

Appendix 2: What we have delivered since 2017

Objective 1: Services are easily accessible for all our residents and capable of responding to changing needs of our communities and how we will look after vulnerable individuals and groups.

What we have done:

- ✓ Council services that support our most vulnerable individuals have been reviewed and transformed to more closely meet the needs of our residents
- ✓ We have adopted a continuous improvement approach to ensuring services are accessible and responsive which means we are continually seeking to improve the way that we target support.
- ✓ We enable our vulnerable residents to have a voice and influence decisions that affect them and the services they receive to shape these to suit individual needs.
- ✓ Maximising variety of communication channels and improvements to online transactions which can be more convenient for some people with protected characteristics, whilst acknowledging that digital transactions may not be accessible to all and therefore continuing to offer mediated support either over the telephone, within the Council Offices, Libraries and Locality Hubs (prior to temporary closure due to the pandemic).
- ✓ Complying with the 2018 Digital Accessibility Regulations to ensure the Council's website can be used by as many people as possible including those with impaired vision, motor difficulties, cognitive impairments or learning disabilities, deafness or impaired hearing.
- ✓ On-line citizenship ceremonies.
- ✓ Increased online library offer.
- ✓ Support with the EU settlement scheme (free service to residents).
- ✓ Extending blue badge scheme to include those with hidden disabilities as per Government legislation and 2,500 people are now registered online users of the Blue Badge Scheme
- ✓ The Local Offer and the Community Directory - online key information hub supporting disabled or vulnerable older residents/carers/families (continuously improved and informed by resident and user feedback).

Objective 2: Vulnerable individuals and groups are supported and looked after

What we have done:

2017

- ✓ Berkshire Suicide Prevention Strategy 2017-20.
- ✓ Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategy 2017-20.
- ✓ Childcare Sufficiency Strategy 2017 – securing the right type and amount of childcare provision.
- ✓ Children's Services Recruitment, Retention and Wellbeing Strategy – ensuring our workforce is committed to equality.
- ✓ Achieving Permanence for Children Strategy 2017-2019.
- ✓ Adopt Berkshire Sufficiency Strategy (2017)

- ✓ Engagement Strategy for Children's Services 2017-2018.

2018

- ✓ Wokingham Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018-21.
- ✓ Education Strategy for Looked After Children (commitment to improve educational outcomes for looked after children).

2019

- ✓ Child Exploitation Strategy 2019-21.
- ✓ Addington Internship Programme 2019.

2020

- ✓ Adult Social Care Strategy 2020-25 – Our ambition for Wokingham Borough to be one of the best Boroughs for adults and carers in need of support to live, where they feel safe, included and a key part of our community.
- ✓ Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy (co-produced with Involve) – Our vision is to have an independent, sustainable and diverse voluntary and community sector, working with the community, Council and partners to meet the needs of local people.
- ✓ Learning Disability Strategy 2020-25 – we want to support more people to be independent and to have the choice of where they live with people they choose. Also supporting young people with a learning disability to prepare for adult life.
- ✓ Draft Arts and Culture Strategy 2020.
- ✓ The Pledge (promises to children in care and care leavers) 2020.
- ✓ Public Rights of Way (PROW) improvement plan 2020 - one of the key aims is to improve access for people with visual or mobility impairments.
- ✓ Customer Charter 2020 – sets out how we will adapt to individual customer needs.
- ✓ Carers Strategy 2020 was co-produced to meet specific needs for vulnerable groups.
- ✓ Autism and Mental Health strategies are emerging, again co-produced and driven by vulnerable groups

We have improved the responsiveness and accessibility of our services through: Improvement to pathways to care and support for protected and vulnerable groups in Children's and Adults Services, facilitated by operational changes to improve outcomes for service users:

- ✓ Children with disabilities.
- ✓ Early help.
- ✓ Edge of care.
- ✓ Youth Offending Service.
- ✓ Adult social care pathway - incorporating lessons learnt from the recent Three Conversations pilot.
- ✓ New Adult safeguarding hub
- ✓ Project Joy – tackling social isolation.
- ✓ Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) improvement programme – improving local placement provision.
- ✓ Community Navigator Scheme – volunteers to introduce people to community services that address their needs.

- ✓ We continue to implement the Wokingham Pledge promise to Children in Care and Care Leavers – and encourage feedback through the Children in Care Council, through the Children’s Rights and Engagement Officer and we monitor our progress every year through questionnaires and telephone surveys and feedback through the Children in Care Council.
- ✓ We support Care leavers into permanent accommodation.
- ✓ Pan West Berkshire safeguarding arrangements.
- ✓ We have committed to addressing racial harassment and hate crime in the Borough.

Objective 3: Consultation and Engagement are effective and inclusive for all our communities

What we have done:

We regularly consult on our policies, strategies and share information on matters affecting our communities. We strive to do this in a variety of ways, involving surveys, co-production of strategies, focus groups, forums and through the democratic process of public participation in Council meetings or representation on partnership boards. Since 2017 we have been developing our approach to reach out to a broader section of the community including through increased social media, online and other media presence.

- ✓ The Children in Care Council meets monthly and is formed of a group of young people who are in care or who are care leavers to act as a second voice for all of Wokingham’s children in care and care leavers. It enables lived experiences to be shared with Managers, Councillors and the Corporate Parenting Board which checks on the service offered. The feedback is used to improve services and strengthen the promises for the future.
- ✓ The Childrens Rights and Advocacy service provides support to around 130 children subject of a child protection plan as well as children in care to ensure that the voice of the child is clearly heard.
- ✓ Strengths Based approach to ensuring we are committed to the wishes, feelings and voice of the child or young person.
- ✓ Regularly shared information with our BME Forum.
- ✓ Wokingham Youth Climate Conference set up to encourage climate friendly behaviours through school visits and educational projects as well as facilitating young people to lead behaviour change across the Borough.
- ✓ We have introduced Wokingham Borough Connect, which has delivered important communications throughout Covid-19 to keep our residents safe.
- ✓ We have kept our phone lines open and worked closely with Citizens Advice with no “wrong” reason to call.
- ✓ Our community engagement officers have continued to have an active presence in our communities, taking care to socially distance and to be there to help our most vulnerable residents.
- ✓ Carried out a Survey on Tackling Racism Matters and Community Cohesion in the Borough to understand communities and set out actions needed.
- ✓ Support and facilitate the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Residents Forum, though this is currently paused to consider how best to move forward.

- ✓ Developed our Community Engagement Team offer – working to support residents and communities to lead self-sustaining lifestyles and playing an active role in community groups (e.g. Norreys Community Group).
- ✓ Co-produced Tenants Charter for our Council Tenants.
- ✓ 150 people with a learning disability contributed to creating the Learning Disability Strategy.
- ✓ Ensure that the voice of people with a learning disability is heard through facilitation of an active Learning Disability Partnership Board supported by the voluntary sector.

Objective 4: The Council's workforce is committed to equality and reflects the communities it serves

What we have done:

We have continuously developed our workforce to ensure we are all committed to achieving a fairer and more equal Borough. Since 2017 we:

- ✓ Implemented the Guaranteed Interview Scheme for any candidate who declares a disability and meets the essential criteria of the role.
- ✓ Advertised all roles on our website and made them accessible to all employees, subject to redeployment needs.
- ✓ Prevented staff with protected characteristics being excluded from career or training opportunities through our Employment Equality Steering Group.
- ✓ Ensured all new staff have mandatory equality training and refresh it as necessary.
- ✓ Continued to include equality learning and unconscious bias training in our recruitment training programme.
- ✓ Did full Equality Impact Assessments whenever major changes affected employees, such as our 21st Century Change Programme to mitigate risks to protected groups.
- ✓ Made reasonable building and equipment adjustments to make offices accessible to all.
- ✓ Offer enhanced maternity pay subject to certain conditions on returning to work.
- ✓ Met our statutory duties for family care leave, for example: Shared Parental Leave, Paternity Leave and Pay, Care Leave, Adoption Leave and Pay, Parental Bereavement Leave.
- ✓ Took on 39 apprentices in 2019-2020 through Elevate Wokingham who seek Apprenticeships and Work Experience for 16-19 year olds not in education, employment or training.
- ✓ Opened our dormant staff café to provide work experience for vulnerable and disadvantaged young people from Addington School to enable young people to acquire catering skills.
- ✓ Appointed a lead for the Equalities at Director level.
- ✓ Introduced individual Covid-19 Risk Assessments for vulnerable and Ethnic Minority staff.
- ✓ Responded to our staff survey on Tackling Racism Matters by setting up working groups to review our policy, practices and visible commitment to equality.

- ✓ Established an Ethnically Diverse Staff Network.
- ✓ Started an Equality Champions programme across the organisation to improve visibility of commitment and support the development of equality objectives, actions and embed equality into procurement and service delivery.
- ✓ Signed Business in the Community's [Race at Work Charter](#) to take action that supports Ethnic Minority career progression

Objective 5: The Council is committed to equality through service commissioning and delivery, improved procurement and partnership working

What we have done:

- ✓ Reviewed and strengthened our approach to procurement of services through greater partnership working, co-production of strategies to inform commissioning of services.
- ✓ Improved the commissioning and procurement process through consultation with customer groups.
- ✓ Ensured tenders from potential suppliers indicate their commitment to equality appropriate to the nature of the contract.
- ✓ Shared equality data between the Council and Providers.
- ✓ Fully supported Neighbourhood Plans.
- ✓ Our Community Safety Partnership is well established and strategic development of the partnership is underway working with a range of partners including the children and young peoples partnership, neighbourhood action groups and the Localities Team, to address the targeting of young or vulnerable people to facilitate criminal activity.
- ✓ Improved the Council's Design and Build approval process to ensure equality impact assessments are shared with the approval board prior to any proposed decision.
- ✓ Co-produced the Tenants Charter with our Council Housing Tenants.
- ✓ Monitored the impact of Covid 19 through Public Health response and recovery work. Looking at the impact on Ethnic Minority Communities and developing actions to respond. All Covid 19 recovery workstreams have and are, being informed by the data and insight held by Public Health so that it can be shared with our partners and our communities.

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