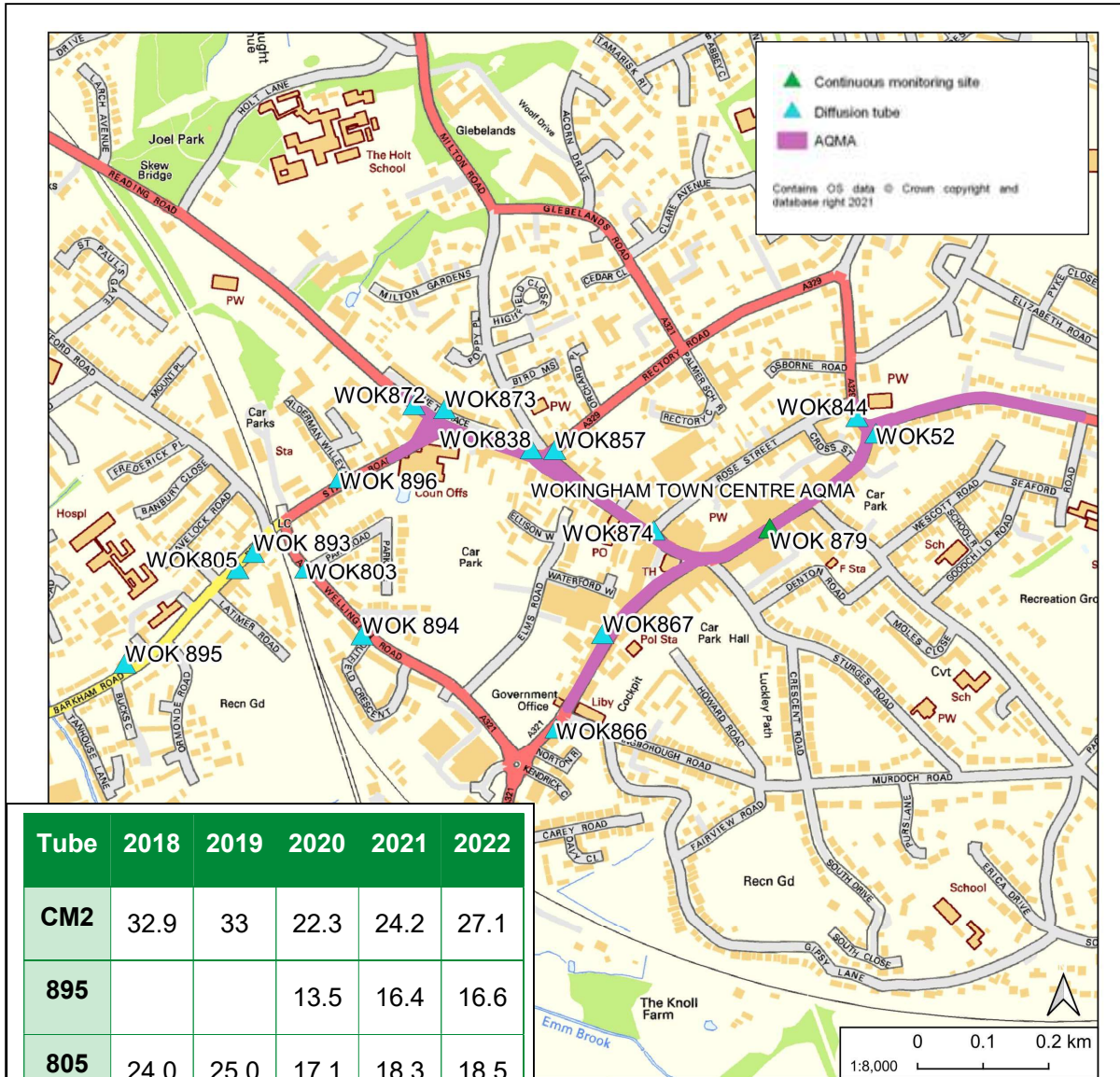


Figure D.7 – Map of Wokingham Town Centre AQMA Monitoring Locations



Tube	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
CM2	32.9	33	22.3	24.2	27.1
895			13.5	16.4	16.6
805	24.0	25.0	17.1	18.3	18.5
893			18.5	20.4	20.4
803	27.0	30.7	19.5	22.0	18.4
896				14.9	16.6
872	33.0	32.4	23.0	25.5	26.4
894			13.3	14.4	14.9
874	25.0	28.9	20.0	21.7	22.4
52	26.0	30.3	21.4	22.8	23.2

Tube	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
838	41.0	41.8	28.6	36.5	37.2
857	39.3	39.9	29.0	31.9	32.4
867	23.6	23.7	13.4	18.1	19.2
866	24.0	25.3	15.9	17.7	18.9
879	33.0	22.2	24.0	27.6	28.0
844	36.0	38.6	25.9	31.2	31.1

Figure D.8 – Map of Sonning Air Quality Monitoring Locations

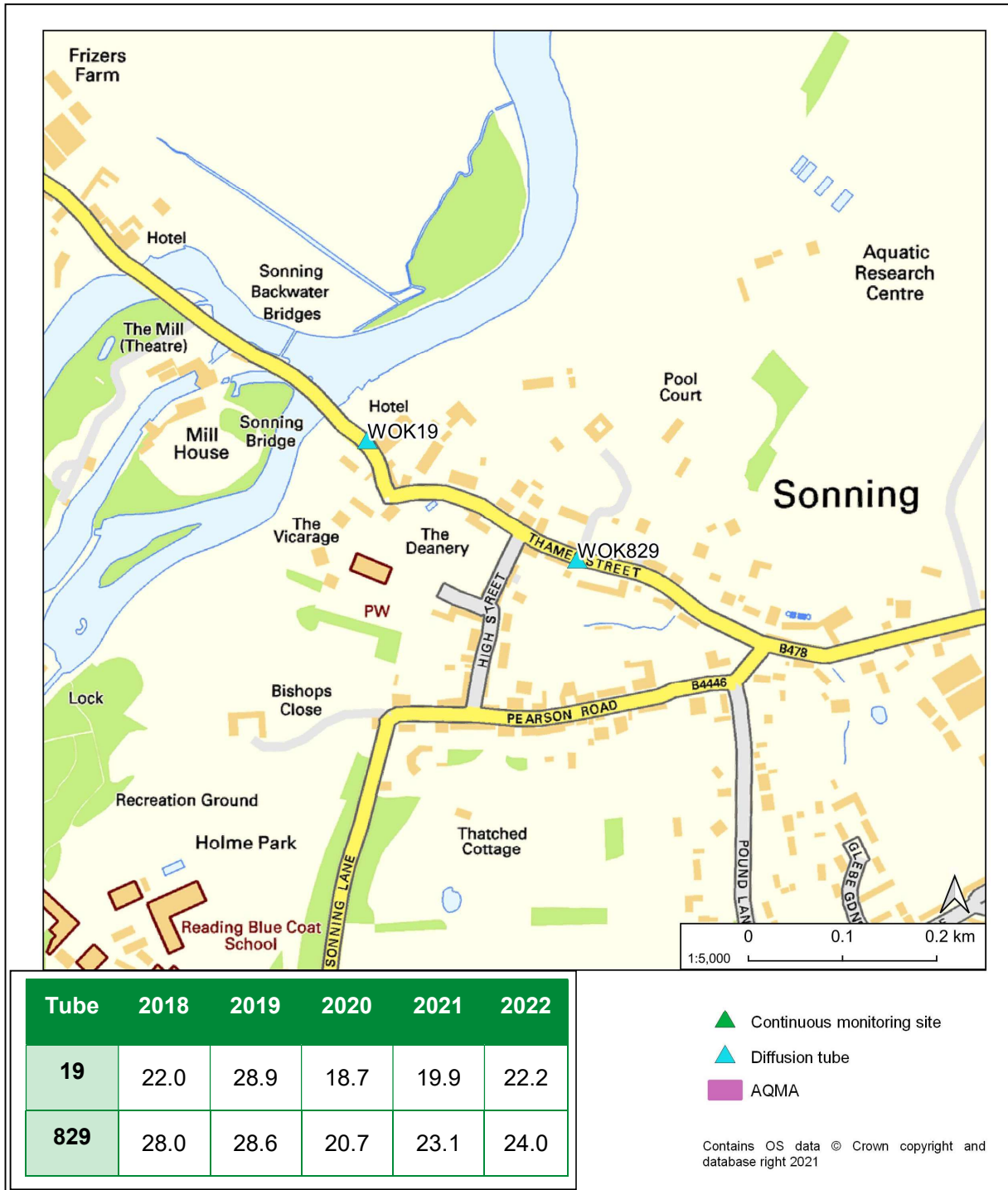


Figure D.9 – Map of (WOK 883) Evendons Primary School



Figure D.10 – Map of (WOK 825) 54 High St Wargrave



Figure D.11 – Map of (WOK 817) 298 London Road

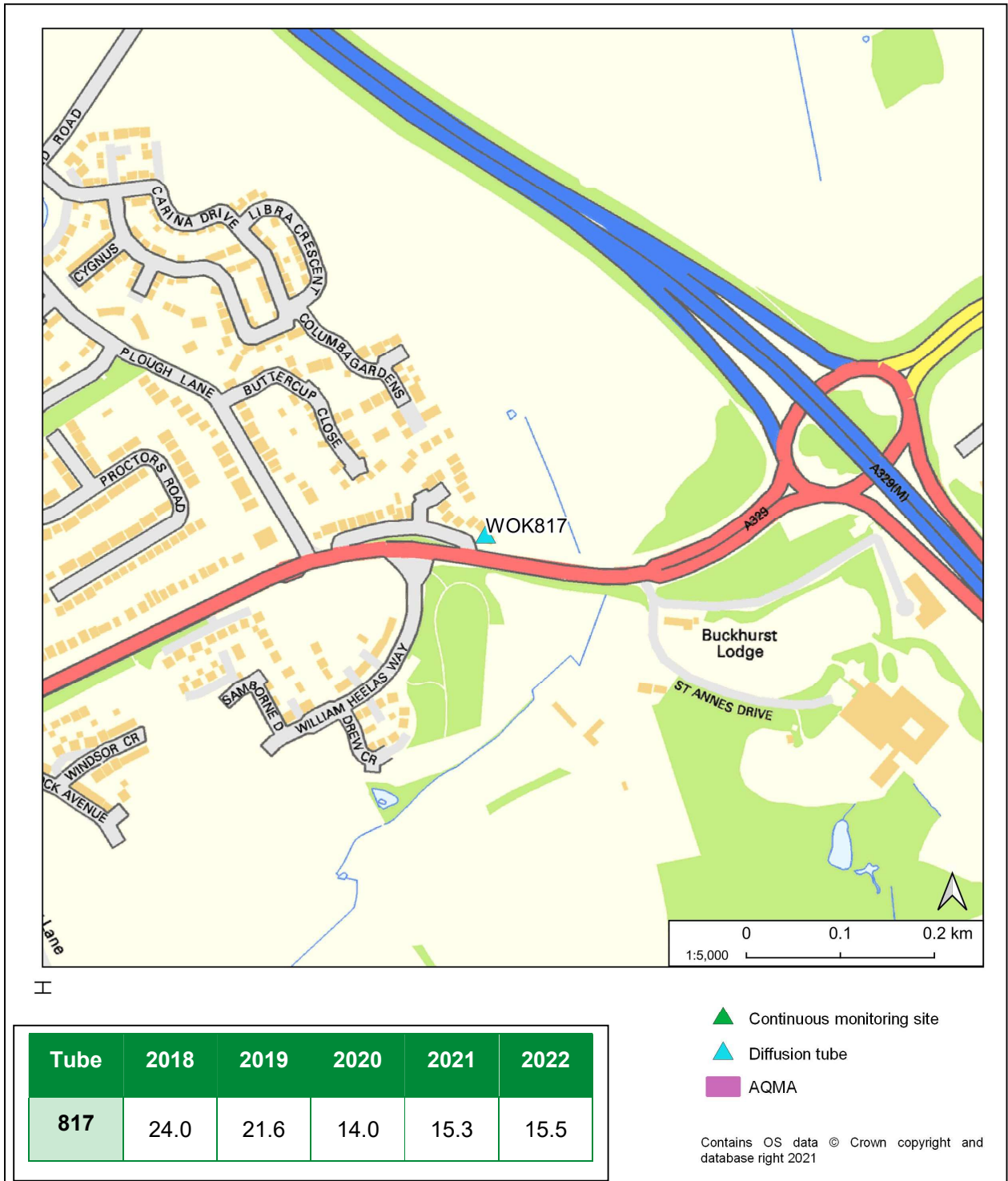


Figure D.12 – Map of (WOK509) Henley Bridge

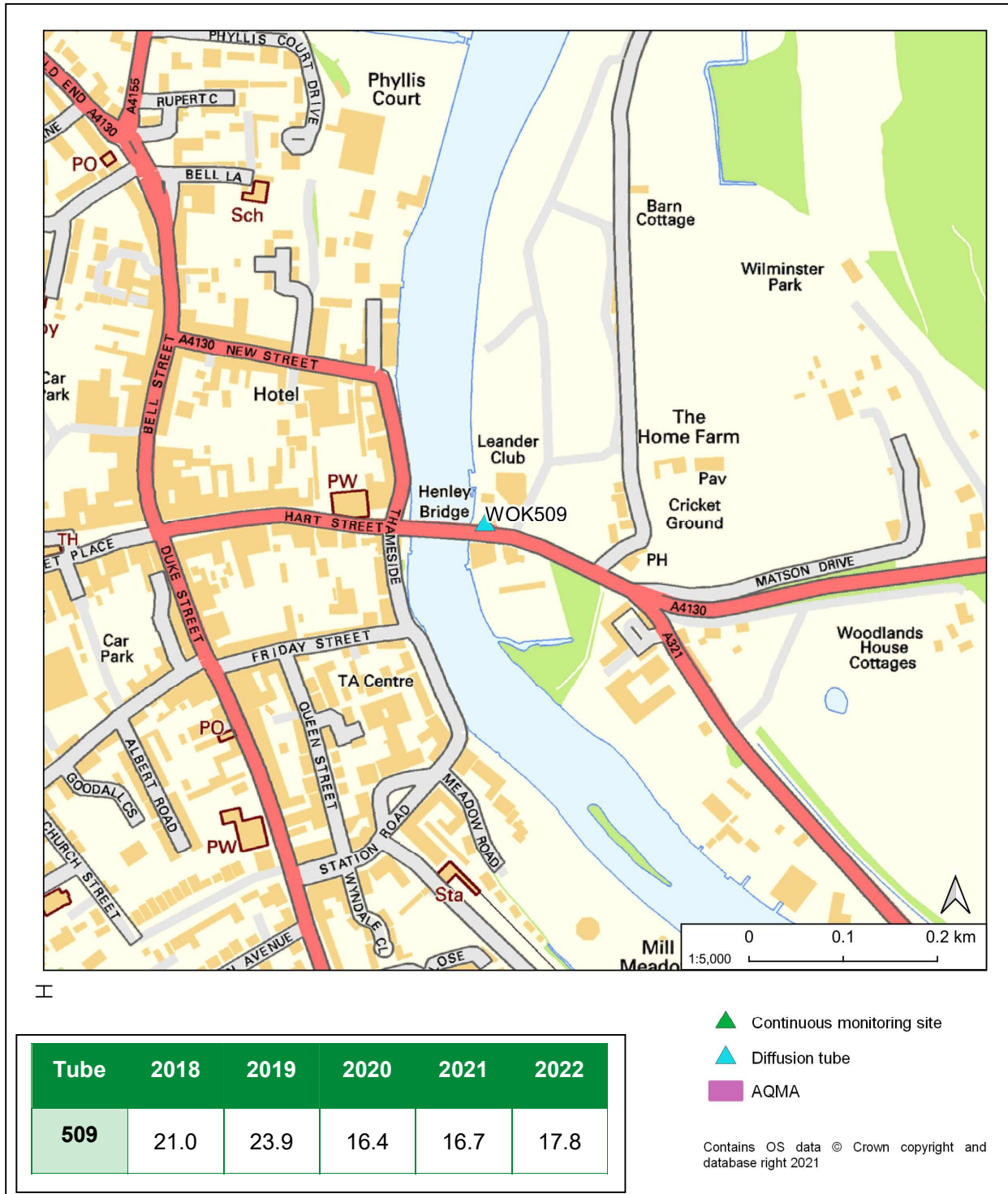


Figure D.13 – Map of (WOK505) Church Road

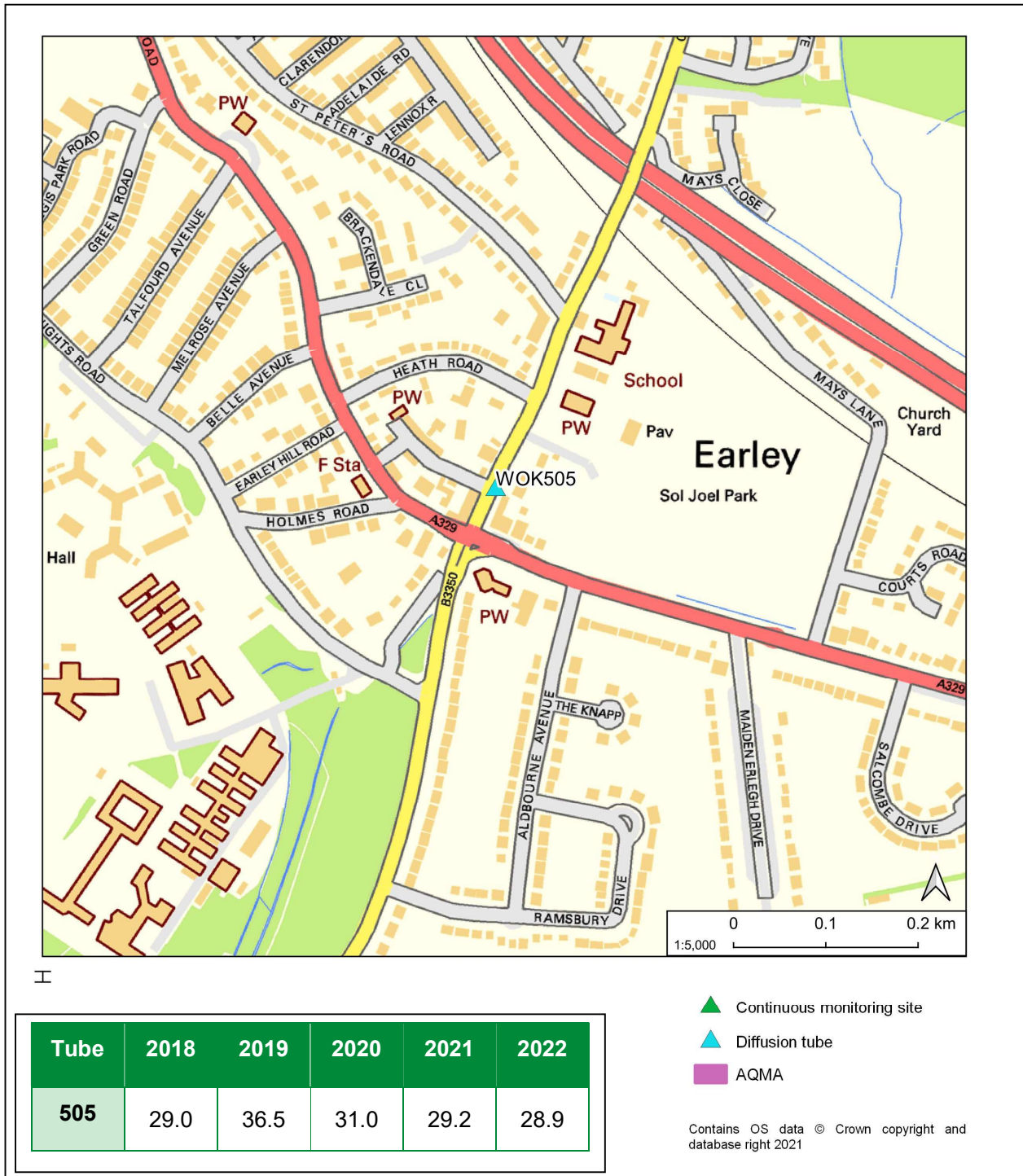
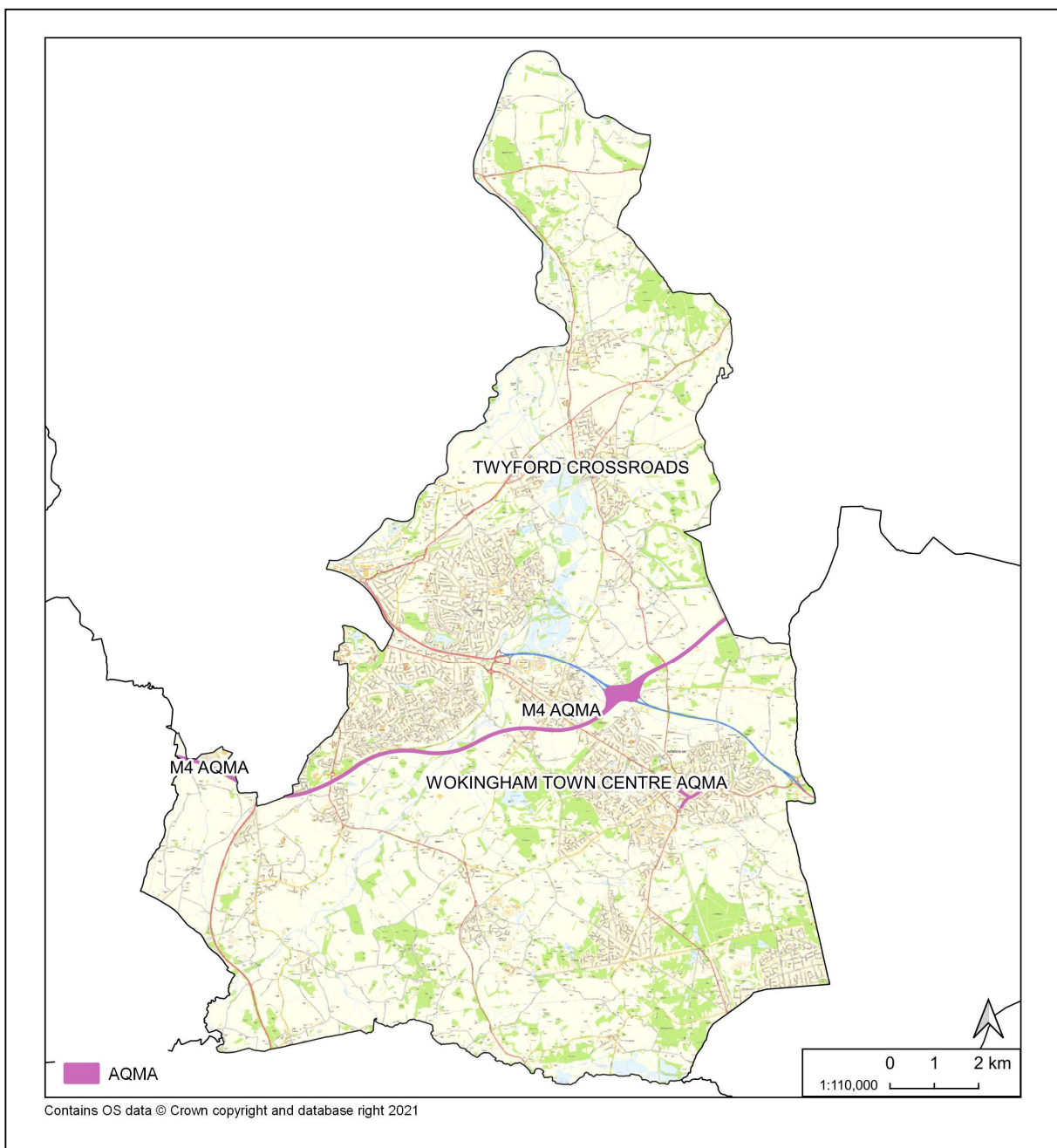


Figure D.14 – Map of Wokingham Borough Council



Appendix E: Summary of Air Quality Objectives in England

Table E.1 – Air Quality Objectives in England¹⁰

Pollutant	Air Quality Objective: Concentration	Air Quality Objective: Measured as
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO ₂)	200µg/m ³ not to be exceeded more than 18 times a year	1-hour mean
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO ₂)	40µg/m ³	Annual mean
Particulate Matter (PM ₁₀)	50µg/m ³ , not to be exceeded more than 35 times a year	24-hour mean
Particulate Matter (PM ₁₀)	40µg/m ³	Annual mean
Sulphur Dioxide (SO ₂)	350µg/m ³ , not to be exceeded more than 24 times a year	1-hour mean
Sulphur Dioxide (SO ₂)	125µg/m ³ , not to be exceeded more than 3 times a year	24-hour mean
Sulphur Dioxide (SO ₂)	266µg/m ³ , not to be exceeded more than 35 times a year	15-minute mean

¹⁰ The units are in microgrammes of pollutant per cubic metre of air (µg/m³).

Glossary of Terms

Abbreviation	Description
AQAP	Air Quality Action Plan - A detailed description of measures, outcomes, achievement dates and implementation methods, showing how the local authority intends to achieve air quality limit values'
AQMA	Air Quality Management Area – An area where air pollutant concentrations exceed / are likely to exceed the relevant air quality objectives. AQMAs are declared for specific pollutants and objectives
ASR	Annual Status Report
Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Diffusion Tube	Plastic tube which measure NO ₂
DMRB	Design Manual for Roads and Bridges – Air quality screening tool produced by National Highways
EU	European Union
FDMS	Filter Dynamics Measurement System
LAQM	Local Air Quality Management
NO ₂	Nitrogen Dioxide
NO _x	Nitrogen Oxides
PM ₁₀	Airborne particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter of 10µm or less
PM _{2.5}	Airborne particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter of 2.5µm or less
QA/QC	Quality Assurance and Quality Control
SO ₂	Sulphur Dioxide

References

- Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance LAQM.TG22. August 2022.
Published by Defra in partnership with the Scottish Government, Welsh Assembly Government and Department of the Environment Northern Ireland.
- Local Air Quality Management Policy Guidance LAQM.PG22. August 2022.
Published by Defra in partnership with the Scottish Government, Welsh Assembly Government and Department of the Environment Northern Ireland.

Wokingham AQMA – Summary of Annual Status Report 2023 (2022 data) and year to date continuous monitoring data (Calendar Q1-Q3)

The pollutant of concern is the annual mean nitrogen dioxide concentration.

The annual mean objective is 40 µg/m³

In 2022 the maximum annual mean NO₂ levels (at continuous monitoring or diffusion tube locations) within each respective AQMA was:

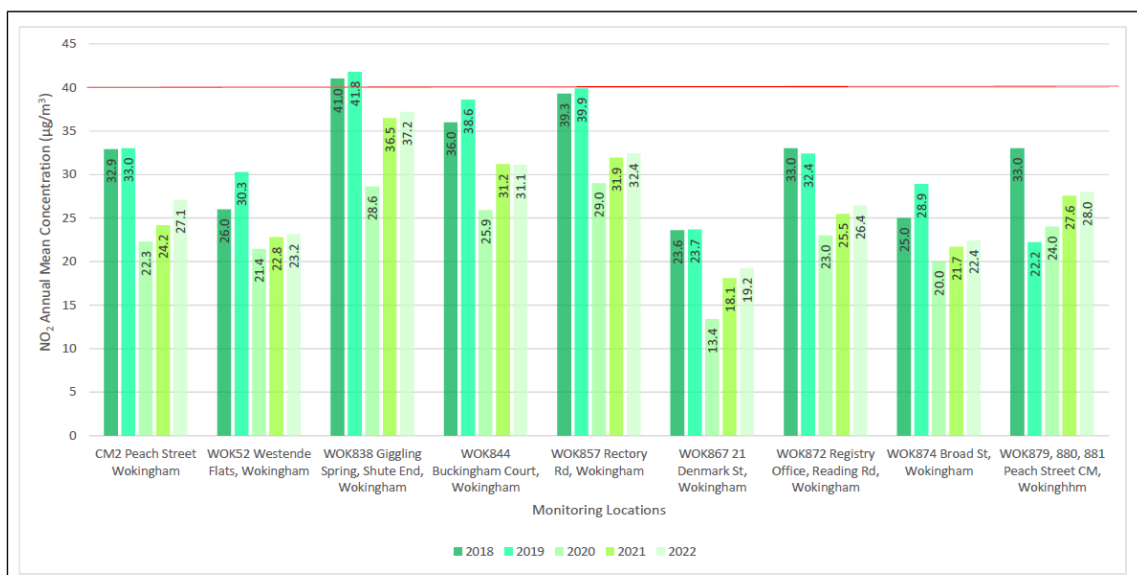
M4	21.5 µg/m ³
Twyford Crossroads	32.8 µg/m ³
Wokingham Town Centre	37.2 µg/m ³

Please refer to revocation report for detail on data for M4 and Twyford Crossroads

For comparative purposes

Within Wokingham AQMA

Trends in Annual Mean NO₂ in Wokingham Town Centre AQMA 2018- 2022



NO₂ decreased substantially during covid. There has been a gradual increase in the annual mean levels since that time. In particular the data at the Shute End sampling location is above the level of the concern (36 µg/m³) at 37.2 µg/m³.

2023 to date continuous monitoring data for Wokingham Town Centre

Diffusion tube data is not yet available for 2023 and the continuous data has not been ratified (through QA QC processes) The provisional continuous monitoring data for the first 3 quarters of 2023, indicates a number of months with indicative increase in NO2 levels.

Month	Average NO concentration (µg/m ³)		Change	% NO2 monthly comparison
	2022	2023		
January	32.1	31.7	Decrease	-1
February	31.4	30.2	Decrease	-4
March	34.4	21.2	Decrease	-62
April	22.2	29.8	Increase	28
May	20.2	27.4	Increase	26
June	20.2	27.0	Increase	25
July	25.7	32.0	Increase	20
August	27.7	24.1	Decrease	-15
September	26.8	33.8	Increase	21
October			?	
November			?	
December			?	

TITLE	Health and Safety Annual Report 22/23
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Executive
WARD	Non-Specific;
LEAD OFFICER	Chief Operating Officer; Sally Watkins
LEAD MEMBER	Executive Member for HR and OD; Rachel Bishop Firth

PURPOSE

To share the annual report for Health and Safety for 22/23 with the Executive for approval.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Executive notes the internal health and safety performance for 2022/23; and the priorities in the report which have informed the action plan for 23/24 and will shape action plan for the next municipal year.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report relates to the Council's internal health and safety performance during the period between 1st April 2022 and 31st March 2023 and covers the Council workforce, where the Council is legally the employer, which includes maintained community schools, special schools, voluntary controlled schools, nursery schools and pupil referral units.

The details included in this report do not include the health and safety performance or services provided to academy schools or Wokingham council partners as part of shared services.

A total of 296 incidents were reported across the organisation (combined reports from schools and services). The number of serious employee incidents i.e. those that may pose significant risk or require notification to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) under The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR) has remained at a low level.

In overall terms, the health and safety performance during 2022-23 across both the schools and the services workforces can be viewed positively. To further enhance our Health and Safety governance a Corporate Health and Safety Board has been introduced to provide ensure oversight of the health and safety management system across each directorate at a senior level.

BACKGROUND

The Health and Safety Annual Report 2022/23 is a high-level report that looks back at internal health and safety performance during the financial year's twelve-month period, highlighting the main achievements over the year and outlining key priorities for the current year and beyond.

The annual report is transparent; it provides stakeholders with information on health and safety performance to enable an understanding of the key issues facing Council staff together with assurance to the Executive that the main risks have been identified, appropriately prioritised and are being adequately addressed.

The annual report is owned by the Corporate Health and Safety Board, reviewed internally by staff consultation groups and the Corporate Leadership Team.

HEALTH AND SAFETY PRIORITIES

- Delivery of the health and safety assurance programme in maintained schools during the 2023-24; this is a two-stage process involving self-evaluation of compliance at local level and then assurance visits for the Council that key risks are being effectively controlled. The program's findings form the basis of the Council's strategy for continual improvement of health and safety management in its schools.
- Housing service will commission a compliance health and safety check as a positive and pro-active action to provide assurance on applicable legislation and approved codes of practice on its property safety compliance.
- Corporate health and safety to review policies and arrangements relating to hybrid working through the Modern Workforce programme ensuring key challenges are identified to make effective use of the available resources and good practice.
- Corporate health and safety to continue support services through periodic review and monitoring of real-world activities in relation to applicable legislation and current standards and guidance.
- Review health and safety arrangements on training, instruction, and information to support areas of competencies required for the effective management and delivery of health and safety at work.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Financial implication of the health and safety strategy have been met through current revenue and so no further financial recommendations are required at this point.

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

Other Financial Information

A failure to comply with statutory duties has the potential to lead to both criminal and civil fines, prosecution costs and enforcement recovery costs.

Stakeholder Considerations and Consultation

Not Applicable

Public Sector Equality Duty

Due regard has been given to WBC's Public Sector Equality Duties.

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*

Not Applicable

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2

Not Applicable

List of Background Papers

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and 'Managing for Health and Safety' (HSG65), a guide for employers published by the HSE.

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WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Health and Safety within Wokingham Borough Council

Annual Report 2022-23

Foreword – by Susan Parsonage

Wokingham Borough Council as an organisation takes health and safety seriously and is committed to the continuous development and improvement of our health and safety management system.

With that aim in mind, and as part of our overall governance arrangements, at this time each year we revisit and review our internal health and safety performance across the preceding twelve months and, taking that information into account and the lessons we have learned along the way, agree our current priorities for health and safety.

As we move ahead, we will continue to take a sensible and proportionate approach to health and safety management and remain committed to learning lessons along the way to improve further.

Susan Parsonage

Chief Executive

Wokingham Borough Council

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Introduction

Wokingham Borough Council has an established health and safety management system that reflects the “Plan Do, Check, Act” approach recommended to employers by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). Our framework arrangements for managing health and safety include:

1. defined responsibilities for health and safety by role
2. consultation with employees on health, safety, and welfare matters
3. designated health and safety leads at both Director and Executive level
4. in-house health and safety specialists providing advice and support.
5. health and safety policies and guidance
6. health and safety training programmes.
7. investigations into the causes of accidents, incidents and near miss events
8. arrangements in place centrally and locally to monitor and review health and safety.

Corporate Health and Safety Role

The Corporate Health and Safety Team’s role has not changed. Its function continues to be to provide support and advice to all staff and members of the council on matters of health, safety, and welfare and to provide and maintain safety policies along with a suite of corporate arrangements and guidance to improve understanding of safe practice and to provide internal assurance checks on safety related areas.

Identification and mitigation of risk at the earliest possible stage must always be the goal, it is the responsibility of the Health and Safety Team to monitor accidents and incident trends, ensuring investigations are prompt and learning applied where appropriate and should it be required at any point the team will notify the HSE, or other relevant bodies of any reportable matters and coordinate the council’s cooperation and response.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report relates to the Council's internal health and safety performance during the period between April 2022 and March 2023 and covers the Council workforce, approx. 1426, and those schools where the Council is legally the employer, approx. 2024 colleagues, which is the case for maintained community schools including special schools, voluntary controlled schools, maintained nursery schools and pupil referral units.

The details included in this report do not include the health and safety performance or services provided to academy schools or Council partners as part of shared services.

In overall terms the health and safety performance during 2022-23 across both the schools and the services workforces could be viewed in a positive light in that the number of serious employee incidents i.e. those that require notification to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) under The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR) remained at a low level with only 2 employee incidents necessitating a statutory notification to the HSE only one of which is being reviewed further by the HSE and an internal investigation is ongoing at the time of this report.

Health and Safety 22/23 Data & Intelligence

A total of 296 incidents were reported across the organisation (schools and services). This is a continuing trend of reduced reporting seen across all schools and services since 2019 and below the average reporting seen over the last 4 years.

Year	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Total Incidents	654	703	320	489	296

Part of this is attributed to the greater number of staff working at home or in lower risk office or home-based office environments.

Of the 296 reported incidents.

- 194 related to accidents/incidents affecting schools and service employees.
- 41 accidents/incidents split between contractors, agency staff and members of the public
- 61 accidents/incidents being reported to the council by maintained schools on behalf of school students/pupils.

A total of 78 incident service-related reports were raised by service staff during 2022-23 (a decrease from the previous year but is consistent with average reporting levels pre-pandemic).

However, 2022-23 saw a significant decrease in near miss reporting from previous years which has been used previously as preventative reporting to address potential improvements to the council's health and safety management.

The Health and Safety team will ensure this is part of the ongoing communications plan and include near miss reporting in the core health and safety modules within the corporate induction.

The total reported service incidents during this reporting period had an outcome of either a minor injury or were without injury; 26% of all incidents reported now relate to verbal abuse from members of the public towards Council employees which has seen an increase over the last 3 years and 41% related to social care related incidents from staff working with children and young people with special needs.

Following absence statistic provided to the Health and Safety team in 2022, two of the top four common causes of reported absences were identified as “stress related”, which include psychological ill health and “musculoskeletal”, commonly muscle injuries to the neck, shoulders, and lower back.

Wider programmes and mitigations for supporting staff wellbeing have already been shown to reduce the level of stress related absences including;

- Regular weekly wellbeing communications
- Established employee Assistance Programme
- Mental Health First Aiders across directorates to support employees
- Embedding welfare checks into one-to-one forms
- HR Business Partners were provided with training to support service managing stress at work.

Further communication and guidance on supporting “musculoskeletal” will be included in the Health and Safety communication plan, with importance being placed on suitable workstation assessments for both office and home activities, reductions in manual handling work where practicable and key wellbeing messages on active movement and reducing prolonged sedentary work.

In addition, the Health and Safety service have begun working closely with HR and the Councils occupational health providers to better differentiate absences to ensure amore tailored approach and holistic understanding of employee welfare risks. This monitoring this will form part of the forward plan for 2023-24 and will form part of future annual reporting to the Corporate Leadership Team and the Health and Safety board.

Ways of Working

Hybrid working has provided greater opportunities for flexible working and in supporting staff welfare; it has also introduced innovative methods for engagement with employees corporately which the Health and Safety service will be using to increase awareness of support available.

The Health and Safety team have identified areas that require strengthening; including how the health and safety management of the Council needs to adapt to better support flexible working.

The Health and Safety team will be engaging directly with the Modern Workforce Programme to ensure these areas of training, process and communication are embedded into the council future workforce planning approach.

Review and Improve

2022-23 saw the introduction of first corporate health and safety assurance programme which was carried out with Council services to support the development of greater health and safety competency at local level through self-evaluation, assurance checks and manager interviews whilst also providing the Council with assurance that key health and safety risks are being adequately controlled.

This self-evaluation will be an ongoing annual process, led by services and supported by the Health & Safety service. This assurance regime will also include a wider bi-annual audit to provide the Corporate Leadership Team of the effectiveness of the Councils Health and safety management system and ensure continuous improvement.

School Based Health and Safety 22/23

Incidents reported by school employees decreased by over 40% and is a 75% reduction in known incidents within schools since 2020. It is unknown why this has occurred and may be in part due to academisation and headcount reduction across community and voluntary schools however this is a larger proportion than expected and will be a point of enquiry during the upcoming school's assurance programme coming in 2023-24.

Positively 97% of school incidents were recorded as minor injury and only five incidences were noted where this caused an employee to become absent from their work. Only one of these incidents, a slip, trip and fall that resulted in a sustained shoulder injury fell under the requirements for RIDDOR as the employee's absence following the incident exceeded the seven consecutive days threshold and so became notifiable to the HSE.

HSE Enforcement

During 2022-23 no Improvement Notices or Prohibition Notices were served on the Council by the HSE for breaches of statutory health and safety duties nor were there any health and safety prosecutions against the Council.

Serious Incident Investigations and Inspections

Two serious incident investigations were undertaken during 2022-2023 by the health and safety team, these incidents identified key areas of improvement and health and safety improvements which were actioned to support the overall compliance within the Council.

The incidents related to a work-related occupational health incident and a non-work-related first aid incident, both of which were referred post-incident to the health and safety team due to the nature of incidents and potential seriousness of risk exposure and/or potential breaches of health and safety legislation if mitigating action was not taken.

Key Findings were provided to Assistant Directors and service managers to address through safety improvement plans and included:

- Responsibilities for managing health and safety arrangements needed to be clear and understood.
- Risk Assessments in place needed to be strengthened to include specific risks
- Communication between services in supporting and managing emergency procedures within corporate buildings needed to be improved
- Local procedures required updating and to be communicated to employees following changes in organisational working arrangements.

The Health and Safety Team continue to work closely with relevant services to support improvements as outlined above.

Key Outcomes for 22/23

- Establishment of a corporate health and safety board to support strategic delivery of continual safety improvements across the council, chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive and sponsored by the Chief Executive to ensure there is senior accountability.
- The health and safety assurance programme was carried out to support the development of greater health and safety competency at local level through self-evaluation, assurance checks and manager interviews. The average overall performance score across the council for building compliance was 84% and an average score for directorates was 88% and above which would be considered as 'Good Performance'. 'Excellent Performance' would see scores of >90% and achievement of this score is the council's aim. The overall performance highlighted 25 specific areas across directorates that can be improved to support better health and safety arrangements.
- Engaged with Property Service and service areas to ensure the health and safety compliance of corporate property's and to undertake periodic reviews. This was achieved through a H&S Self-Monitoring Checklist to

ensure ongoing compliance and preventative actions for council owned and managed premises; enabling ownership by identified responsible persons. This work ensures ongoing checks and preventative actions to support safe working environments in place for council employees and members of the public.

- Higher risk activities were identified following the assurance process in areas such as countryside services, highways, housing and other frontline services which will require further review to ensure the ongoing compliance with health and safety arrangements are monitored and maintained whilst compliance areas in the wider council focused on lower level risks such as office work is managed by operational line managers through inductions and the newly established annual self-assessment process.
- There was continued engagement to raise awareness of workstation assessments and support services to ensure that suitable arrangements were in place for both office and home working employees.
- A data collection of lone workers across the organisation identified a larger number of lone workers than previously known, ongoing mitigation work is being undertaken to support services to ensure adequate arrangements and training of lone workers is undertaken and this forms part of the forward look for 2023-24 and the modern workforce programme.

Looking forward – our health and safety priorities for 2023-24

The areas noted below form part of the forward action plan which is shown in Appendix C. The health and safety board will be responsible for monitoring and ensure delivery of actions related to the forward plan.

Key actions include:

- Undertaking the seeking health and safety assurance programme in schools; this is a two-stage process involving self-evaluation of compliance at local level and assurance for the Council that key risks are being effectively controlled. The findings of the program form the basis of the Council's strategy for the continual improvement of health and safety management in its schools.
- Health and safety team to support front line services through periodic review and monitoring of real-world activities in relation to applicable legislation and current standards and guidance.
- Housing to commission a compliance health check as a positive and pro-active action to provide assurance on applicable legislation and approved codes of practice on property safety compliance and to understand WBCs current position, wider areas of good practices and recognise if any areas need to be strengthened.

- Support services in managing the health and safety risk associated with hybrid working through the Modern Workforce programme ensuring key challenges are identified to make effective use of the available resources and good practice.
- Work in collaboration with HR to seek reductions in days lost due to stress related and illness and mental ill health.
- Seek reduction in days lost due to work related incidents and ill health - particularly those associated musculoskeletal Injures, including manual handling and display screen equipment.
- Review and update existing health and safety training modules and develop new training, instruction, and information to support areas of competencies required for the effective management and delivery of health and safety at work.
- Support 'bite-size' H&S training for managers to develop health and safety awareness courses across service areas.

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