



# WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

A Meeting of the **COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** will be held in David Hicks 1 - Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham RG40 1BN **MONDAY 3 JULY 2023 AT 7.00 PM**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Susan Parsonage', written in a cursive style.

Susan Parsonage  
Chief Executive  
Published on 23 June 2023

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

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

<https://youtube.com/live/eQHKH4bRM-8?feature=share>

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

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

## MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

### Councillors

Chris Johnson (Chair)  
David Cornish  
Charles Margetts

Peter Dennis (Vice-Chair)  
Norman Jorgensen  
Alistair Neal

Laura Blumenthal  
Pauline Jorgensen  
Marie-Louise Weighill

### Substitutes

Jane Ainslie  
Catherine Glover  
Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey

Andy Croy  
Stuart Munro  
Alison Swaddle

Phil Cunnington  
Caroline Smith  
Shahid Younis

ITEM NO.	WARD	SUBJECT	PAGE NO.
12.		<b>APOLOGIES</b> To receive any apologies for absence.	
13.		<b>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING</b> To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2023.	5 - 12
14.		<b>DECLARATION OF INTEREST</b> To receive any declarations of interest.	
15.		<b>PUBLIC QUESTION TIME</b> To answer any public questions  A period of 30 minutes will be allowed for members of the public to ask questions submitted under notice.  The Council welcomes questions from members of the public about the work of this committee.  Subject to meeting certain timescales, questions can relate to general issues concerned with the work of the Committee or an item which is on the Agenda for this meeting. For full details of the procedure for submitting questions please contact the Democratic Services Section on the numbers given below or go to <a href="http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/publicquestions">www.wokingham.gov.uk/publicquestions</a>	
16.		<b>MEMBER QUESTION TIME</b> To answer any member questions.	
17.	None Specific	<b>DIRECTORATE PRIORITIES - RESOURCES AND ASSETS</b> To receive the strategic priorities for the Resources and Assets Directorate.	13 - 26

<b>18.</b>	None Specific	<b>DIRECTORATE PRIORITIES - PLACE AND GROWTH</b> To receive the strategic priorities for the Place and Growth Directorate.	<b>To Follow</b>
<b>19.</b>	None Specific	<b>COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP UPDATE</b> To receive the annual update on the work of the Community Safety Partnership.	<b>27 - 48</b>
<b>20.</b>	None Specific	<b>DRAFT WOKINGHAM VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS (VAWG) STRATEGY</b> To consider the draft Wokingham Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy.	<b>49 - 72</b>
<b>21.</b>	None Specific	<b>WOKINGHAM ANTI-ABUSE CHARTER UPDATE</b> To consider a report on Wokingham's Anti-Abuse Charter.	<b>73 - 76</b>
<b>22.</b>	None Specific	<b>ACTION TRACKER</b> To consider the Committee's action tracker.	<b>77 - 78</b>
<b>23.</b>	None Specific	<b>WORK PROGRAMME</b> To consider the Committee's work programme for the remainder of the 2023/24 municipal year.	<b>79 - 88</b>

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

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

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## **MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 22 MAY 2023 FROM 7.00 PM TO 8.43 PM**

### **Committee Members Present**

Councillors: Chris Johnson (Chair), Peter Dennis (Vice-Chair), David Cornish, Norman Jorgensen, Pauline Jorgensen, Charles Margetts, Alistair Neal and Marie-Louise Weighill

### **Executive Members Present**

Councillors: Ian Shenton (Executive Member for Environment, Sport and Leisure)

### **Officers Present**

Boniface Ngu Azeh (Senior Specialist (Drainage Flooding Advice)), Narinder Brar (Community Safety Manager), Neil Carr (Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist), Andy Glencross (Head of Environmental Services) and Callum Wernham (Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist)

### **Others Present**

Phiala Mehring (Vice Chair of the Local Flood Forum and Community representative on the Thames Regional Flood and Coast Committee)

### **1. ELECTION OF CHAIR**

Peter Dennis nominated Chris Johnson to be elected Chair for the 2023/24 municipal year. This was seconded by David Cornish.

**RESOLVED** That Chris Johnson be elected Chair for the 2023/24 municipal year.

### **2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR**

David Cornish nominated Peter Dennis to be appointed Vice-Chair for the 2023/24 municipal year. This was seconded by Al Neal.

**RESOLVED** That Peter Dennis be appointed Vice Chair for the 2023/24 municipal year.

### **3. APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was submitted from Councillor Laura Blumenthal.

### **4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 6 March 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **5. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **6. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions.

### **7. MEMBER QUESTION TIME**

There were no Member questions.

## 8. ANNUAL FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE

The Committee considered a report, set out in agenda pages 13 to 18, which provided an update on the works in relation to the Council's flood risk management responsibilities over the past 12 months.

The report outlined a number of actions that had been undertaken, including CCTV condition surveys, repair works to the highway drainage system, delivery of capital drainage schemes, revenue drainage maintenance works, smart drainage trials and funding applications to reduce the surface water flood risks.

Ian Shenton (Executive Member for Environment, Sport and Leisure), Boniface Ngu (Flood Risk & Drainage Manager) and Andy Glencross (Head of Environmental Services) attended the meeting to answer Member queries.

During the ensuing discussion, Members raised the following points and queries:

- Could Members be informed when successful works were completed? Officer response – Members were informed of works prior to each set of works starting. Follow-up emails could also be sent, and this would be looked at going forwards;
- It was noted that CCTV condition surveys had been undertaken on Barkham Road, whilst a capital project had been completed on Barkham Ride;
- It was noted that funding was available for the Church Lane project;
- Given the impact of climate change on the potential for flooding, were we recalibrating how we accounted for climate change, specifically when assessing planning applications, in particular where sites were located near tributaries such as the Emm Brook or Barkham Brook? Officer response – Officers insisted on a 40 percent accommodation for climate change when attenuation basins were designed. For example, if a basin of 10m would be sufficient today, officers would insist that it be built to 14m;
- Which manholes and drain covers were contained on the ArcGIS system? Officer response – This could be confusing, as when residents saw a manhole they usually assumed it was the responsibility of Wokingham Borough Council (WBC). Most surface water drainage sewers were operated by Thames Water, whilst some were managed by WBC. When a resident reported an issue to WBC, officers checked mapping software to confirm the owner, and directed the resident to Thames Water where it was found to be their responsibility;
- Was it possible to have all manholes mapped on WBC's ArcGIS system? Officer response – Whilst WBC's assets were mapped on the ArcGIS system, assets from other owners such as Thames Water were not mapped. The issue was that whilst other assets could be mapped in theory, updates may not be regular and become out of date as WBC would be relying on third party data sources. As such, other assets were not mapped, and officers manually checked manhole covers and forwarded issues to Thames Water if necessary;
- How many reports were received per year in relation to manhole covers? Officer response – A written answer would be provided on this matter;

- It was noted that officers would look into an issue raised in relation to water flowing intermittently near the Lower Earley peripheral road, towards the Black Boy Roundabout;
- What was the relationship between WBC and Thames Water, and could WBC carry out CCTV works on Thames Water assets and forward the issue onto Thames Water? Officer response – WBC had a good relationship with Thames Water, however officers couldn't always put as much pressure on them as might be desired. For example, there were situations where WBC owned gulleys fed into the Thames Water network, and Thames Water did not always act as quickly as WBC might when issues arose;
- Was there a legal framework where WBC could charge Thames Water for repair costs due to negligence? Officer response – This was not an option available to WBC;
- Were officers tracking areas which were impacted by flash flooding, to enable proactive flood risk management prior to weather forecasts being issued? Officer response – Officers routinely cleared gulleys to create capacity ahead of flash flood warnings, within the approved budget. The engineering solution to changing the capacity of the network was not simple and involved modifications to the Thames Water network. Such works could be very expensive and involve a considerable amount of planning and preparation;
- What was done where an issue was identified with an asset which was not owned by WBC? Officer response – Officers sought to identify the owner of faulty assets, informing them of the issue and providing them with a date when remedial works should be carried out by. Officers also informed the owners that should works not be carried out within a reasonable timeframe, WBC would carry out the works and claim back the costs;
- What more could be done to protect drainage and sewerage systems installed on new developments during construction, and were these routinely cleared prior to occupation of the development? Officer response – It was very difficult for WBC to pressure developers to maintain new network infrastructure during development, and the leverage available to WBC was that we would not adopt a new network until it was clear, operational, and up to standard;
- It was noted that the issue in relation to the works to Church Lane predated the Strategic Development Location (SDL);
- Were households required to install adequate drainage measures where they paved over green areas on their property to create a paved driveway? Officer response – Where planning permission was required, officers could condition driveway surfacing to be a permeable surface. However, these surfaces did need to be maintained to ensure that they remained permeable;
- Did the Council take measures to ensure that ponds did not dry out in hot conditions? Officer response – This depended on how the ponds were designed, as some were designed to only hold rain whilst it rained. Detention basins were constructed with clay as the base layer, to keep the permanent water level at a particular level. Any loss of water would be due to evaporation, and there was very little that could be done in such situations;

- Who was responsible for animals, such as fish, where ponds and lakes evaporated and lost water and oxygen levels during hot weather? Officer response – This was the responsibility of the land owner, and for example WBC installed aeration machines to protect stocks of large fish. However, such events were a natural process, as when fish thrived this could be at the detriment of other types of wildlife;
- It was noted that the reactive maintenance team was fully staffed, whilst the planning side of the service currently had a vacancy which was due to be recruited for;
- Phiala Mehring, Vice Chair of the Local Flood Forum and Community representative on the Thames Regional Flood and Coast Committee, was invited by the Chair to address the Committee. Phiala stated that in an ideal world there would be more of a focus on strategic flood risk management, and added that some assets could not manage with the impacts of climate change. Phiala suggested that officers continue to place bids for natural flood risk management funding wherever possible. Phiala stated that it may be useful for officers to assess where water could be stored throughout the Borough, and apply for funding to carry out such works. Phiala stated that Thames Water worked differently to WBC, as they were predominantly focussed on the volume of reports. As such, Phiala suggested that residents were made aware to ask all impacted neighbours to report issues to Thames Water get issues resolved as quickly as possible. Phiala commented that there was general appreciation when Local Authorities took on the management of SuDS, as when these were operated by management companies there was often a lack of detail regarding maintenance programmes;
- What was the view in relation to dredging rivers? Vice Chair of the Local Flood Forum and Community representative on the Thames Regional Flood and Coast Committee response – In general, dredging rivers created more issues than it solved, as rivers would require constant re-dredging going forwards. Effective dredging would also have to be carried out deep into the riverbed and very wide across the span of the river. Natural flood management aimed to slow the flow of a river and give existing assets a chance to cope. In addition, 'greening' spaces can allow for water to naturally be absorbed and retained in strategic areas.

**RESOLVED** That:

- 1) Ian Shenton, Boniface Ngu, Andy Glencross and Phiala Mehring be thanked for attending the meeting;
- 2) Officers aim to send follow-up emails to Members once flood risk management works had been completed in their Wards;
- 3) A written answer be provided as to how many reports were received in relation to manhole covers;
- 4) Officers look into an issue raised in relation to water flowing intermittently near the Lower Earley peripheral road, towards the Black Boy Roundabout;
- 5) Members consider encouraging residents to report issues to Thames Water individually, rather than nominating a spokesperson to raise an issue, as Thames Water tended to be more focussed on the volume of reports.



## 9. COMBATING DRUGS PARTNERSHIP

The Committee considered a report, set out in agenda pages 19 to 26, which outlined detail in relation to the Combatting Drugs Partnership.

The report stated that the strategy was now at the implementation stage, and would need to be progressed with key partners such as Thames Valley Police, Probation, and Health organisations. It had been agreed that Community Safety Partnerships were best placed to take the implementation of local delivery forwards, as such partnerships would have well-established frameworks for partnership delivery in place. Local agreements for the delivery and governance arrangements were due to be finalised at the next meeting of the Community Safety Partnership in June 2023.

Ian Shenton (Executive Member for Environment, Sport and Leisure) and Narinder Brar (Community Safety Manager) attended the meeting to answer Member queries.

During the ensuing discussion, Members raised the following points and queries:

- It was noted that the large number of reports in relation to Earley Fields was due to drugs being found at the Loddon Valley police station when suspects were searched;
- It was noted that the reported figures represented reported incidents, rather than convictions or arrests;
- Were there any other opportunities to receive this data, as many of the recorded incidents would include a large portion of Reading which was served by Loddon Valley. Officer response – Officers had asked whether data could be provided from the police, anonymised, and filtered for the Borough, however this was a resourcing issue at present;
- Had there been any noticeable issues raised by adults in treatment as a result of pharmacy closures? Officer response – Not at present, as many treatment options were still in situ whilst others had been moved to other spaces;
- What could be done to better advertise treatment services within the Borough, and was there an indication of the success rate of treatments? Officer response – Relapse data and data in relation to people who had successfully stayed in treatment for 6 months or 12 months was recorded and reported nationally, which gave a good indication of success rates. Datasets specific to Wokingham could be provided to the Committee. There were plans in place to raise the awareness and access opportunities to treatment, There was still a level of stigma with regards to accessing help, and there were a large percentage of people who were functioning on a day to day basis who had addiction issues. Whilst it could be very hard to reach out to such people, access to online resources and treatments provided opportunities for people to access self help and signposting to other organisations;
- It was proposed that the Committee have oversight of the delivery group, which could be reported at a future meeting of the Committee;
- It was noted that the previous report had highlighted a significant spike in reports around the Christmas period. This was lifted from a police operation, and emphasised that there were particular periods of the year where people were more likely to be

drawn towards taking drugs, or relapse. It was critical to offer support and messaging during these periods;

- It was noted that officers would liaise with the police with regards to whether the operation carried out over the Christmas period was intelligence based or based on random checks;
- Was glue sniffing an issue within the Borough? Officer response – Whilst this had not been totally eradicated, instances were very low throughout the Borough. Other substances tended to be more widely used, whilst online spaces created a certain ease of access to some substances;
- What help was available to children whose parents were receiving treatment for drug or alcohol addiction? Officer response – Family therapy was available for children and family members of substance misuse incidents, to ensure the wellbeing and health needs of individuals was being catered for.

**RESOLVED** That:

- 1) Ian Shenton and Narinder Brar be thanked for attending the meeting;
- 2) Datasets in relation to relapses, 6-month and 12-month successive treatments for the Borough be provided to the Committee;
- 3) Officers liaise with the police with regards to ascertaining whether the operation carried out over the Christmas period was intelligence based or based on random checks;
- 4) The Committee receive a further report towards the end of the 2023/24 municipal year, giving them oversight of the delivery group. Officers disaggregate figures to be Wokingham specific as best as was possible.

#### **10. ACTIVE TRAVEL TASK AND FINISH GROUP - APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS**

The Committee considered a report, set out in agenda pages 27 to 32, which set out the recommendation to appoint five Members to the Active Travel Task and Finish Group for the 2023/24 municipal year.

It was requested that Officers include information on the status of the £600k of funding given for the LCWIP at the next 6-monthly meeting of the Group.

Members requested that information be provided as to whether the Government had a preference as to our suggested schemes, in addition to an update on the proposed Woodley cycle scheme. It was agreed that these updates could be circulated via email.

**RESOLVED** That Alistair Neal, Peter Dennis, Charles Margetts, Pauline Jorgensen and Marie Louise-Weighill be appointed to the Active Travel Task and Finish Group for the 2023/24 municipal year.

#### **11. WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee considered their work programme for the remainder of the 2023/24 municipal year, set out in agenda pages 33 to 36.

**RESOLVED** That:

- 1) Callum Wernham be thanked for attending the meeting;
- 2) Officers arrange a conversation between the Chair and the S151 officer, to ascertain the appropriate meeting for the Committee to consider an update on the status of WBC's earmarked reserves;
- 3) The Arts and Culture Strategy update aim to be scheduled this municipal year;
- 4) Officers liaise with Highways officers and the Chair to schedule relevant reports to be considered at the September meeting of the Committee, for example in relation to car parking, KPIs of the service and volume of requests and highways maintenance;
- 5) Officers seek to arrange an update on the progress of the Local Plan Update in October 2023;
- 6) Officers liaise with the Chair with regards to arranging a report on the Planning process at WBC, including how development management, strategic planning and enforcement officers operated within the Borough;
- 7) Officers seek to re-arrange the work programme into sections split by topics, for example highways issues or community issues;
- 8) Officers explore the possibility to invite representatives of housing management companies to the Committee, to ensure fees were fair and proportional.

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# Resources and Assets

Service Delivery Plan 2023 – 2024

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Agenda Item 17.

# Finance

Providing a strategic financial function and a core enabling role to inform, enable and support delivery; to provide financial, commercial and procurement systems, information and advice to enable, empower and support the workforce to deliver efficient and effective customer-focused services. Maximising income collection whilst effectively delivering financial welfare payments to residents.

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## Political Drivers

Local Govt Finance Settlement  
Organisational Change and transformation  
Economy  
New Corporate Plan  
COV -19 recovery  
Local demand and environment



## Customer Experience:

Our colleagues  
Members  
Residents  
Businesses  
Partners

## Our Functions:

Finance Strategy  
Finance Operational  
Procurement  
Commercial  
Business Services  
Collections  
Welfare

## Outcomes

Strong Financial Management

Delivering value and efficiency through Commercial and procurement activity

Driving and delivering value for money and efficiency

Maximising income collection and supporting those in financial hardship

# Finance Service 2023/24

Objectives	Action	Timescale
Strengthen financial management, governance, skills and decision making	Develop and deliver organisational financial skills training program Embed Finance Customer Charter – roles and behaviours Develop improved operational and strategic financial reporting including benchmark and unit cost information Deliver 2024/25 MTFP (incl capital and treasury strategy) Sign-off of 2020/21 and (incl external audit process) 2021/22 accounts, and closure of 2022/23 accounts Improved capital bidding and monitoring process (incl Capital Gold control prog) Deliver treasury management improvement programme Review of finance regs/constitution Review and develop the approach to engagement and awareness of council budget process with residents	Sept 23 Sept 23 July 23 Feb 24 Various July 23 Aug 23 Oct 23 Nov 23
Strengthen procurement & commercial approach through enhanced support, governance and upskilling	Develop and deliver Procurement and Commercial OFP programme Develop and deliver a pipeline of commercial and procurement workstreams–driving financial value of approach Review current organisational contract monitoring resources and skills Develop and deliver organisational procurement and commercial training	Mar 24 Mar 24 Sept 23 Aug 23
Deliver a program of process improvements and efficiencies through business support	Delivery of programme of improvement and efficiency reviews within finance business support unit – meeting financial/budget targets	Mar 24
Maximise income collection whilst supporting those in financial hardship	To deliver automation, efficiency and channel shift opportunities across income and welfare Deliver specific debt recovery programs to strengthen bad debt provision Review of Council Tax Relief scheme (implementation for 2024/25) Business case development for internal bailiff service	Mar 24 Aug 23 Feb 24 Sept 23
Inform, identify and support VFM and efficiency opportunities across the Council to maintain financial stability	To support the development and delivery of efficiency and transformation options to support MTFP 24/25 – across org To develop unit cost and benchmarking information across org in order to assist future option identification Review of financial resilience – external benchmark including approaches to longer-term financial planning	Mar 24 Aug 23 Oct 23
Cross-cutting (finance) activity	BWO improvement programme Deliver 5% efficiency saving across Finance (whilst maintaining financial support/governance) 6 monthly internal customer satisfaction survey across finance functions	Mar 24 Mar 24 Mar 24

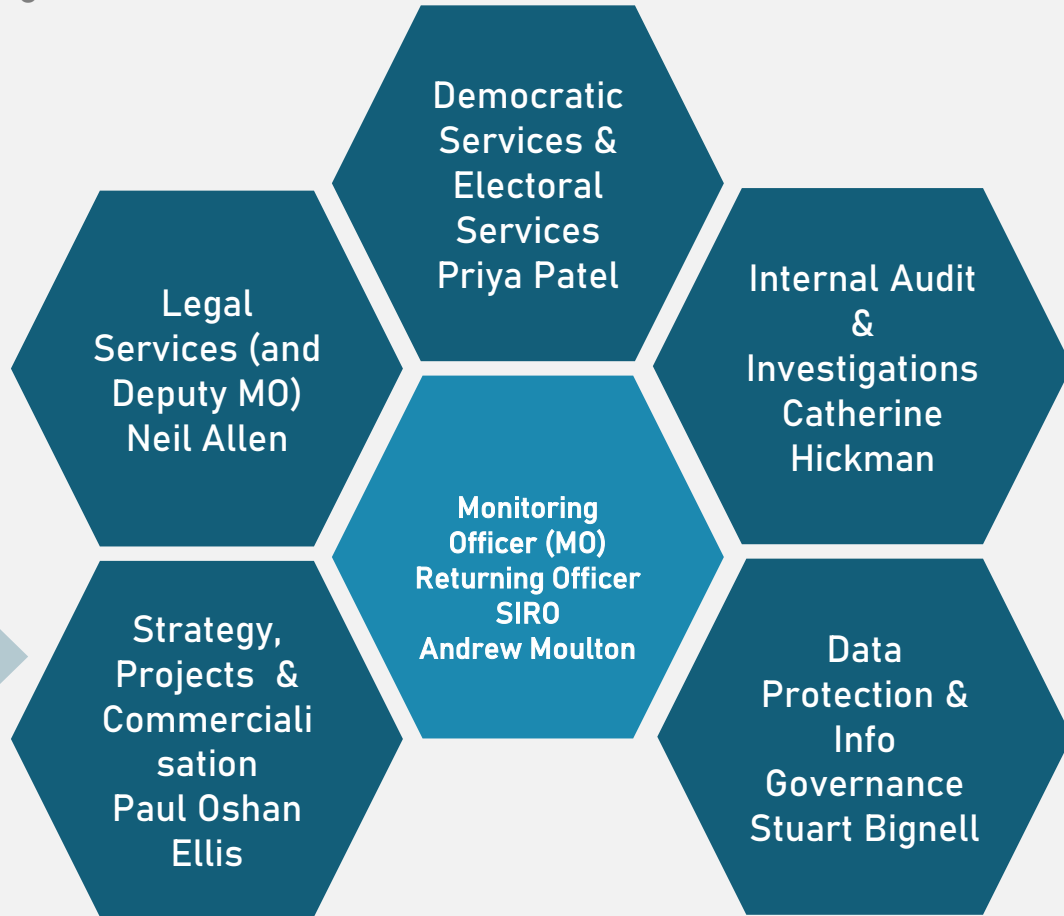
# Finance Service 2023/24

Objectives	Action	Timescale
Strengthen financial management, governance, skills and decision making	Deliver 2025/26 MTFP (incl capital and treasury strategy) Closure of 2023/24 accounts (additional targets pending progress on previous years accounts) Continued development of financial skills across organisation and embedding finance charter	Feb 25 June 2024 Mar 25
Strengthen procurement & commercial approach through enhanced support, governance and upskilling	Develop and deliver Procurement and Commercial OFP programme Develop and deliver a pipeline of commercial and procurement workstreams-driving financial value of approach	Mar 25 Mar 25
Deliver a program of process improvements and efficiencies through business support	Delivery of programme of improvement and efficiency reviews within finance business support unit – meeting financial/budget targets (within finance and maximising service impacts)	Mar 25
Maximise income collection whilst supporting those in financial hardship	To deliver automation, efficiency and channel shift opportunities across income and welfare Deliver specific debt recovery programs to strengthen bad debt provision Delivery of internal bailiff service (pending successful business case)	Mar 25 Aug 23 Sept 24
Inform, identify and support VFM and efficiency opportunities across the Council to maintain financial stability	To support the development and delivery of efficiency and transformation options to support MTFP 25/26 – across org To develop unit cost and benchmarking information across org in order to assist future option identification	Mar 25 Oct 24
Cross-cutting (Finance) activity	BWO improvement programme Deliver 5% efficiency saving across Finance (whilst maintaining financial support/governance) 6 monthly internal customer satisfaction survey across finance functions	Mar 25 Mar 25 Mar 25



# Governance Services 23/24

Custodian of the Council's constitutional, legal and governance arrangements..



## Our Projects (23/24):

- Borough elections May 2023
- Town & Parish elections May 2023
- Annual Governance Statement 22/23
- Member Induction & Development
- Neighbourhood Plan referenda – June 23
- Constitution Review – summer
- AGS and action plan 2022/23
- Data & Info Governance Strategy & implementation
- Counter fraud service development
- PSIAS assessment for Internal Audit
- Overview & Scrutiny improvement
- Polling Places review
- Annual electoral canvass - autumn

## Our Projects (24/25)

- All-out Borough election May 2024:
- Parliamentary elections (likely between May & Nov 24)
- Community Governance Review

## Outcomes for Council (Local Code of Corporate Governance)

Behaving with integrity, commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law

Openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

Defined outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits.

Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes

Developing the Council's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.

Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.

Managing risks and implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability

# Governance – Programme Plan

Objectives	Actions	Timescale
<p>To be a smarter and more efficient service by developing effective and accessible digital solutions; making it easier for our internal customers, residents and businesses to work and communicate with us.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete support to the Boundary Commission’s Electoral Review for implementation in 2024.</li> <li>• Deliver two constituencies for next Parliamentary elections</li> <li>• Post Shute End delivery of public meetings</li> <li>• Community Governance review</li> </ul>	<p>By May 2024</p> <p>May – Nov 24 24/25? 24/25</p>
<p>→ To strive to be the best we can be as a service, an employer and as colleagues. To be innovative and ambitious, harnessing the skills and enthusiasm of all our colleagues to be recognised nationally and locally as an excellent service and a great place to work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver May 2023 elections</li> <li>• Deliver Member induction and development as per LGA recommendation from peer review</li> <li>• Complete root &amp; branch review of Constitution</li> <li>• Prepare for all-out local elections in 2024</li> <li>• Deliver Audit and Investigation plans for the partner council and client councils.</li> <li>• Develop further business partnering/intelligent client approach for Legal Services</li> <li>• Embed and communicate Local Code of Corporate Governance.</li> <li>• Improved Exec Forward Planning and decision-making</li> </ul>	<p>May 2023</p> <p>May/June 2023</p> <p>Summer 2023</p> <p>Dec 2023</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>March 2024</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

# “Opportunities” – 2023/24 and beyond

- Streamlining Governance through summer 2023 Constitution Review
- Fraud identification and recovery
- Revisiting “all-out” elections question
- Modernising internal audit (PSIAS review)

# “Challenges” - Budget Bids 2024/25 – Initial Proposals

## Democratic Services

- Upgrade/replace AV system for live streaming public meetings
- Additional work demands – new post for school appeals

## 20 Information Governance (in Legal Services)

- Compliance software for policies, asset registers etc
- Insurance cover for Cyber risk

Internal Audit - Use of data analytics

# Top Risks – Governance Services

Information Governance – data protection breach, non-compliance

Capacity (particularly at key times such as lead-in to elections)

Member/Officer relationships leading to complaints (formal and informal) and reputational damage

# Commercial Property

*To professionally manage the Council's property assets, ensuring we have a fit-for-purpose portfolio which meets the Council's strategic objectives and service & customer needs and delivers Value for Money*

Political Balance  
Changing service need  
Changing Economy – cost increase; inflation; supply chain



**Our Functions:**  
Investment  
Estates  
Development  
Operational Property, including  
Facilities Management

**Customer Experience:**  
Our colleagues  
Members  
Residents  
Businesses  
Partners

## Outcomes

To ensure long term income for the council

A sufficient fit for purpose estate working towards carbon neutrality

Delivery of service development schemes to specification, on time and on budget

# Commercial Property

Objectives	Action	Timescale
<p>To be the central corporate resource responsible for the management of all Council property assets, utilising the Corporate Landlord Model</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake Corporate Landlord Model self-assessment and develop action plan to embed Corporate Landlord Model into service practices</li> <li>• Develop and deliver Asset Management plan and service Asset management plan</li> <li>• Play an active role in Strategic Growth &amp; Assets process to understand Service needs and delivering to requirements utilising WBC assets</li> </ul>	<p>Mid-2023</p> <p>Mid-2023</p> <p>On-going</p>
<p>To manage and develop a multi-functional portfolio of assets which meets out statutory landlord obligations and service needs &amp; service outcomes, including working towards carbon neutrality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play an active role in Strategic Growth &amp; Assets process to understand Service needs and delivering to requirements utilising WBC assets</li> <li>• Lead on delivery of the Assets Opportunities OFP to rationalise property portfolio</li> <li>• Develop and implement policy relating to use of assets by VCS</li> <li>• Major projects:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carnival II, Wokingham</li> <li>• Barkham Farm Solar Farm (+ solar farms 2 &amp; 3)</li> <li>• Gorse Ride II</li> <li>• Twyford Library</li> <li>• School extensions</li> <li>• SEND school provision</li> <li>• Future HQ provision</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Green energy generation projects ongoing £18m over 3 years in MTFP – projects to achieve 7-year payback or 14%ROI as minimum and to achieve 100% renewable energy consumption across the councils' estate in 5 years</li> <li>• Energy Reduction projects – aim to reduce energy consumption year on year by 5%</li> <li>• Support services energy reduction schemes</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>2023-24</p> <p>Mid-2023</p> <p>2023-2026</p> <p>2023-24</p>

# Commercial Property

Objectives	Action	Timescale
<p>Ensuring our property portfolio achieves Value for Money, by generating a positive financial return and by reducing the financial burden of the property portfolio</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to implement stream-lined approach to managing rent and service charge collection</li> <li>• Implement recommendations and actions from internal audit report for Reconciliations</li> <li>• Develop and implement approach to managing income concessions</li> </ul>	<p>On-going</p> <p>Mid-2023</p> <p>Mid-2023</p>
<p>Ensure the service has the key skills and resources, including data intelligence, to meet identified needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop programme (with adequate resource) to ensure property data comprehensive and complete to enable efficient management (Tech Forge)</li> </ul>	<p>End FY 2023-24</p>



# Sport and Leisure

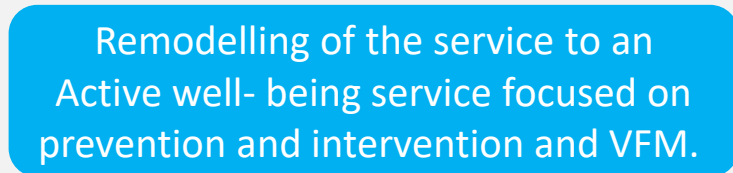
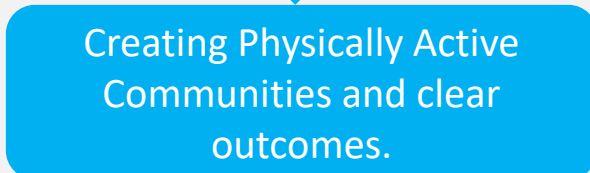
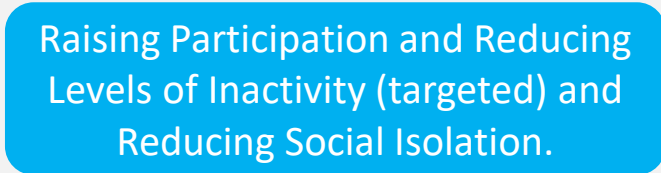
## Creating Physically Active Communities, Reducing Isolation and Narrowing the Health Inequalities Gap

### Our Functions:

Community Physical Activity programmes - Intervention  
Leisure Provisions indoor/outdoor  
Parks and Open Spaces (Inc Pitches)  
Cantley Café  
Commercial activity

### Customer Experience:

Customers  
Residents  
Internal colleagues  
Elected Members  
Businesses  
Key Internal/External Partners



## Objectives and Actions

Objective	Actions	Timescale
Service Transformation	Ensure the delivery of the revised service model – to maximise the outcomes/impact across the health inequalities agenda across Wokingham. Increased working with Public Health.	Sept 23
Financial Sustainability	A clear and coherent financial plan that supports the revised service model and wider transformation programme – that sets out revenue and a cost reduction plan.	On-going
Manage, maintain and develop indoor/outdoor facilities	Innovation and revised service offering including supporting a revised pricing policy for indoor sites that helps support wider access to services for those disadvantaged.	Oct 23
Combined Cultural Offer.	Service Realignment to ensure a combined Cultural service offer can deliver wider service outcomes.	Sept 23
Partnership	Work with local sport and community clubs and external partners to increase participation.	On-going
Management of Leisure contract.	Success of leisure facilities (completion of KPI's, customer satisfaction, completion of targets, performance).	On-going
Increase participation numbers (targeted)	Increase targeted programmes, joint working across the council.	On-going
Remodelling of the service.	Review current services – de-commission low value add/non financially sustainable. Review of inhouse services – best delivery models; inhouse/partnership/ wider alternate delivery models.	On-going
Young Persons offer	Extend the school outreach programme targeting local schools with targeted intervention to increase participation and physical activity.	Oct 23

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Community Safety Partnership Update</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 3 July 2023
<b>WARD</b>	None specific;
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	Director, Place and Growth - Giorgio Framaliccio

## **OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY**

Crime, disorder & anti-social behaviour issues affect all sections of society. Whilst Wokingham remains a very safe place and has one of the lowest crime rates in the Southeast, some categories of crime are seeing an upward trend.

The Wokingham Community Safety Partnership, made up of key stakeholders including, Wokingham Borough Council, Thames Valley Police, Berkshire Fire and Rescue, Health and Probation Services. Continue to work together to address issues and concerns effecting the borough's residents, business and wider communities.

The Wokingham Community Safety Partnership (CSP) is two years into its three-year strategy, this report outlines the progress and outcomes achieved in year two.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Committee considers and offers comments on the crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour issues and the work of the Wokingham Community Safety Partnership from April 2022 – March 2023.

## **SUMMARY OF REPORT**

The Wokingham Community Safety Strategy was adopted in June 2021. The focus for the 2021-2024 strategy is on the following three strategic priorities, underpinned by five specific aims:

### **Strategic priorities**

- 1 Listening to needs and concerns of local residents.
- 2 Intervening early and preventing issues escalating.
- 3 Working together to protect vulnerable residents.

### **Specific Aims**

- 1 Work with communities to deal with crime and anti-social behaviour hotspots.
- 2 Reduce the harm caused by domestic abuse.
- 3 Reduce incidents of serious violence and knife crime.
- 4 Tackle exploitation of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- 5 Reduce incidents of residential burglary and theft from vehicle.

### **Crime Performance**

All crime across the borough has seen an increase of +11.4% (841 offences) in the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 when compared to the same period the previous year. Increases have been seen largely in categories in relation to theft as well as some other crime types.

Crimes that have decreased when compared to the same period last year, include drugs possession, drugs trafficking, possession of weapons and public order offences. Some categories including burglary dwelling, robbery and hate crime have all seen reductions.

The partnership's draft end of year report 2022/23 is attached in Appendix A and provides further detail.

## **Background**

### **Statutory and other partners**

The ability to tackle crime and disorder is maximised if everyone including local residents and businesses, community and voluntary groups, and services work together in a coordinated way. The local authority, police, health, probation and fire services are statutory partners under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. However, in practice, the Community Safety Partnership works across a much wider range of partners at different levels and on different topics to address what needs doing, who can help and to take action. There is good information exchange between those concerned, including with residents, so that agencies can listen and respond to the needs of local people.

### **Setting our work in context**

As well as the negative impact on the daily lives of individuals, the effects of crime, anti-social behaviour and disorder draw widely on public service resources. Working in partnership and adopting a 'whole systems approach' is essential for both for prevention and positive action. The partnerships work contributes to the Police & Crime Commissioner's Police and Criminal Justice Plan and to the council's Corporate Plan as well as measures set out in the Public Health Outcomes Framework.

### **2022-2023**

This past year the Wokingham Community Safety Partnership was Chaired by Susan Parsonage, Chief Executive of Wokingham Borough. The work of the board was supported by the Executive Member for Environment, Sport and Leisure, Ian Shenton and the Executive Member for Arts, Environment and Resident Services Sarah Kerr.

### **Analysis of Issues**

This year the partnership has made positive progress on several of its workstreams, the Community Safety End of Year Report for 2022/23 attached in Appendix A, provides a comprehensive overview of the work delivered in respect of each of the partnerships workstreams. This includes, domestic abuse, prevent & channel, substance misuse, anti-social behaviour, serious violence and exploitation & violence against women and girls.

### **Crime Performance**

All crime has seen an increase of +11.4% (841 offences) in the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 when compared to the same period the previous year. Increases have been seen largely in categories in relation to theft, including Shoplifting (+470 crimes), Bike Theft (+122 crimes), Theft of and Theft from Vehicle Offences (+54 & +60 crimes respectively). There has also been an increase of +29 offences in relation to Sexual Offences Non - Rape, an increase of +83 more Harassment incidents and +72 more Domestic Abuse incidents.

Crimes that have decreased when compared to the same period last year, include Drugs Possession down (-72 crimes) and Trafficking (-24 crimes), Possession of Weapons down (-9) and Public Order Offences down (-54 crimes), and Rape (-5 crimes). Some categories including Burglary Dwelling, Robbery and Hate Crime have reduced by small percentages. Drug related offences are often linked to active police operations, this year there have been fewer proactive police operations across the local police area due to frontline operational resourcing demands.

### **Anti-Social Behaviour**

This is the first fully operational 12 months of the councils Anti-Social Behaviour Team which has proved to be both successful and busy with over 1900 service requests being received. In addition to this newly formed service, the Council Housing Anti-Social Behaviour response for high level ASB cases has also been integrated into the Community Safety Teams existing ASB service.

Multi- agency ASB Panel meetings continue to share information and have oversight of high and medium level ASB cases.

### **Violence Against Women & Girls and Domestic Violence**

The partnership continues to make improvements with respect of this area or work, it has been working on a violence against women and girls strategy to draw together work already in situ, but also to identify gaps and work on more early intervention, prevention work to ensure joint work on initiatives is explored and implemented. Large amounts of training across a cross section of professionals has been delivered, this will help to ensure professionals can identify and assist DA victims at the earliest opportunity. Literature has been reviewed as part of a large communications plan in connection with DA and work to improve the offer of safe accommodation continues together with work towards completing and achieving Domestic Abuse Housing Accreditation for Council Housing in the coming year.

Further detailed information on progress is attached in Appendix A; the draft Community Safety Partnership end of year report for 22-23.

### **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	Nil	N/A
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	Nil	Nil	N/A
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	Nil	Nil	N/A

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

N/A

#### **Cross-Council Implications**

N/A

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

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

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

The CSP has no negative impact on WBC's Climate Emergency Objectives

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

None

**List of Background Papers**

None

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# **Wokingham Community Safety Partnership Annual Report 2022-2023**

# **Community Safety Partnership Annual Report 2022/23**

## **Introduction: The Partnership and its work**

The Community Safety Partnership's aims and overarching duty is to:

- Reduce crime and disorder.
- Improve community safety.
- Reduce re-offending.

By addressing these three overarching outcomes the partnership strives to improve the quality of life for everyone who lives, works or visits the borough. The focus for 2021-2024 is on the following three strategic priorities, underpinned by five specific aims:

### **Strategic priorities**

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- 2 Intervening early and preventing issues escalating.
- 3 Working together to protect vulnerable residents.

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### **Setting our work in context**

As well as the negative impact on the daily lives of individuals, the effects of crime, anti-social behaviour and disorder draw widely on public service resources. Working in partnership and adopting a 'whole system approach' is essential for both for prevention and positive action. The partnerships work contributes to the Police & Crime Commissioner's Police and Criminal Justice Plan and to the council's Corporate Plan as well as measures set out in the Public Health Outcomes Framework.

### **2022-2023**

This past year the Wokingham Community Safety Partnership was Chaired by Susan Parsonage, Chief Executive of Wokingham Borough. The work of the board was supported by the Executive Member for Environment, Sport and Leisure, Ian Shenton and the Executive Member for Arts, Environment and Resident Services Sarah Kerr.

This year the partnership has made positive progress on several of its workstreams, by way of an overview, the achievements are summarised below. In many cases each of the partnerships workstreams have individual more detailed end of year reports where more detail can be found.

### **Domestic Abuse Key Achievements**

- Undertaken actions to support the Wokingham Domestic Abuse Policy 2021 – 2024.
- Increased capacity within the Domestic Abuse commissioned service, located physically in joint premises within the borough. This provides support for victim-survivors, children, perpetrators and practitioners.
- Delivered 42 Multi and single agency training sessions, with 1133 people as well as 7 presentations attended by a further 246 practitioners to increase understanding and insight and improve practice and interventions.
- Recognised as a best practice DA Partnership Board by Department for Levelling Up Housing Communities.
- Undertaken a full independent review of DA literature to increase accessibility of information and resources, updated and produced additional materials and videos to reflect the needs of our community. This has included use of digital, printed, and other media to raise awareness of domestic abuse issues.
- Implementation and delivery comprehensive multi agency communications plan. One example being resources produced for Ukrainian guests and hosts as well as establishing a pathway for interpreter support.
- Increased the number of specialist support options available to Wokingham residents through encouraging new services into the borough to include a programme for those affected by the long-term psychological impact of having experienced domestic abuse and a new stalking advocacy service.
- Increased involvement with the work of the Berkshire Suicide Prevention Board and other regional and national operational groups.
- Continued to strive to reach more residents who face additional barriers to information and services, including those who have protected characteristics to increase access to services, alongside driving improved service responses.

For more information, please see the separate Domestic Abuse Services Annual Report 2022-2023.

### **Prevent & Channel**

- First Prevent Duty self-assessment submitted to the Home Office with positive feedback. This showed performance against the ten benchmarks which are required to be met to deliver the Prevent Duty.
- New live virtual training sessions for social workers launched.
- Lead on successful joint Berkshire West bid, for a new Home Office Preventing radicalisation grant for unfunded areas.
- Undertook Hate Crime awareness campaign to tie in with the National Hate Crime Awareness.
- Campaign to raise awareness about the threat to tie in with Safer Internet Day 2023: 7 February 2023.
- QR code on sticker and poster format has been produced and distributed to schools and Bracknell and Wokingham College. Also promoted via libraries, Berkshire Youth newsletter, Education News and residents' newsletters. This provides a quick link to Internet Matters with advice on online safety for children and young people.

- Annual channel panel assurance statement. This is made up of five sections and 34 areas of compliance- the Council has achieved green status for all areas.
- Discussed cases referred to Channel Panel via Prevent and reviewed previously closed cases as required.
- Received a presentation on the Prevent Action Plan and an update on current CT risk.
- Members of both groups joined together in a presentation on mental health and radicalisation. Case studies were also discussed as part of Channel Panel development.

### **Substance Misuse Key Achievements**

- Strategic Substance Misuse Needs Assessment undertaken, position statement and action plan drafted, Delivery group being established to oversee implementation.
- The Combatting Drugs Partnership (CDP) for West Berkshire encompassing Wokingham, Reading and West Berks was created. The Senior Responsible Officer appointed for the CDP, currently the TVP Police & Crime Commissioner.
- Local partners continued to work together on the long-term ambitions that will be key to the strategy's success. A new set of local and national outcomes frameworks provided to measure progress against the key strategic priorities and ensure public services can be held to account at both national and local levels.
- Implemented Long-acting buprenorphine prescribing to assist with stabilisation for opiate clients.
- Developed a comprehensive educational awareness offer for parents, students, and teachers of all schools across Wokingham Borough.
- Delivered outreach sessions within Salvation Army to promote harm reduction messages to reduce risk to individuals and the community.

### **Anti-Social Behaviour Community Safety**

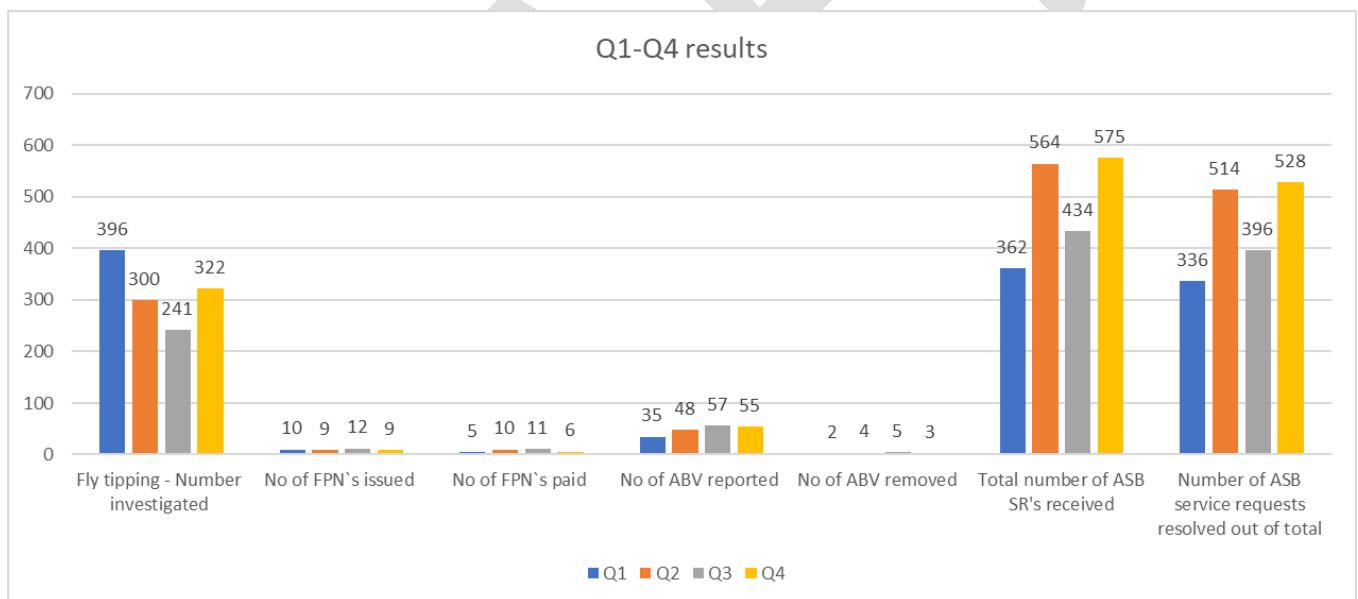
- Delivered borough wide multi-agency anti-social behaviour panel, dealing with medium and high-level complex cases.
- The anti-social behaviour panel oversaw interventions of 27 medium – high level cases.
- 22 medium – high level ASB cases problem resolved and closed. 1 case escalated into the criminal space with perpetrator being discussed by other forums therefore closed.
- 2 cases that had previously been discussed were re-opened.
- 2 Community Triggers received, 1 did not meet threshold, however, was reviewed by the ASB Panel. Co-ordinated response and action plan in response to 1 Community Trigger, was closed due to lack of further evidence.
- 4 Community Protection Warnings (CPW's) issued.
- 3 Acceptable Behaviour Agreement (ABA) issued.
- 96 service requesting in relation to reports of ASB received and resolved.
- Attendance and contribution at approximately 25 safeguarding meetings.
- Implementation of Public Spaces Protection Order to address issues caused by nuisance vehicle use and car meets.
- Successful integration of Housing ASB service into the Community Safety Team.
- Problem Solving Hotspot Action Plan escalated and adopted jointly with Thames Valley Police for Norreys Estate, regular meetings held to discuss perpetrators, victims and environmental interventions. Perpetrators interviewed under PACE (Police and Criminal Evidence Act) 2 residents moved to safe accommodation. One partial closure order put in place. Criminal activities significantly disrupted.

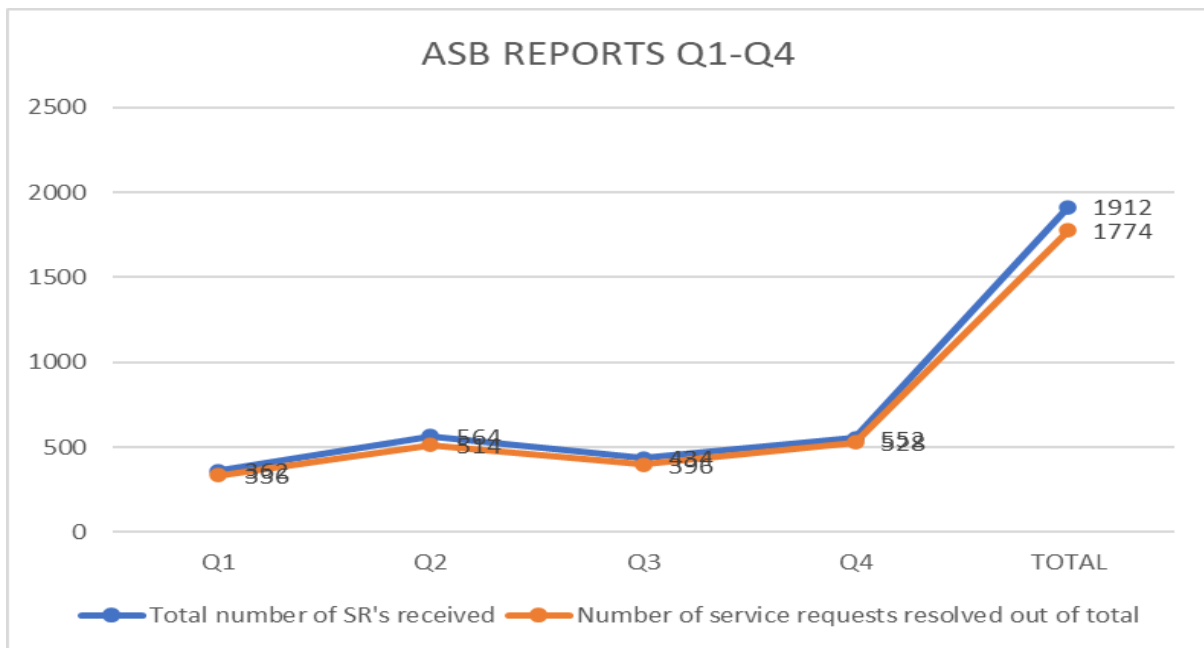
- Safeguarding and enforcement interventions for 2 cuckooing cases (where a vulnerable persons property is taken over, usually for the purpose of drug taking or dealing) in relation to council properties.
- Networking event with ASB theme organised for partner agencies.

### **Anti-Social Behaviour Safety & Enforcement**

- Team has now been in place for a full 12 months.
- Originally 10, now operating as a team of 8, there are 4 x senior ASB officers and 4 x ASB officers.
- Delivering a shift rota 7 days a week and dealing with reports of ASB, ranging from bonfire's related nuisance to fly tipping or a household noise nuisance.
- Team continues to work closely with the Community Safety team, Thames Valley Police, Town and Parish Councils as well as other local agencies.
- 40 FPN's for fly tipping/ littering issued, visited numerous businesses to check waste contracts to remove business waste have been dealt, together with several noise nuisance related complaints.
- Regular attendance and monitoring of the Public Space Protection order across the borough in relation to car meets.

### **Council ASB Service Requests**





### **ASB – Criminal damage Case Study**

*Cantley Park - Numerous complaints about Anti-social behaviour at Cantley Park were received by the ASB team. No information about who may be responsible was available. As a result, it was deemed that the installation of CCTV should be deployed to try identify those responsible. The levels of ASB continued to increase and even become more severe. The ASB team, with the help of Thames Valley Police identified the 3 main offenders and worked with the Community Safety Team & the ASB Panel to put together a problem-solving plan.*

*Community Safety Officers made a referral to the Youth Justice Team who became involved and worked with the families to identify ways to deter the individuals from re offending. 2 of the young people have engaged with the youth team and have been working with the KICKS football project. Unfortunately, 1 of the individuals came with more complex issues and has not engaged and continued to engage in offending. This individual is now subject to criminal charges and is being dealt with by TVP.*

### **Problem Solving Tasking Group**

- Reviewed purpose and structure of the group.
- Developed good working relationships and facilitated partnership working between the Council, Thames Valley Police, the Fire Service, Cranstoun (Substance Misuse Services), Public Protection Partnership, Community Alcohol Partnership and Town Council.
- Worked on implementation of Public Spaces Protection Order
- Worked with retailers to reinstate Shopwatch to address theft from shop offence increase.

- Hate crime data and agency responses reviewed on a quarterly basis. Supported Hate Crime Awareness week.
- Discussed Anti-social Behaviour Hotspots and formulated a multi-agency response involving the Council's Enforcement and Safety Team, Thames Valley Police, Prevention and Youth Justice Service and the Fire Service.
- Formulated a multi-agency response to Halloween and Bonfire Night.
- Organised delivery of Modern Slavery Training

### **Serious Violence and Exploitation**

- Set up Hospital Navigators to provide mentoring and support in the emergency department for young victims of violence.
- Worked with Thames Valley Police on Operation Kosh to produce action plans targeting those carrying weapons.
- Formed an Exploitation Task and Finish Group looking at the Safeguarding Framework and Multi Agency Responses (EMRAC)
- Produced a comprehensive local problem profile of serious violence and exploitation.
- Based on recommendations in the local problem profile commissioned "deep-dive" analysis of peaks in Violence and disorder.
- Work being undertaken in schools to reduce fixed and permanent exclusions.
- Produced a strategy to reduce and prevent serious violence.

The Strategy and action plan will be signed off by the SV & ESB in June 2023 before being formally adopted by WBCSP and published in January 2024.

### **Violence Against Women and Girls**

- Draft Wokingham Violence Against Women & Girls Strategy (VAWG) produced. Sign off expected September 2023.
- CSP and DA Partnership Board and DA Networking Group invited to consider and agree the following priorities:-
  - Putting the victim/survivor at the centre of service design and delivery;
  - Having a clear focus on perpetrators in order to keep victims and survivors safe;
  - Taking a strategic, system-wide approach to commissioning, acknowledging the gendered nature of VAWG;
  - Being locally led and safeguard individuals at every point;
  - Raising local awareness of the issues and involve, engage and empower communities to seek, design and deliver solutions to prevent VAWG.
- The community were consulted on the draft VAWG strategy, through the Community Safety Survey, and invited to help shape the action plan.

## Crime Performance Summary 1st April 2022- 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	+/-	% change
<b>All crime (Excluding fraud)</b>	6,783	7,403	8,244	841	11.4%
<b>Violence with injury</b>	620	754	704	-50	-6.6%
<b>Violence without Injury (Excluding Harassment)</b>	1,026	1,101	1,174	73	6.6%
<b>Harassment</b>	799	939	1,022	83	8.8%
<b>Rape</b>	66	92	87	-5	-5.4%
<b>Non-Rape Sexual Offences</b>	160	163	192	29	17.8%
<b>Robbery</b>	42	35	34	-1	-2.9%
<b>Residential Burglary - Dwelling</b>	125	167	163	-4	-2.4%
<b>Residential Burglary - Sheds / Garages</b>	149	92	101	9	9.8%
<b>Theft of Vehicle</b>	156	165	219	54	32.7%
<b>Theft from Vehicle</b>	336	272	332	60	22.1%
<b>Theft from the Person</b>	87	104	105	1	1.0%
<b>Bicycle Theft</b>	152	144	266	122	84.7%
<b>Shoplifting</b>	395	411	881	470	114.4%
<b>Making off without Payment</b>	113	134	123	-11	-8.2%
<b>Arson</b>	45	55	58	3	5.5%
<b>Criminal Damage</b>	768	702	688	-14	-2.0%
<b>Drug Trafficking</b>	93	57	33	-24	-42.1%
<b>Drug Possession</b>	211	204	132	-72	-35.3%
<b>Possession of Weapons Offences</b>	52	42	33	-9	-21.4%
<b>Public Order Offences</b>	540	953	899	-54	-5.7%

## Hate Crime & Domestic Abuse

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	+/-	% change
<i>NOTE: Some types of hate crime have a very low occurrence so it is possible month figures may become negative due to record updates</i>					
<b>Recorded Hate Crime (included in above crimes) and Incidents</b>	266	312	304	-8	-2.6%
<b>Racially or Religiously Aggravated Crime</b>	85	110	81	-29	-26.4%
<b>Racist Incidents</b>	139	174	150	-24	-13.8%
<b>Religious Incidents</b>	7	4	9	5	125.0%
<b>Homophobic Incidents</b>	22	21	28	7	33.3%
<b>Transphobic Incidents</b>	10	11	13	2	18.2%
<b>Disability Incidents</b>	19	32	26	-6	-18.8%
<b>Domestic Crime and Incidents - National Definition</b>					-
<b>Domestic Abuse Incidents - Recorded Crime (ND)</b>	473	323	395	72	22.3%
<b>Domestic Abuse Incidents - Non Crime Occurrence (ND)</b>	107	79	65	-14	-17.7%
<b>MARAC</b>					
<b>MARAC – Total cases discussed</b>	136	75	91	16	21.3%
<b>MARAC – Repeat cases</b>	52	23	33	10	43.5%
<b>MARAC – Total number of children</b>	165	96	82	-14	-14.6%



## Police Reported Anti-Social Behaviour

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	+/-	% change
Personal	296	217	172	-45	-20.7%
Community	987	896	698	-198	-22.1%
Environmental	132	114	103	-11	-9.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1415</b>	<b>1227</b>	<b>973</b>	<b>-254</b>	<b>-20.7%</b>

## Wokingham MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences)

	Cases	Repeat Cases	Percentage Repeat Cases
April 19 to Mar 20	128	34	26.5%
April 20 to Mar 21	136	52	38.2%
April 21 to Mar 22	75	23	30.6%
April 22 to Mar 23	91	33	36.2%

## Crime Performance Overview

All crime has seen an increase of +11.4% (841 offences) in the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 when compared to the same period the previous year. Increases have been seen largely in categories in relation to theft, including Shoplifting (+470 crimes), Bike Theft (+122 crimes), Theft of and Theft from Vehicle Offences (+54 & +60 crimes respectively). There has also been an increase of +29 offences in relation to Sexual Offences Non - Rape, an increase of +83 more Harassment incidents and +72 more Domestic Abuse incidents.

Theft offences have seen some of the largest increases on record both locally and nationally. It is thought that a substantial increase has been driven by the cost-of-living crisis, an increase of theft of items such as food, baby formula and household essentials, including washing up detergent and personal care products. This is a change from previous data in relation to shoplifting offences which indicated that luxury items, such as perfume, electrical styling equipment and alcohol were amongst the most stolen items.

Wokingham in line with several other parts of the country have seen an increase in the use of bicycles as an alternative and more popular mode of transport. Due to a mix of environmental and economic factors, bikes have become more popular. Sadly, increases use has resulted in an increase in opportunities for bike thefts. Hotspot locations include train stations, Wokingham Town and the newly opened Carnival Hub. Increased security measures and enforcement activity have been undertaken and will continue. However, the ease of being able to sell bikes as part of an online marketplace, coupled with the continued demand for their sale continues to compound the issue. Events to increase and promote security advice, continue across the hotspot locations and across social media.

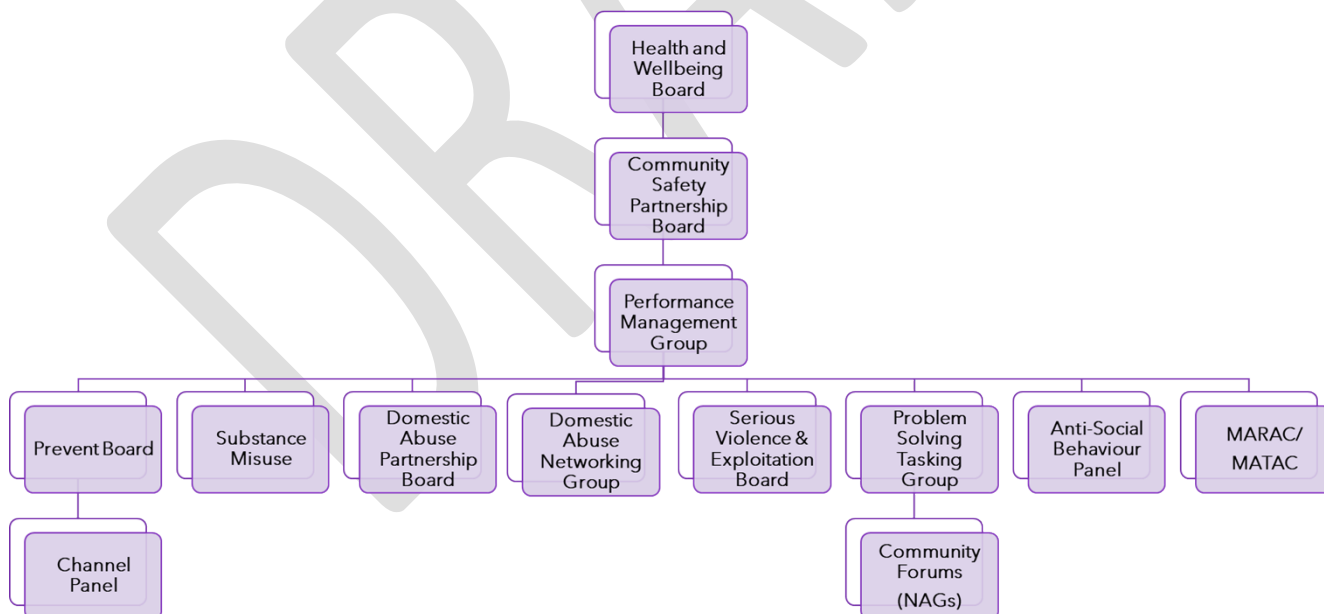
As an affluent borough Wokingham continues to have a higher than national average car ownership, this is a contributing factor in continuing to attract offenders perpetrating vehicle crime offences. Theft of vehicle crime continue to take place locally and is primarily driven by organised crime activity. Thames Valley police have been working with the council to identify gaps in CCTV and ANPR camera's to help detection and enforcement activity to tackle organised crime. Education and prevention advice continues to be rolled out to local residents to help aid prevention.

Violence against women and girl related offences including sexual offences, domestic abuse and harassment have continued to see a rise. A national drive to better identify, respond and support victims of these offences continue to increase confidence of victims coming forward for support. National and local changes and Domestic Abuse Matters training implemented by Thames Valley Police has also resulted in an increase and better identification of offences when officers attend incidents. To understand the local picture more comprehensively the partnership is in the process of developing a VAWG strategy, due for roll out later in the year.

Crimes that have decreased when compared to the same period last year, include Drugs Possession down (-72 crimes) and Trafficking (-24 crimes), Possession of Weapons down (-9) and Public Order Offences down (-54 crimes), and Rape (-5 crimes). Some categories including Burglary Dwelling, Robbery and Hate Crime have reduced by small amounts. Drug related offences are often linked to active police operations, this year there have been fewer proactive police operations due to frontline operational resourcing demands. Joint work in schools by both the Councils Youth Justice Services and Thames Valley police in relation to knife crime and robbery are starting to have an impact on these crime types, it is however anticipated the results of this work will be seen via longer term impacts.

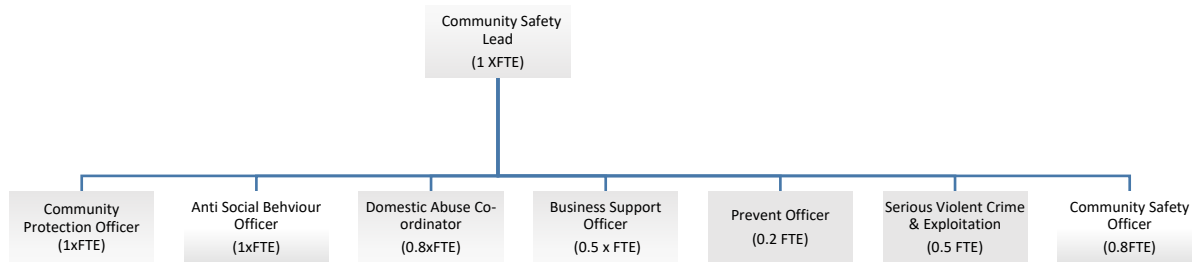
**Partnership Governance & Structure**

The current governance structure and delivery groups for the Wokingham Community Safety Partnership are set out below. A detailed summary of the groups can be found in Appendix A.



**Community Safety Team 2022/23**

The council’s community safety team consists of the following structure.



## **Funding**

Last year, the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) committed to provide grant funding to all CSP's across the Thames Valley and rather than the annual allocation agreed each year that has changed to allow funding across three financial years (2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25). This would allow greater flexibility for the Community Safety Partnership to commit to multi-year projects rather than being restricted to spending an agreed set amount each year.

The allocation to the Wokingham CSP is as follows:-

2022/23 £103,138  
 2023/24 £126,561  
 2024/25 £150,875

**Total over 3 years = £380,574**

This commitment will be reviewed annually, and funding approval will remain on the basis of approved funding bids delivering against the Police & Criminal Justice Plan followed by performance monitoring reports that demonstrate outcomes that have been delivered, or outcomes that are being worked towards.

Of the £103,138 allocated in 2022/23, £58,003 was spent and the underspend of £45,135 will be carried forward into 2023/24 and added to the £126,561 allowing projects of circa £171,696 to be funded.

### **Projects funded in 2022/23**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Spend in 2022/23</b>
Joint Analyst for Berkshire CSP's	£3,270
Independent Domestic Violence Advisor training	£9,750
Public Protection Partnership – Fraud Victim Support Scheme	£5,000
Domestic Abuse Home Refuge Scheme	£5,000
Reading FC Community Trust – 'Kicks'/Positive Pathways Project	£20,000
Problem Solving & Tasking Group – Small Projects	£7,053
Domestic Homicide Review cost of independent chair	£7,200
Statistical analysis for serious violence and exploitation and anti-social behaviour scoping	£4,000

The Domestic Abuse Duties Grant was approximately £248K, specifically ring fenced for the delivery of the new Domestic Abuse Act 2021 duty.

In addition, the partnership received £17K from the Violence Reduction Unit to help the partnership prepare the groundwork in readiness for the new Serious Violence Duty.

The partnership also has oversight of the Borough's commissioned Domestic Abuse service and the Substance Misuse Service contracts.

DRAFT

## **Community Safety Partnership Subgroups**

### **Problem Solving Tasking Group (PSTG)**

**Chair:** Police Neighbourhood Inspector

**Deputy Chair:** Wokingham Community Safety Manager

**Frequency:** Every 6 weeks for 1.5hrs

**Membership:** Cranston drug and alcohol services, Public Protection Partnership, police, WBC children's social care, Prevention & Youth Justice Service, fire service, Wokingham town council, WBC community engagement, WBC Enforcement and Safety Team, Involve community services, Reading football club.

**Overview** The PSTG work together to identify and reduce location-based problems identified by local reporting and data analysis. The groups collaborative approach allows for effective information and intelligence sharing across the agencies; leading to a greater understanding of concerns and an ability to identify the most appropriate problem solving solution. The solutions are often collaborative in nature, demonstrating that all agencies have a role to play. The group has addressed ASB in Arborfield, Woodley Town Centre and local parks. The group is working with the business community in Wokingham Town Centre to reduce an increase in shoplifting. It is also working with those most at risk of offending, providing appropriate drug, alcohol and housing support. In the coming year the group will consider its response to Violence Against Women and Girls to include reviewing CCTV locations and provision of 3rd sector support during the Night Time Economy. It has delivered e-scooter awareness events with TVP and RBFR, bike-marking events and numerous other pop up information sessions responding to local issues. The group continues to look at ways to work together including utilising technology to engage with the community on the issues of most concern and providing practical solutions.

### **Anti- Social Behaviour Panel**

**Chair:** Wokingham Borough Council Community Protection Officer

**Deputy Chair:** Wokingham Community Safety Manager

**Frequency:** Every 6 weeks for 1.5- 2hours

**Membership:** Registered social landlords, WBC community development, WBC housing, police, adult social care, children's social care and Reading football club.

**Overview:** Multi agency panel meets to discuss medium and high level anti-social behaviour issues across the borough. During the past 12 months the group has discussed 19 medium to high level anti-social behaviour cases in relation to private, WBC or housing association properties. Outcomes have included investigative interviews, warning letters, community protection warnings (CPW), community triggers, multi-agency interventions including referrals on to mental health services and assisting with tenancy checks, warnings and notices. A separate multi-agency panel has met regularly to discuss intervention work on the Norreys estate following an increase in medium and high level ASB and criminal activity.

### **Domestic Abuse Partnership Board**

**Chair:** Assistant Director Environment and Safety

**Deputy Chair:** Wokingham Community Safety Manager

**Frequency:** Bimonthly for 2 hours.

**Overview:** Key priorities for the group are to support Wokingham Borough Council in meeting its duty under Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. The board is working together to support, advise and work in partnership with Wokingham Borough Council to ensure victims of domestic abuse have access to adequate and appropriate support within safe accommodation services. The group is working to improve outcomes for victims of

domestic abuse, including children, through a strategic approach to identify and address gaps in support within safe accommodation services.

### **Domestic Abuse Network**

**Chair:** Assistant Director Safeguarding and Quality Assurance

**Deputy Chair:** Wokingham Community Safety Manager

**Frequency:** Bimonthly for 2 hours.

**Overview:** Key priorities include sharing best practice, building strong networks between agencies working in the borough and delivering on the Wokingham Domestic Abuse Strategy 2021 – 2024. The group is working to improve outcomes for all those affected by domestic abuse regardless of gender or protected characteristics.

### **MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference)**

**Chair:** Thames Valley Police

**Deputy Chair:** N/A

**Frequency:** Monthly

**Overview:** The Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) is a monthly multi agency meeting to safeguard adult victims of domestic abuse and their children who have been identified as being at 'high risk' of serious harm or homicide. Information is shared between agencies to create a collective understanding of risks and put in place a coordinated action plan to increase safety options.

### **MATAC (Multi Agency Tasking and Coordination)**

**Chair:** Thames Valley Police

**Deputy Chair:** N/A

**Frequency:** Monthly

**Overview:** MATAC is a monthly meeting to identify and tackle the most harmful domestic abuse perpetrators, through changing offender behaviour, reducing re-offending and safeguarding victims and families. Engagement with perpetrators is through education, prevention and diversion methods, including referrals to community based domestic abuse perpetrator interventions, working with housing providers and drug / alcohol/ mental health interventions. If engagement is unsuccessful, disruption and enforcement tactics are used.

### **Substance Misuse**

**Chair:** TBC

**Deputy Chair:** TBC

**Frequency:** TBC

**Overview:** The Combatting Drugs Partnership (CDP) for West Berkshire encompassing Wokingham, Reading and West Berks is now in place. The Senior Responsible Officer appointed for the CDP is currently the TVP Police & Crime Commissioner. A decision will be made shortly regarding the structure of a CSP sub-group. Please note this group has not met in 2022/23.

### **Prevent Board**

**Chair:** Assistant Director for Adult Social Care,

**Deputy Chair:** Deputy LPA Commander, Thames Valley Police

**Frequency:** Every Quarter for 1.5hrs

**Overview:** Key priorities include the delivery and review of the Wokingham Prevent Action plan and ensuring that the local authority is undertaking its statutory duties as set out by the Counter Terrorism and Securities Act 2014. The Prevent Board has strategic oversight of the Borough's delivery of the duties set out in the Counter Terrorism and Securities Act 2014. This includes compliance and delivery of Prevent training delivery across a range of

partner public sector organisations, IT and venue hire policies. Community engagement and development activities and raising awareness of the Prevent programme across communities and professionals including information on how to raise concerns and where to go for further information.

### **Channel Panel**

**Chair:** (Acting) Assistant Director Adult Social Care

**Deputy Chair:** Community Safety Manager

**Frequency:** Every month for 1.5hrs

**Overview:** Meets monthly if there are case to discuss or once every quarter to discuss good practice and share learning through case studies. Key priorities are to discuss any referrals made to the multi-agency panel, to safeguard individuals at risk of racialisation.

### **Serious Violence & Exploitation Strategy Board (SV & ESB)**

**Chair:** Local Police Area Commander and Assistant Director Children's Social Care and Early Help

**Deputy Chair:** N/A

**Frequency:** Quarterly for 2 hours

**Overview:** This group was formed in response to a new statutory duty to reduce and prevent serious violence which became law in April 2022 and was enacted in January 2023.

The group is tasked with working collaboratively to provide a whole systems response to the issue of serious violence in communities including that which occurs within the context of the criminal and sexual exploitation of children, young people and vulnerable adults. Working to increase active participation across agencies and communities to fully understand and prevent individuals of all ages from becoming involved in and impacted by serious violence. A Local Problem Profile was produced and recommendations from that have informed a new Strategy. The approach taken was endorsed by CSP in February 2023.

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# Agenda Item 20.

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Draft Wokingham Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy 2023-26</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 3 July 2023
<b>WARD</b>	None specific;
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	Director, Place and Growth - Giorgio Framalocco

## **OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY**

The Violence Against Women and Girls strategy (2023-26) has been written to help tackle and reduce violence, in all its forms, across the borough of Wokingham. The outcome is to ensure that we make Wokingham an even safer place to live in, to work in, to visit and to identify a range of measures and activity to achieve that.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Committee consider the draft Wokingham VAWG strategy and recommend any changes prior to referral to the Executive for adoption.

## **SUMMARY OF REPORT**

This report is a follow up to the briefing given to this committee in November 2022 and provides background and progress to the development of the draft VAWG strategy.

## **1 Background**

- 1.1 The council's Executive resolved at their meeting in September 2022 that a Wokingham Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategy be produced and that the Council seek White Ribbon Accreditation.
- 1.2 A report was presented to this committee in November 2022 setting out what is meant by VAWG and the impact it can have on women and girls and particularly on their feelings of vulnerability and safety. At the meeting members requested that a draft VAWG strategy and an update on progress be presented to a future meeting of this committee.
- 1.3 Members were informed that the public profile and awareness of VAWG had been raised in recent years by several well publicised murders, especially that of Sarah Everard, who was kidnapped and killed by a serving Metropolitan Police Officer.
- 1.4 Crimes such as rape, female genital mutilation, stalking, harassment, and digital crimes such as cyber-flashing, 'revenge porn' and 'up-skirting' are taking place every day and have a long-lasting impact on victims, including mental and physical health problems, not doing well at school or work, becoming homeless, children being harmed and reduced feelings of personal safety.
- 1.5 The Wokingham Community Safety Partnership has taken important steps towards improving its response to tackling and ending VAWG. This includes workstreams and strategies covering Domestic Abuse, Serious Violence and Exploitation and Radicalisation that sits within the PREVENT agenda. Whilst these are all key in helping to tackle violence against women and girls, a local Wokingham VAWG strategy is essential in coordinating a robust approach to tackling crimes that disproportionately affect women and girls.
- 1.6 There is also growing concern around the influence that the internet and social media has, particularly on younger males that are being exposed to 'influencers' promoting misogyny, incel and other aspects of radicalisation that are known to fuel violence, prejudice and hatred toward women and girls.
- 1.7 Alongside the strategy the council is in the process of seeking White Ribbon Accreditation that will help with the internal organisational response to VAWG. This will help identify potential risks, provide a solid commitment to gender equality and diversity, protection of employees through supportive policies and procedures, and accountability and monitoring of actions at all levels within the organisation.

## **2 Progress to date**

- 2.1 The draft strategy is nearing completion having been considered by the Wokingham CSP, Domestic Abuse Partnership Board and Networking Group, Serious Violence and Exploitation Board, the VAWG Equality Forum Subgroup, and the Voluntary & Community Sector Steering Group.

2.2 The following priorities, included in the draft strategy, reflect those set out in the National VAWG Strategy, and the strategy produced by Thames Valley Police and the priorities of the Police and Crime Commissioner:

- 1) Putting the victim/survivor at the centre of service design and delivery;
- 2) Taking a strategic, system-wide approach to commissioning;
- 3) Having a clear focus on perpetrators and holding them to account;
- 4) Safeguarding and supporting individuals and victims at every point with a strong emphasis on early identification and help;
- 5) Raising local awareness of the issues and involve, engage, and empower communities to seek, design and deliver solutions.
- 6) Changing inappropriate attitudes and behaviours of men and boys.

2.3 As part of the Community Safety Survey (April 2023) residents and organisations across the borough were invited to comment on the draft priorities of which 88% (n163) agreed with the priorities and 12% (n23) did not. There were several comments about making the environment safer including improved street lighting, providing safe spaces and more police patrols. Several respondents made reference that violence also affected men and boys and was not just violence against women and girls.

2.4 The draft VAWG Action Plan currently shows a broad and comprehensive range of activity that has been taken from the Home Office document 'Violence Against Women and Girls - National Statement of Expectations'. The range of actions will need to be refined and focussed on the needs and priorities of the Wokingham Community and it is proposed that this work be undertaken by a yet to be established working group that would include key partners.

2.5 To ensure delivery against the draft priorities, key areas of work will include:-

- Collecting accurate data & analysis;
- Mapping VAWG service provision locally;
- Identifying gaps in VAWG services, including those for marginalised women and girls;
- Drawing out and understanding the lived experiences of women and girls in Wokingham;
- Identifying resources to ensure the borough has the required capacity to deliver actions and implementation.

### 3 Timeline for Implementation

- 3.1 The revised timeline for implementation of the strategy is Autumn 2023 with the Executive being invited to consider and approve the final draft as soon after the summer recess as possible.

#### 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 relevant to the Recommendation/Decision**

There are no immediate financial implications. Funding requirements will become apparent as the action plan evolves and the implications of any activity and improvements are known. These will be put forward for consideration as part of the annual budget setting process.

#### **Cross-Council Implications**

There will be implications for other council services including those responsible for ensuring a safe environment is provided in which women and girls in particular can feel safe walking to and from work, school/college, and social/leisure activities.

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

Due regard of the Public Sector Equality Duty has been taken into account and the very nature of the report supports and promotes equality.

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

Click or tap here to enter text. The strategy and associated actions could lead to a culture change whereby women in the borough feel safer and therefore are more likely to walk, rather than drive or take a cab. In turn, this may lead to a reduction in carbon emissions

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

Not applicable

<b>List of Background Papers</b>
Draft Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy (2023-26)

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# Wokingham Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG) Strategy 2023 - 2026

Foreword by Councillor Sarah Kerr, Wokingham Borough Council  
Executive Member for Climate Change and Resident Services  
and Susan Parsonage, Wokingham Borough Council Chief Executive  
and Chair of the Wokingham Community Safety Partnership - To be  
added

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## 1. Introduction

The Wokingham Community Safety Partnership (WCSP), of which Wokingham Borough Council is a key partner, is determined to STOP Violence against Women and Girls in all its forms, and to help achieve this a long-term strategic approach is being taken.

Consultation with the community and the WCSP has identified six key priorities and these will underpin the essential work necessary in achieving our shared vision.

- 1) Putting the victim/survivor at the centre of service design and delivery;
- 2) Taking a strategic, system-wide approach to commissioning;
- 3) Having a clear focus on perpetrators and holding them to account;
- 4) Safeguarding and supporting individuals and victims at every point with a strong emphasis on early identification and help;
- 5) Raising local awareness of the issues and involve, engage, and empower communities to seek, design and deliver solutions.
- 6) Changing inappropriate attitudes and behaviours of men and boys.

This strategy takes an integrated approach to help deliver the cultural and behavioural shift that is needed to change attitudes to women and girls. The strategy does not seek to demonise men and boys, the vast majority of whom are respectful and rightly treat women and girls as equals. There are however men and boys who engage in violence and abuse at all levels towards women and girls simply because of their gender, and this strategy is aimed at targeting and stopping such behaviour through awareness, prevention, tackling and bringing perpetrators to account, and supporting and keeping victims safe.

It is further recognised that men and boys are also affected by crimes classified as VAWG and this was articulated by several respondents to the community safety survey carried out in April 2023.

VAWG is a global problem that takes place in local communities, often unseen and unreported. To effectively tackle VAWG within the Wokingham Borough area, we need our own strategy and the full engagement and support of a wide range of stakeholders from the public, private, and voluntary sectors if we are to ensure that women and girls can live free from the fear of violence and other crimes.

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act that received Royal Assent on 28 April 2022 places new duties on a range of agencies to work collaboratively to prepare a strategy for preventing and reducing serious violence including sexual offences and domestic abuse.

Strategies relating to domestic abuse and serious violent crime have already been produced by the Wokingham Community Safety Partnership, in collaboration with a



wide range of partner organisations. Whilst domestic abuse is one element of VAWG, this strategy reflects the need to ensure there is a clear focus on tackling the full range of crimes which disproportionately affect women and girls.

Crimes of violence against women and girls include rape and other sexual offences. Stalking, domestic abuse, 'honour-based' abuse (including forced marriage and 'honour' killings), 'revenge porn', 'up-skirting' and many others are increasing nationally which is unacceptable, and measures to reverse this trend and tackle the crimes robustly must be a high priority.

Through its work on domestic abuse and serious violence and exploitation, the Wokingham Community Safety Partnership recognises the wider context of VAWG and how elements of it sit within a range of workstreams. It is for that reason that a focused strategy has been written specifically for VAWG.

## **2. Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) defined**

VAWG describes a range of violent and abusive acts and behaviours which are disproportionately directed against women and girls. It can take several forms including physical, sexual, psychological, or economic.

The United Nations definition of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), defines VAWG as: *"Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life."*

The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (also known as the "Istanbul Convention"), defines VAWG as: *"a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women and shall mean all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life" (Article 3).*

VAWG takes place in communities across the UK and can happen within current or previous relationships, in families, with friends, colleagues, people in positions of power and strangers. The violence and abuse can take place in familiar locations, often behind closed doors, including homes, workplaces, leisure facilities and outdoor locations including streets, open spaces and on public transport. This is not an exhaustive list but serves to highlight why women and girls often feel vulnerable and scared if safe places are not available to them.

The abuse is not always in person. Some forms of violence, abuse and coercive behaviour take place in the virtual world of the internet and social media. This could include internet stalking, porn revenge, sexual harassment, bullying or trafficking.

Violence against women and girls describes violent and oppressive patterns of behaviour and practises, which may seek to achieve power and control over women and girls. It impacts on the physical safety, health and emotional well-being of individuals and can lead to victims taking their own lives and may well impact on families, carers, children and the community as a whole.

Women and girls are targeted because of their gender and examples of the types of violence and abuse made against them includes:

- Sexual violence, including rape, abuse and exploitation
- Sexual harassment and bullying
- Stalking
- Revenge Porn
- Up skirting
- Trafficking
- Domestic violence and abuse
- Coercive and controlling behaviour
- Female genital mutilation (FGM)
- Forced marriage
- Crimes committed in the name of 'Honour'

These acts can take place regardless of ethnicity, faith, sexuality or age and whilst these have a disproportionate effect on women and girls, we recognise that men and boys are also victims of violence and abuse. Whilst the focus of this strategy is on VAWG, the Wokingham Community Safety Partnership is committed to providing support for all victims of such abuse regardless of gender.

### **3. The causes of VAWG**

Whilst evidence has shown that gender inequality is a key driver of VAWG, there are many other factors including substance use (alcohol and/or drugs), mental ill health, anger issues, growing up in an abusive household, cultural practices, break up of relationships, revenge, jealousy, sexual gratification, and peer pressure.

The Council of Europe has identified a range of factors which lie at the root of the problem including:-

- Sexist views, and the idea that men can have more power over women and children, results in abuse being used to maintain this power. Gender stereotypes reinforce this inequality and creates an acceptance of violence and abuse. The belief that men must be tough, strong, and always in control can result in them exerting control over a partner.
- Although abuse is illegal, sadly we see many victims blamed for the abuse and low sentences for abusers. This results in low reporting and abuse being allowed to continue. For example, rape convictions remain low and have got worse in recent years that could potentially send a message that offenders can evade justice.
- The under-representation of women and minority groups in power and politics means they have fewer opportunities to shape the discussion and to affect changes in policy, or to adopt measures to end VAWG. It is because of the

lobbying by women's groups that, in the UK, rape in marriage became a criminal offence in 1991 and coercive control became a criminal offence in 2015.

There are increasing concerns about how the internet and social media platforms (Twitter, WhatsApp, TikTok etc.) are being used for the promulgation of the ideology around misogyny, incel, inequality and extremism. These platforms are being increasingly used by social media 'influencers' many of whom who have thousands of 'followers' and who are mainly targeting an audience of young men and boys.

Whilst the freedom of speech is an important principle allowing an individual or a community to articulate their opinions and ideas without fear of retaliation, censorship, or legal sanction there are concerns that on-line content being posted by individuals and influencers can have a negative impact particularly on impressionable young and vulnerable people that will potentially fuel VAWG and as such freedom of speech does not equate to freedom from consequences.

#### **4. Why have we produced a Wokingham VAWG strategy?**

The strategy has been designed to provide context and focus around VAWG, including defining what VAWG is, the impact it has on women and girls and society more widely, what is being done to tackle it, and what our priorities and actions are to address these concerns, behaviours and crimes.

VAWG is abhorrent behaviour and should not be accepted in any form in our community. The Wokingham Community Safety Partnership will work with stakeholders, producing a clear plan of action to underpin the activity that will drive improvements to root out such violence and abuse.

The Wokingham Community Safety Partnership will ensure that awareness of VAWG is raised among local agencies and the wider community. Perpetrators will be robustly pursued, victims and survivors will be supported and multi-agency approaches will be used to understand and meet the needs of victims, survivors and family members to support a process of recovery and to achieve positive life outcomes.

The effects of being a victim of these crimes can last indefinitely. That can include mental health problems, physical health problems, not doing well at school or work, becoming homeless, children being harmed and not feeling safe.

Women and girls should be safe and feel safe. If they don't, they can't have the same freedoms and chances in life as men and boys.

An important element of tackling VAWG will be hearing from women and girls that have been subjected to violence. From hearing about those experiences, the community safety partnership can better understand what it can do to prevent such violence. A lot can also be learnt from women and girls that, whilst they may not have been victims themselves, are nevertheless fearful of becoming victims. Their views on what measures can be taken to improve not just the risk of actual harm but also helping to improve feelings of safety can therefore be heard.

Tackling VAWG cuts across several of the CSP's workstreams including Domestic Abuse (DA), Serious Violence and Exploitation (SVE) and Substance Misuse. The strategy for tackling Domestic Abuse was adopted in 2021, and the Serious Violence & Exploitation Strategy is expected to be adopted later this year.

## **5. What the government is doing to tackle VAWG**

The Government's ambition is to reduce the prevalence of VAWG, recognising that at a local level we all have a key role to play in achieving this aim.

The scale and prevalence of VAWG has been brought to the nation's attention in recent times following a number of tragic cases. Thousands of women and girls have also shared their personal experiences of abuse and harassment online via the 'Everyone's Invited' website and the Government's Call for Evidence on VAWG received more than 180,000 responses.

Reports to helplines increased during the COVID-19 pandemic and predictably extended periods of lockdown fuelled violent and oppressive patterns of behaviour.

In addition to passing the Domestic Abuse Act in 2021, the governments VAWG Strategy is clear about the need to support victims and survivors, prevent offending and strengthen the systems in place to address all forms of VAWG. The expectation is that local strategies and services should include:-

1. Putting the victim/survivor at the centre of service design and delivery;
2. Having a clear focus on perpetrators in order to keep victims and survivors safe;
3. Taking a strategic, system-wide approach to commissioning, acknowledging the gendered nature of VAWG;
4. Being locally led and safeguard individuals at every point;
5. Raising local awareness of the issues and involve, engage and empower communities to seek, design and deliver solutions to prevent VAWG.

## **6. What are Thames Valley Police doing to tackle VAWG**

Thames Valley Police produced a VAWG strategy (2022/23) that complements the National Police Chief Council (NPCC) strategy recognising the many forms of violence against women and girls. [Provide a link to the new TVP VAWG Strategy](#)

## **7. What is being done locally to tackle VAWG**

A lot of positive work is already being carried out by the Wokingham Community Safety Partnership and in particular Wokingham Borough Council, Thames Valley Police, Probation Service, schools and colleges, charities and social enterprise and commissioned service providers including Cranstoun.

Cranstoun Wokingham has been commissioned by Wokingham Borough Council to provide a domestic abuse service and a drug and alcohol service. It is important to recognise that whilst domestic abuse is a pillar of VAWG, it doesn't just affect women and girls, but we know that it does disproportionately affect them.

The Cranstoun Domestic Abuse Service brings together an integrated range of programmes and interventions to support victims and survivors of domestic abuse. Programmes and services are delivered by highly experienced and skilled staff with unique skills in domestic abuse. They are dedicated to delivering the best support possible for the Wokingham community, and do so by providing the following:

- Assessment and support for victims and children
- Assessment and support for perpetrators in order to address and change their behaviours
- Support related to domestic abuse for children and young people in schools
- Targeting services to the most vulnerable and hard to reach groups
- Working with health providers to establish referral pathways
- Outreach victim/survivors case work
- Support to children including both one to one and group support
- Domestic abuse awareness including PSHE support and professional training
- 'Seeking Safety' and 'Freedom' programmes, groups for victims and survivors

There are several charitable and not for profit organisations that are based in and around Wokingham including Kaleidoscopic, SupportU, and Berkshire Women's Aid (BWA) and these all provide valuable support to our communities.

Wokingham Borough Council has shown its commitment, through the Wokingham Anti-abuse Charter, to make a difference by raising awareness and changing cultures within the organisation and aim to further achieve that through accreditation to White Ribbon.

White Ribbon is the internationally recognised symbol for ending male violence against women that was founded in Canada in 1989. It encourages everyone, especially men and boys to make the White Ribbon Promise to never commit, excuse or remain silent about violence against women and girls. It's purpose is to remove the requirement of women and girls to change their behaviours to avoid violence against them and put that onus onto eliminating the violence in the first place.

The aforementioned list demonstrates a very real commitment to tackling VAWG but that's not enough. More could and should be done and that is why this strategy has been produced and key partners have agreed to deliver the priorities and actions contained herein.

Importantly, the strategy clearly articulates how VAWG will be tackled and what difference it will make. It also provides the opportunity for the community to take ownership through sharing concerns, views, ideas and suggestions that can feed into the action plan and review process.

## **8. Needs Assessment**

We know that violence against women and girls exists within our communities, some of the violence is reported whereas much of the violence remains unreported.

The priorities for eliminating VAWG are shown in the next section and how these priorities will be delivered is detailed in the action plan.

Whilst organisations including Thames Valley Police, probation, service providers, charities etc. all collect data, that will be obtained and analysed to inform a VAWG Needs Assessment. This will help to provide a more detailed understanding of the extent of the problems and in turn that will enable the Wokingham Community Safety Partnership to focus resources in the most effective way.

The Needs Assessment will also help to ensure that where additional funding is required it can be justified on the basis of clear evidence. This is not to suggest that concerns, for which there may be limited tangible evidence, will not be tackled as that would not be the case. It is for example not possible, or indeed desirable, to try and account financially for how safe people feel. It is well known that feelings of safety are very important and can impact mental health, influence the places people visit, the routes they take to travel to and from work and venues, the people they meet, the way they dress and many other considerations.

The Needs Assessment would therefore need to take account of all the facets of VAWG, prioritise them where appropriate, and ensure that we clearly show the desired outcomes.

## **9. The Priorities**

The priorities for the Wokingham Community Safety Partnership VAWG Strategy compliment those set out in the National VAWG Strategy, and the strategy produced by Thames Valley Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner:

- 7) Putting the victim/survivor at the centre of service design and delivery;
- 8) Taking a strategic, system-wide approach to commissioning;
- 9) Having a clear focus on perpetrators and holding them to account;
- 10) Safeguarding and supporting individuals and victims at every point with a strong emphasis on early identification and help;
- 11) Raising local awareness of the issues and involve, engage, and empower communities to seek, design and deliver solutions.
- 12) Changing inappropriate attitudes and behaviours of men and boys.

## **10. Turning strategy into action**

The success of this VAWG strategy is dependent on the buy-in and support of the entire community. That means that the public sector (local authority, police, probation, education, health services), private sector (businesses, service providers), voluntary sector (charities, not for profit organisations, social enterprises) must work collaboratively to achieve the goal of eliminating violence against women and girls.

For the strategy and action plan to make a real difference it will be important to understand the experiences of victims and survivors. That will help the partnership to provide focussed services to tackle the broad range of offences that make up VAWG and to identify a range of methods to tackle the causes and perpetrators.

## **11. Governance**

The Wokingham Community Safety Partnership (WCSP) is responsible for developing and updating this strategy and action plan. The WCSP, through the Performance Management Group (a sub-group of the WCSP), will have responsibility for monitoring and refreshing the strategy and action plan at the appropriate times with input from the Domestic Abuse Board and the Serious Violence & Exploitation Board.

## **12. Conclusion**

We know violence against women and girls exists in our community, even if we don't see or experience it personally.

We know that it can seriously affect levels of confidence, independence, health (physical and mental) and life chances.

We know that many women and girls live in fear of violence and abuse and perhaps shrug it off as inevitable and not worth reporting.

We know that in order to address these issues, we need to achieve a cultural shift and change attitudes and behaviours to ensure Wokingham Borough is a safe place for our residents, visitors and commuters that live, work, study and enjoy visiting our towns and countryside.

Activity designed to tackle VAWG already exists within a range of workstreams and strategies, including Domestic Abuse, Serious Violent Crime, Hate Crime, Exploitation and Anti-Social Behaviour, and this work is delivered on a daily basis by a wide range of partner organisations. This is important work but given the seriousness and impact of VAWG, a dedicated strategy with the single aim of STOPPING VAWG is an absolute necessity and will remain as one of our highest priorities.

Please note the following draft Action Plan is populated with a range of actions taken from the Home Office's VAWG National Statement of Expectations. Whilst the majority of the actions are relevant they will need to be refined, focussed and prioritised on the needs of Wokingham.

## Wokingham Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG)

### Action Plan

Priority 1	Action		Lead	Progress
<b>Put the victim /survivor at the centre of service design and delivery.</b>	1.1	Carry out an accessible and open consultation to identify which services are needed locally to ensure victims (including children and young people) and service providers can share their views and experiences.		
	1.2	Set up a forum to ensure victim-survivors can share their views and experiences.		
	1.3	Set up a forum to ensure service providers can share the work they are doing.		
	1.4	Conduct a comprehensive needs assessment to map the demographics and lived experiences of victims locally.		
	1.5	Ensure safeguarding processes are effectively linked and involved with VAWG.		
	1.6	Ensure there is sufficient local specialist VAWG service provision, including provision designed specifically to support victims from ethnic minority backgrounds, deaf and disabled victims, victims with learning disabilities, male victims, LGBT victims, migrant victims, children and young people and older victims.		
	1.7	Collaborate and have protocols with other areas to allow victim-survivors easy movement from one area to another (including access to housing).		
	1.8	Ensure there is an effective process to identify where an individual is faced with multiple barriers (mental health issues, drug and alcohol dependencies, poverty and homelessness). Victims of VAWG are likely to come into contact with other services and systems (such as mental health, substance misuse or homelessness). Review how these services identify and respond to women's experiences of VAWG.		



	1.9	Assess and build in access to mental health service provision for victims of all types of VAWG.		
	1.10	Consider specialist interventions that provide a complete and holistic programme of support for healthcare teams to spot the signs of abuse and understand the impact of trauma and simple referral pathways for their patients into specialist advocates and support workers based in VAWG services (in line with NICE guidelines).		
Priority 2	Action		Lead	Progress
<b>Take a strategic, system-wide approach to commissioning, acknowledging the gendered nature of VAWG.</b>	2.1	Ensure that they understand the dynamics of VAWG and the issues that need to be addressed, for example by attending appropriate training delivered by specialist services where possible.		
	2.2	Adopt a whole system response to VAWG (for example through a Coordinated Community Response) and draw on learning from other pilots to encourage more joined up working and drive improvements in early intervention and prevention.		
	2.3	Understand need and provision in the local area by accessing available data, evidence, service standards and intelligence from local and national specialist providers. Gather input from victims and survivors (including those who have never used a specialist service), local authorities, health, police, education, housing, probation and the VAWG sector (including specialist 'by and for' services who may be able to offer specific expertise on issues affecting local communities).		
	2.4	Map local issues from safeguarding, crime, health, housing and specialist VAWG sector data (noting that most cases of VAWG are not reported to statutory agencies). For example, identify 'standard' risk perpetrators and develop early intervention plans to prevent escalation.		
	2.5	Understand local crime and other non-criminal justice data about the prevalence of VAWG crimes in the area, as well as national research on the likely prevalence of VAWG crimes.		
	2.6	Aim to have trained professionals in hospitals and other health and social care		

		settings to identify and support victims and signpost them to services.		
	2.7	Have a robust and useful local VAWG disaggregated data set and develop an effective information sharing protocol that adheres to data protection requirements.		
	2.8	Have a concise local strategy setting out how the impact of local commissioning will be measured, and what victims and survivors can expect from services, including who is accountable locally, how concerns can be raised and how success will be measured and evaluated.		
	2.9	Have a meaningful process for measuring victims' satisfaction, including engaging with local specialist VAWG organisations to understand how they qualitatively and quantitatively measure victims' satisfaction with the services and support they receive.		
	2.10	Collaborate and develop shared goals and objectives across local authority and service boundaries to ensure a multi-agency response, recognising that services may be commissioned in partnership or at a regional level.		
Priority 3	Action		Lead	Progress
<b>Have a clear focus on perpetrators and hold them to account.</b>	3.1	Take a proactive and robust approach to perpetrators and provide effective interventions to challenge and change their behaviour.		
	3.2	Proactively seek to increase knowledge and understanding of perpetrator behaviours, such that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The tactics perpetrators use (such as manipulation, minimising, justifying and blaming others and / or external factors for their abuse) are recognised and understood</li> <li>- Frontline staff are able to correctly identify the primary perpetrator and respond appropriately, including in complex cases where a primary aggressor is not easily identifiable</li> <li>- Repeat and escalating offending can be tackled and reduced</li> </ul> The family, community and societal context that perpetrators operate within are taken into account.		
	3.3	Have a robust needs assessment process, including a forum, to help shape services for perpetrators.		
	3.4	Assess and address local specialist provision and consider diverse specialist		

		provisions where necessary in order to increase the safety of victims		
	3.5	<p>Commission services that meet the local need. In particular, commissioners should consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Perpetrators with complex needs, who will come into contact with other services and systems (such as mental health, substance misuse or homelessness services, or services for people with physical and / or learning disabilities)</li> <li>- A multi-agency response, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-ensuring frontline professionals are trained to spot signs of abuse and understand the impact of trauma, and know how to recognise it, respond and refer perpetrators to appropriate services and</li> <li>-having specialist workers in children's services teams who can work with diverse groups of perpetrators who pose a risk to children and their parents, as well as children displaying harmful behaviours</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		
	3.6	Ensure interventions are effective, efficient and safe for the victim and their children and meet the minimum Standards set out by the Government. Ideally, perpetrator programmes should also be accredited by Respect where applicable and consider programmes which target the most prolific or highest-harm perpetrators, such as Drive.		
	3.7	Be cognisant that programmes that work with perpetrators should form part of longer-term strategies to prevent reoffending and have a clear plan for bringing perpetrators to justice. Interventions that are not ordered by the court are not an alternative to justice.		
Priority 4		Action	Lead	Progress
<b>Be locally-led and safeguard individuals at every point.</b>	4.1	Identify a board of local champions or critical friends (including representatives from smaller specialist organisations from the VAWG sector) to drive challenge and learning on VAWG issues and local progress, identifying safe, accessible and open forums to bring relevant parties together to discuss all forms of VAWG and agree a local approach.		
	4.2	Consider pooling local budgets and funding sources and working with local providers to support a commissioning process that encourages consortia bids which recognise and allow for smaller		

		local specialist providers. Where larger providers are proposing to work with specialist services as sub-contractors, commissioners should take steps to ensure that these services are aware of their inclusion in the bid. Where funding is awarded, they should follow this up to ensure that funding and referrals are reaching specialist services as expected.		
	4.3	Ensure that larger tenders do not inadvertently favour bids from large providers. For example, tenders where there is a specific request for a single, large provider, insufficient time for consortia/partnership forming, or a small number of high-value lots requiring bidders to be in a strong financial position will limit the ability of local specialist services to bid. These local services will likely have developed as a response to the particular needs of the area and have specialist knowledge and expertise relevant to the communities they serve.		
	4.4	Assess new multi-agency approaches, including ways of streamlining structures and meeting whilst improving joined up case management.		
	4.5	Identify practical steps to take to ensure learning from reviews and inspectorate reports are maximised, put into practice and shared across local VAWG partnerships. These could include domestic homicide reviews, serious case reviews, deaths by suicide where the victim had a history of VAWG, HMICFRS reports and other inspectorates' reports on VAWG and child sexual abuse / exploitation.		
	4.6	Link HMICFRS and other inspectorate reports on police response and local agency action plans into local area strategies, working in partnership with the PCC. For local authorities, this should be linked to the work of the Local Safeguarding Adults Board and be informed by the Safeguarding Adult Board Annual Report and to Clinical Commissioning Groups and the new Integrated Care Systems.		
	4.7	Make proactive and constructive links with Supporting Families Co-ordinators and local domestic abuse and sexual violence coordinators to build local networks and capacity.		
	4.8	In family contexts, ensure the safeguarding and support needs of non-		

		abusive parents alongside children are considered. Commissioners and providers should be sensitive to the harm that abuse can have on non-abusive parent-child relationships and not place responsibility for a perpetrator's abuse on non-abusive parents.		
	4.9	Consider how training provided to local professionals (on all types of VAWG) is evaluated, and how to ensure it is making a difference, increasing learning and awareness of local specialist services and that it builds in the voice of victims.		
	4.10	Identify any VAWG initiatives being delivered by the local police force with funding from central Government and whether other VAWG initiatives are being delivered locally by the specialist VAWG sector. This could be, for example, via the National Lottery Community Fund or through other large charitable trusts or grant making organisations. If so, consider whether they can support local initiatives and whether there is learning to be shared.		
Priority 5	Action		Lead	Progress
<b>Raise local awareness of the issues and involve, engage, and empower communities to seek, design and deliver solutions.</b>	5.1	Be aware of the statutory relationships, sex and health education curriculum which covers topics such as actively communicating and recognising consent and the concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, 'honour' based abuse and FGM.		
	5.2	Refer to the Respectful School Communities toolkit for advice on creating a culture in which sexual harassment of all kinds is seen as unacceptable. The Keeping Children Safe in Education Statutory Safeguarding Guidance provides detailed advice on managing reports of abuse and provides links to specialist advice and support.		
	5.3	Identify when this is being taught in schools and what additional activity is happening, including the use of nationally available campaign materials such as Government campaigns or local initiatives that raise awareness of the myths and stereotypes relating to VAWG. Encourage head-teachers and local specialist services to work together on these issues.		
	5.4	Reach out to universities and their representative bodies, to discuss their implementation of the Office for Students'		

		Statements of Expectations for Preventing and Addressing Harassment and Sexual Misconduct.		
	5.5	Identify whether the right local connections are in place so that schools know where to ask for specialist advice, including whether children have the opportunity to talk to someone about their personal experiences. For example, referral pathways to specialist children’s domestic abuse or sexual violence services. Consider whether there is access to provision that works with young people who are displaying sexually violent or inappropriate behaviour, and how young people displaying harmful sexual behaviours are being supported to change their behaviour.		
	5.6	Map out local VAWG support groups, including specialist ‘by and for’ organisations supporting victims from ethnic minority backgrounds, male victims, deaf and disabled victims, LGBT+ victims and other marginalised victims and survivors to find out who they reach and what expertise they have so that this can be aligned with the aims.		
	5.7	Identify and promote wider touch points in your community, including, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Whether local employers have policies on VAWG, or whether the local Chamber of Commerce can encourage them to do so, or to sign up to the Employers’ Initiative for Domestic Abuse</li> <li>- What steps local banks and building societies are taking to identify and support victims of financial and economic abuse, including how this may be part of a wider pattern of abuse, such as controlling or coercive behaviour</li> <li>- What steps local banks and building societies are taking to provide safe disclosure points for vulnerable customers, including disabled or elderly people who may not be able to attend a bank branch in person. This should include signposting customers to appropriate specialist support services</li> <li>- How local deaf and disabled people and people with learning difficulties are able to disclose violence or abuse safely to</li> </ul>		

		<p>professionals, giving consideration to any difficulties they may have in leaving the house or in expressing themselves to receive the help they need. Information should be provided in accessible formats (to match the needs of those receiving it) and should include information describing what abuse is, as some people may not recognise that they are victims and require further support to understand what is happening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensuring local health visitors, housing and health and social care professionals are trained to spot all forms of abuse and take the appropriate action</li> <li>- Local initiatives like 'Ask Me' and 'Ask for ANI', Safe Spaces and 'Ask for Angela' and whether they can be part of a strategy to provide safe spaces where people can disclose abuse in the course of daily life to someone who will know what to do</li> <li>- Local authority housing and homelessness policies that include VAWG</li> <li>- Sexual violence bystander programmes, and how they might be used locally to raise awareness and help increase reporting</li> <li>- Opportunities to access the latest technologies and online methods to identify and support victims and survivors and those worried about their own behaviour, noting that online mechanisms are not a substitute for face-to-face provision.</li> </ul>		
Priority 6	Action		Lead	Progress
<b>Change inappropriate attitudes and behaviours of men and boys.</b>	6.1	Work together with schools to support learning and understanding of healthy relationships, abuse and VAWG. This will be based on evidenced best practice that strengthens equality and respect and supports children and young people to increase their understanding, and knowledge of how to report abuse and receive support.		
	6.2	Work with local colleges and Universities to develop awareness in respect of healthy relationships and awareness in		

		respect of VAWG, that supports understanding, identification, and knowledge as to how to report and receive support.		
	6.3	Implement a survivor forum to listen, learn and hear directly from women and girls with lived experiences of VAWG.		
	6.4	Develop a comprehensive partnership training offer to educate, inform and empower the partnership in their work to address and support VAWG. Ensure this is co-produced with survivors.		
	6.5	Deliver a public-facing and culturally relevant communications campaign, which raise awareness of abuse in all its forms and educate on how to get support from local and national services.		
	6.6	Deliver a public-facing and culturally relevant communications campaign, which raise awareness of abuse in all its forms and educate on how to get support from local and national services.		
	6.7	Work in partnership with local community organisations to ensure engagement with and, representation from across all communities including those with protected characteristics to ensure all voices are heard to better understand needs, inform service delivery, and ensure survivors know where to get support.		
	6.8	Work with local communities and stakeholders to understand the prevalence of harmful practices locally and take practical steps to prevent occurrence, support survivors and address any permissive cultural norms that are prevalent.		



<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Wokingham Anti Abuse Charter Update</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 3 July 2023
<b>WARD</b>	None specific;
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	Director, Place and Growth - Giorgio Framaliccio

## **OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY**

- Increased awareness, education and training in relation to violence and abuse including domestic abuse through the commitment of a local Anti-Abuse Charter.
- Increased access to levels of help and support for those experiencing violence and abuse.
- Implementation of a trauma-based approach across the council.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- 1) Note and offer comment on the report;
- 2) Consider if the Council's Anti Abuse Charter should form part of the annual Community Safety Partnership Update Report in future, which is also presented to this Committee.

## **SUMMARY OF REPORT**

Since the adoption of the Charter in January 2021 lots of activity in separate but connected workstreams has been underway. This includes work in relation to hate crime, domestic abuse, violence against women and girls (VAWG), anti-social behaviour and criminal exploitation as part of the serious violence and exploitation strategy.

## **Background**

In January 2021 Council approved a local Charter for all officers and councillors for adoption. It made the intention of the council to help residents clear, including victims and survivors. Its aim was also to aid the councils understanding of the council's commitment towards fostering a deep-rooted culture and step change on violence and abuse.

It was anticipated that the Charter would assist to champion the councils then, newly formed Domestic Abuse Strategy 2021- 2024 and help embed its approach to raising education, awareness and training of wider forms of abuse.

## **The Charter**

***Wokingham Borough Council stands committed to preventing any form of violence or abuse against anyone in the Borough. Officers and councillors pledge to champion a culture of high standards by reporting abuse and supporting victims throughout their recovery journey. This includes being informed on recognising signs of trauma and preventing victim blaming.***

## **Analysis of Issues**

Since the adoption of the Charter in January 2021 lots of activity in separate, but connected workstreams has been underway. This includes work in relation to hate crime, domestic abuse, violence against women and girls (VAWG), anti-social behaviour and criminal exploitation as part of the ongoing work on serious violence and exploitation.

## **Hate Crime**

The Community Safety Partnership have been working on developing a Hate Crime Action Plan with the following aims;

### **Preventing hate crime by challenging beliefs and attitudes**

- Supporting educational establishments in educating and protecting young people from hate crime
- Funding specific projects designed to challenge prejudice.
- Wider activity to challenge prejudice.
- Engaging with experts and community stakeholders to ensure our preventative approach is working.

### **Responding to hate crime within our communities**

- Training for the professionals including the wider criminal justice system to improve recognition of and responses to hate crime.
- Providing support to vulnerable communities

### **Increasing the reporting of hate crime**

- Support improvements to reporting and recording processes.
- Address the underreporting of disability hate crime.

### **Improving support for victims of hate crime**

- Supporting victims through the criminal justice system
- Support specific communities we know are particularly vulnerable.

## **Building our understanding of hate crime**

- Monitoring hate crime incidents and responding accordingly.
- Engage with Asian Communities to understand their experience of Hate Crime and reporting and ensure adequate support is available.
- Engage with other ethnic minorities to understand their experience of Hate Crime and reporting and ensure adequate support is available.
- Utilise expert groups.
- Share experience and expertise

## **Violence Against Women and Girls & DA**

Both areas of work have seen several improvements and developments including the development and implementation of a comprehensive Domestic Abuse Strategy and action plan and the draft development of a local Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy that works on longer term issues to help tackle violence and safety with a focus on women. The Community Safety Partnership Draft End of Year Report 2022-23 and the Domestic Abuse End of Year Reports provide more comprehensive information.

In addition to this work, at the September 2022 meeting of the council's Executive Committee, White Ribbon Accreditation programme was granted approval and work has also begun to implement this scheme across the council.

## **Domestic Abuse**

### **Key Progress**

- Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) Domestic abuse housing specialist appointed.
- DAHA accreditation process commenced and on track to be completed December 2023.
- Additional Independent Domestic Abuse Advocate (IDVA) capacity for Cranstoun.
- Comprehensive multi agency communications strategy in place.
- Extensive multi agency training programme in place, including training for WBC staff.
- Wokingham Domestic Abuse Partnership Board recognised as best practice<sup>1</sup>

## **Serious Violence & Exploitation**

### **Key Progress**

- Set up Hospital Navigators to provide mentoring and support in the emergency department for young victims of violence.
- Worked with Thames Valley Police on Operation Kosh to produce action plans targeting those carrying weapons.
- Formed an Exploitation Task and Finish Group looking at the Safeguarding Framework and Multi Agency Responses (EMRAC)
- Produced a comprehensive local problem profile of serious violence and exploitation.
- Based on recommendations in the local problem profile commissioned "deep-dive" analysis of peaks in Violence and disorder.
- Work being undertaken in schools to reduce fixed and permanent exclusions.
- Produced a strategy to reduce and prevent serious violence.

## 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	Nil
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	N/A	N/A	Nil
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	N/A	N/A	Nil

<b>Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision</b>
None

<b>Cross-Council Implications</b>
None

<b>Public Sector Equality Duty</b>
Due regard has been given to WBC's duties under the Equality Act.

<b>Climate Emergency – This Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to playing as full a role as possible – leading by example as well as by exhortation – in achieving a carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030</b>
This item has no negative consequences in relation to WBC's Climate Emergency ambitions.

<b>Reasons for considering the report in Part 2</b>
N/A

<b>List of Background Papers</b>
Annual progress report from the Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation National Expert Steering Group 2021-22 (published April 2023).

<b>Contact</b> Narinder Brar	<b>Service Place</b>
<b>Telephone No</b> 0118 974 6000	<b>Email</b> narinder.brar@wokingham.gov.uk

<sup>i</sup> Annual progress report from the Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation National Expert Steering Group 2021-22 (published April 2023)

# Agenda Item 22.

## Community & Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Action Tracker 2023/24

Community & Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 22 May 2023		
Agenda Item	Action	Update
Minutes of Previous Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed</li> </ul>
Flood Risk Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Officers aim to send follow-up emails to Members once flood risk management works had been completed in their Wards;</li> <li>• Written answer re manhole covers;</li> <li>• Lower Earley peripheral road issue – officers to liaise with relevant Ward Member;</li> <li>• Members to encourage residents to ‘bulk’ report issues to Thames Water.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing/Noted</li> <li>• Completed</li> <li>• Completed</li> <li>• Completed/Noted</li> </ul>
Combatting Drugs Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Datasets re relapses, 6 &amp; 12-month programme successes for the Borough be circulated;</li> <li>• Officers to ascertain if the police operation over Christmas was random or intelligence based;</li> <li>• Schedule agenda item re oversight of the delivery group – end of 23/24 municipal year.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• March 2024</li> </ul>
Active Travel Task and Finish Group Appointments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information be provided to the Group re funding allocation and any Government preferences to suggested WBC schemes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scheduled for/prior to next T&amp;FG meeting</li> </ul>
Work Programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chair, Vice-Chair and S151 officer to meet re earmarked reserves item;</li> <li>• Arts and Culture strategy to be scheduled;</li> <li>• Officers liaise with Highways colleagues re scheduling items for September 2023 meeting;</li> <li>• Schedule item on the Local Plan Update;</li> <li>• Arrange item on planning/strategic planning/enforcement services via the Chair;</li> <li>• Arrange work programme by ‘topic’;</li> <li>• Consider inviting representatives from housing management companies to the Committee.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• October 2023</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Completed</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>

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## COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DATE OF MEETING	ITEM	PURPOSE OF REPORT	REASON FOR CONSIDERATION	CONTACT OFFICER
<b>4 September 2023</b>	<b>Highways and Transport Items</b>	To receive a report(s) on key issues within the Highways and Transport Service. Officer suggestion: Highways Maintenance (including customer service), Civil Parking Enforcement	Work programme	Chris Easton
	<b>Arts and Culture Strategy</b>	To consider the delivery of the Arts and Culture Strategy.	Work Programme	Rhian Hayes
	<b>Action Tracker</b>	To consider the Committee's action tracker	Standing Item	Callum Wernham
	<b>Work Programme</b>	To consider the work programme for the Committee for 2023-24	Standing Item	Democratic Services

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

## Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2023/24

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	<b><u>MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN</u></b>	<b><u>Scheduled or Considered</u></b>
1.	Scrutinising the development of the Council's Budget for 2024/25	Oct 2023 onwards
	<b><u>COMMUNITY ISSUES</u></b>	
2.	Reviewing the work of the Community Safety Partnership, the effectiveness of local policing and fire and rescue services	July 2023; March 2023 Police/Fire
3.	Scrutinising delivery of the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy	July 2023
4.	Scrutinising delivery of the Anti-Abuse Strategy	July 2023
5.	Scrutinising delivery of the Drug and Alcohol Misuse Strategy	May 2023; Delivery Group March 2024
6.	Scrutinising the Voluntary Sector Commissioning Strategy	Ongoing
7.	Scrutinising measures to develop closer working relationships with Town and Parish Councils and the voluntary sector	Ongoing
	<b><u>PLANNING, LICENSING AND ENVIRONMENT</u></b>	
8.	Scrutinising progress on the Local Plan Update and the Council's Five Year Land Supply	October 2023
9.	Scrutinising performance of the in-house Enforcement and Safety service	Ongoing
10.	Exercising the Council's flood risk management responsibilities by monitoring flood risk activities and partnership working with Towns and Parishes	May 2023; Update March 2024
11.	Scrutinising burial capacity across the Borough and the Council's plans to ensure adequate future capacity	Via email May 2023

<b><u>ACTIVE TRAVEL, HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT</u></b>		
12.	Scrutinising service and policy developments relating to the Council's public facing services and its in-house support services	Ongoing
13.	Reviewing highways and transport issues including highways contracts, customer service, car parking, Bus Strategy and cycling infrastructure	September 2023
14.	Considering the report of the Active Travel Task and Finish Group	Ongoing
15.	Scrutinising the Borough-wide Parking Management Strategy	Ongoing
<b><u>OTHER STRATEGIES, POLICIES AND OVERVIEW</u></b>		
16.	Scrutinising the Council's Arts and Culture Strategy	September 2023
17.	Scrutinising the Council's Housing Services to ensure that the needs of local residents and communities are being met	Ongoing
18.	Scrutinising the operation and performance of the Council-owned companies and shared service arrangements	Ongoing
19.	Appointing Task and Finish Groups as appropriate	Ongoing

### ***Task and Finish Groups***

Active Travel Task and Finish Group