



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

A Meeting of the **COUNCIL** will be held in Council Chamber
- Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham RG40 1BN on
THURSDAY 16 NOVEMBER 2023 AT 7.30 PM

Susan Parsonage
Chief Executive
Published on 8 November 2023

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

The meeting can also be watched live using the following link:
<https://youtube.com/live/uO9pZn-NnW4?feature=share>

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

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

To: The Members of Wokingham Borough Council

ITEM NO.	WARD	SUBJECT	PAGE NO.
73.		APOLOGIES To receive any apologies for absence.	
74.		MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 October 2023.	11 - 48
75.		DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST To receive any declarations of interest.	
76.		MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS To receive any announcements by the Mayor.	
77.		PUBLIC QUESTION TIME To answer any public questions. A period of 30 minutes will be allowed for members of the public to ask questions submitted under notice. The Council welcomes questions from members of the public about the work of the Council. Subject to meeting certain timescales, questions can relate to general issues concerned with the work of the Council or an item which is on the Agenda for this meeting. For full details of the procedure for submitting questions please contact the Democratic Services Section on the numbers given below or go to www.wokingham.gov.uk/publicquestions	
77.1	Bulmershe and Whitegates; Coronation; Ewendons; Loddon; Norreys; South Lake; Wescott	George Evans has asked the Executive Member for Active Travel, Transport and Highways the following question: Question: In previous years Wokingham Borough Council, under Conservative administration, has incentivised shopping in Wokingham and Woodley towns in the weeks running up to Christmas by making car parking on Saturdays free - it has recently been announced this will not be happening this year. Now that car parking charges have doubled and chargeable periods expanded to include evenings and Sundays, what steps is the Council taking to mitigate impacts on businesses and incentivise visiting our towns?	

78.

PETITIONS

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

79.

OUTCOME OF CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINT

Following a complaint against Councillor Baker, an investigation was conducted into the allegations which centred on a May 2023 conversation between Councillor Baker and three Woodley Town councillors which the complainant alleged had not met the standards relating to “respect,” “unlawful discrimination,” and “disrepute” as set out in the Code of Conduct.

The investigators’ report concluded that, of the three allegations, two were not proven, but there had been a breach of one clause of Wokingham Borough Council’s Code of Conduct (paragraph 9.2.8.1 – “respect”).

Councillor Baker has been asked to make a written apology to the complainant and three witnesses which he has done and will also receive training on aspects of the Code.

In accordance with Rule 9.1.13.3 of the Borough Council’s Constitution, the decision notice was published on the Council’s website on 11 October 2023. A copy of the decision notice has been sent to the complainant, the Subject Member, and the Independent Person.

The Constitution also requires that the matter is reported to a meeting of the Council where the report will be noted and there will be no discussion on the item. In relation to this complaint there is no further action required.

RECOMMENDATION: The Council notes that Councillor Keith Baker was found to be in breach of the Member Code of Conduct.

80.

PRESENTATION BY THE YOUTH COUNCIL

To receive a presentation on the work of the Youth Council.

81.

PRESENTATION BY THAMES VALLEY POLICE, CRIME COMMISSIONER AND CHIEF CONSTABLE

To receive a presentation from the Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police, Jason Hogg, and the Police

and Crime Commissioner, Matthew Barber.

A 30 minute presentation will be followed by an opportunity for Members to ask questions.

82. CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION - HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD TERMS OF REFERENCE 49 - 60

To agree the changes to the Wokingham Borough Health and Wellbeing Board's terms of reference, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, and recommended by the Wokingham Borough Health and Wellbeing Board.

83. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

To answer any member questions.

A period of 30 minutes will be allowed for Members to ask questions submitted under Notice.

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

83.1 None Specific

Gary Cowan has asked the Executive Member for Finance the following question:

Question:

Just 31 British councils, under 10 per cent of the total, have released audited accounts for 2022/23. The deadline for audited accounts was 30th September.

97 councils failed to publish any accounts in 2022/23. The deadline for draft accounts was 31st May. A total of 658 audited statements of accounts are overdue over the last four financial years.

Records held by the Taxpayers Alliance shows that Statements of accounts submitted by local authorities, 2019/20 - 2022/23

With Accounts checked as of 16th October 2023 Wokingham's last audited account was 2019/20.

- 20/21 was unknown.
- 21/22 is in draft
- 22/23 is not published.

My question is when, at what cost, will audited accounts for the various years 20/21 to now be published?

83.2 None Specific Pauline Helliard-Symons has asked the Deputy Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Children's Services the following question:

Question:

As you will be aware a number of children in Wokingham Without were unable to get into a local secondary school this September. Some were offered places as far away as Oakbank at the other end of the Borough, and Yateley. There is pressure on secondary school places in the south of the Borough generally.

What are you doing to ensure there are enough places for all our children closer to their homes in the south of the Borough, and specifically in Wokingham Without?

83.3 None Specific David Cornish has asked the Executive Member for Planning and the Local Plan the following question:

Question:

The last version of the Local Plan Update (LPU), the 'Revised Growth Strategy' was published for consultation in November 2021. The plan listed sites suitable for development and gave a capacity for each site. For example: "Location X has been identified for 10 dwellings". That is a clear and unambiguous statement.

And yet, when discussing Planning Applications for some of these sites with officers, I was advised that these site capacity numbers should be seen as 'indicative' or even, the 'minimum' number.

I can find no statement in the Revised Growth Strategy to support this. I understand that the LPU is a working document, with numbers therein used as part of a broad calculation.

But that is not what the public understand. If a site is included in a consultation with a site capacity indicated against it, then the public will base their responses accordingly. To tell them later that the number means something quite different is blatantly misleading.

Could I ask the Executive Member for Planning to work with officers to ensure that when the next version of the LPU is published, the meaning of statements about site capacity is made much clearer.

83.4 Finchampstead South Charles Margetts has asked the Executive Member for Planning and the Local Plan the following question:

Question:

The Council is planning to develop two Special Educational Needs Disability schools, a solar farm and a covid wood alongside Barkham Ride. There are also planning applications with the council for close to 100 houses to be built on a site on the same stretch of road. Much of this work is scheduled to take place in 2024/2025. Barkham Ride is a narrow secondary road. At the junction with Commonfield Lane a car driver has to stop if a bus / lorry is coming the other way as the road is not wide enough for two lines of traffic. The drainage system under the road is poor and based on figures from Wokingham Borough Council highways there have been 60 sets of roadworks on the drainage on this road since 2019. What work is planned to improve Barkham ride to manage this additional traffic?

83.5 None Specific Jackie Rance has asked the Executive Member for Business and Economic Development the following question:

Question:

The Council is claiming that there is no reduction in footfall in our town centres. The experience of business people in the town centre is very different. How do you explain this?

83.6 None Specific Abdul Loyes has asked the Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Housing the following question:

Question:

How many instances of anti-social behaviour by Council tenants have there been in the last year and how many evictions has this resulted in?

83.7 None Specific Phil Cunnington has asked the Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Services the following question:

Question:

A number of public statements by the LibDem leader and others recently have said that excess spending in Adult Social Care is jeopardising the Council's financial stability.

Can you explain which areas of Adult Social Care

have overspent the budget agreed by Council and by how much year to date?

83.8 Winnersh

Laura Blumenthal has asked the Executive Member for Environment, Sport and Leisure the following question:

Question:

Reintroducing women's only swimming was signed off by this Council a year and a half ago but still hasn't started again. The current plans are a million miles away from the vision of it being a convenient and pleasant experience to get more women being active. Plans include it being held at The Forest School, only available between the times of 8am - 9am Tuesdays and Wednesdays during term time. Women will also have to hire the facility themselves to open and close it and organise a volunteer lifeguard. What consultation have you done with women to know that this is what they want, this works for them and it'll be a success?

84.

MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND WARD MATTERS

An opportunity for Members to ask questions in relation to the latest circulated volume of Minutes of Meetings and Ward Matters. 20 minutes is permitted for this item.

85.

STATEMENTS BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

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

In accordance with Procedure Rule 4.2.23 the total time allocated to this item shall not exceed 20 minutes, and no Member shall speak for more than 5 minutes.

86.

STATEMENT FROM COUNCIL OWNED COMPANIES

To receive any statements from Directors of Council Owned Companies.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 4.2.24 the total time allocated to this item shall not exceed 10 minutes, and no Director, except with the consent of Council, shall speak for more than 3 minutes.

87.

MOTIONS

To consider any motions.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 4.2.11.2 a maximum period of 30 minutes will be allowed for each Motion to be moved, seconded and debated, including dealing with any amendments. At the expiry of the 30-minute period debate will cease immediately, the mover of the Motion or amendment will have the right of reply before the Motion or amendment is put to the vote.

87.1 None Specific

Motion 510 submitted by Pauline Helliard Symons

‘While recognising concerns about clean air and congestion, there has to be a balance with supporting the local economy, therefore this Council is committed not to introduce ULEZ (Ultra Low Emissions Zone) charges in any part of the Borough of Wokingham.’

Statement from the Chief Finance Officer:

There are no direct financial implications in supporting this motion.

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

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