

Climate Emergency Strategy Highlight Report – January – March 2021

Our Key Priorities:

1. Reduce Carbon Dioxide Emissions from Transport
2. Reduce Carbon Dioxide Emissions from Domestic and Business Property
3. Generate more Renewable Energy in the Borough
4. Create a Local Plan that Specifies Net Zero Construction and Infrastructure
5. Increase the Levels of Carbon Sequestration in the Borough through 'Greening the Environment'
6. Engage with Young People and Support Sustainable Schools
7. Reduce Waste Sent to Landfill
8. Encouraging Behavioural Change

Highlights January – March

The following highlights the achievements and issues from the actions being used to deliver these priorities.

Key Achievements:

These milestones have been completed in the action plan

Sustainable and Active Transport

- Plans to improve cycling facilities outside Wokingham town centre and linking Woodley and Earley to Reading are being drawn up.
- A bid was put forward for the Emergency Active Travel Fund, with Ealy/Reading Active Route, Woodley/Reading Active Travel Route and Wokingham Town Centre/A329 London Road selected as potential projects. Then council was awarded £576,650 from towards improvements to cycling and walking facilities.
- A consultation seeking residents views on the initial scheme proposals was launched in March.
- A Greenways consultation for Route B - greenway route through Woosehill Meadows from A329 Reading Road to Heron Road- was launched in March.
- Improvements to the route at Cantley Park are also underway to provide an improved high-quality route for active travel by pedestrians and cyclists. This is the first part of Route B to be constructed.
- Phase one called 'California Way' was completed early this year and connects the new development in Arborfield with the Finchampstead Baptist Centre via California Country Park.
- The two Park and Ride projects for Winnersh Triangle and Coppid Beach began construction in February 2021.
- My journey has promoted walking and cycling trails throughout the Borough using posters and QR trails with prizes
 - New Year bike ride for families – Jan – 15 people took part
 - Cycle trail competitions - Feb - 40 entries for FBC – Arborfield and 44 entries for Pinewood to Bucklers Forest

- Hunt for the Hound QR code walking trails round California Country Park and Buckhurst Meadows
 - Scooter training delivered in 4 schools to key worker children spring term – 81 pupils
- The adult loan bike scheme continues to facilitate bikes to residents that do not own a bike. The scheme will be extended to keyworkers.
- My journey engaged keyworker/vulnerable children attending school to deliver training cycling this term. St. Sebastian's Primary, Floreat Montague Park Primary, Radstock Primary, Nine Mile Ride Primary have confirmed and are looking forward to taking part. When schools reopened from 8th March, we also ran Bikeability courses at Crazies Hill Primary, St. Nicholas CE Primary and One School Global (private school.)
- Five adult cycle training sessions were delivered in the Autumn when restrictions were eased. Adult is likely to start again in April when lockdown restrictions are eased. Adult cycle training (for both beginners and improvers) will be restarting on Saturday mornings from 24th April 2021, when lockdown restrictions are eased. SHINE bike rides for over 60's will recommence from 21st April. Breeze rides for women (beginners or ladies returning to cycling) were able to restart from 30th March and 3 rides have already been run.
- Due to continuing COVID restrictions, all My Journey events were on hold during the Autumn, including Bikeability cycle training Levels 1, 2 and 3 in community centres and bike hubs, Bikeability Learn to Ride training and Balance bike clubs. These activities will restart after the Easter holidays, from 21st April onwards. Woky Wheels for All (inclusive cycling sessions for vulnerable or disabled adults) will also restart weekly from 22nd April.

Electric Vehicles

- An Electric Vehicle Charging Points Survey has been launched on 24th March and will be open till 30th April 2021. The main aim of the survey is to gauge charging demand and provide some insight on the barriers that prevent people from buying EVs. The results of this survey will help us to plan the next charging locations and demonstrate demand when applying for funding.
- One new Electric Vehicle Charging Point (EVCP) was installed at Dinton Pastures Main Carpark in March 2021 with a provision to add a second.

Air Quality

- A Downward trend in Nitrogen Dioxide emissions (NO₂) has continued into Q3 of 2020 (latest data available). Evidenced in both Peach Street and Twyford compared to 2019 levels.
- The Public Protection Partnership have been awarded £259K from the DEFRA Air Quality grant programme to deliver an ambitious and exciting project to make improvements to air quality across Bracknell Forest, West Berkshire and Wokingham Council areas. Behaviour change will be a key focus of the project.
- Work is ongoing to identify the best locations for the new air quality monitoring units secured by successful funding bid and co-ordinating this with other ongoing projects (ADEPT and ITS).
- Mobile diffusion tubes have been placed at 6 schools in the Borough as part of the Eco-Travel Officer programme.

- A new banner design from the My Journey school's competition for no-idling has been approved and being printed to be installed along railings/fences around schools and junctions where possible.

Renewable Energy & Council Retrofitting Projects

- The consultation for the new solar farm in Barkham started on February 2021. Planning permission has been submitted. 36MWp
- The council has progressed discussions with SEN around connection to the grid for the solar farm.
- The Wokingham Community Energy scheme was approved by Executive in January 2021. The scheme is being put together with a board, from public.
- The delivery of Energy Company Obligation Scheme (ECO) and Green Homes Grant schemes started on November. Households that fall under the criteria of these schemes have been invited to participate. So far, 482 properties have benefited from the ECO scheme, with cavity wall insulation (244 properties) and loft insulation (325 properties) measurements achieving potential carbon savings of 209 tCO₂ per year.
- The bid application for Green Homes Grant LAD 1b submitted in collaboration with Bracknell Forest Council was unsuccessful.
- WBC has been collaborating with Greater South East Energy Hub who is developing a Sourcing Strategy for Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Phase 2. This phase focuses on EPC Band E, F & G and low-income households and is expected to run to March 2022.
- A bid (through the Energy Hub) is currently being finalised for Green Homes Grant LAD 2. This will be formalised in June. This phase focuses on EPC Band E, F & G and low-income households and is expected to run to March 2022.
- Retrofit measures are due to be undertaken at :
 - Lambs Lane School
 - Rivermead School
 - Southlake School
 - Coombes School
 - Nine Mile Ride
 - Combined, the above work will save : 18 Tonnes of CO₂ annually.
- Work has been completed for the pilot SAP improvement project at Yeosfield. We are now in the monitoring phase.
- The specifications to install solar panels and battery storage in properties to be used by Adult and Children's Services have been agreed.

New Council Development

- A second national event was hosted in March 2021 to promote the lessons learned from Dinton Activity Centre, the first carbon-positive building in the Borough, the online conference was hosted by the Built Environment Network.
- Solar PV installations completed in the new extension for Addington School
- Three funding bids were successful in securing Salix grant (PSDS) total value of grant secured is £390,396 for energy efficiency improvement works across a number of Council assets

Carbon Sequestration

- The business case for the 250,000 trees project was approved in December. Phase 1 of the project is progressing, and a detailed project management plan is being developed. The recruitment process for a project manager has started, the job will be advertised within the next month.
- Woodland Trust grant funding (£300,000) secured in March 2021.

Schools & Young People

- Project launched to support schools to apply for free tree packs from the Woodland Trust to plant on schools' grounds. 16 schools have expressed interest in applying for the packs.
- Headteachers summit has been approved to be held in May/June 2021. This summit aims to provide teachers with information on the part schools can play in responding to the climate emergency, including setting up eco-committees for pupils.
- Undertaken a total of 9 retrofit projects at schools including LED lighting and variable heat pumps. A further 10 projects approved for similar retrofit projects including LED lighting, heating replacement and loft insulation. 49 retrofitting projects for schools in the borough are in the pipeline.

Waste & Recycling

- Following extensive and successful promotion of the new recycling bags through the social media and the e-newsletter the new recycling bags have now been delivered across the borough, as a solution to tackle the wet recycling issue.
- A number of communications campaigns were undertaken over the quarter to increase recycling rates, focusing on food waste and also promoting the garden waste scheme renewal in March to 24,000 residents to encourage them to sign back up to the service.
- The Waste & Recycling team are beginning work on the new WBC Waste Strategy and this has been added into the Climate Emergency Action Plan this quarter.
- The waste team engaged with the town and parish council's at April's Borough/Parish Liaison meeting to promote food waste recycling and raise awareness of the upcoming Waste Strategy.

Communication & Engagement

Twenty press releases were delivered between January to March 2021:

- The fight against fly-tipping, 19 January 2021
- Park and ride projects, 22 January 2021
- The new Community Energy Scheme, 27 January 2021
- New Barkham solar farm proposals, 02 February 2021
- New recycling and waste bag deliveries, 09 February 2021
- New school module delivery, 16 February 2021
- Recycling and blue bag deliveries begin this week, 23 February 2021
- Keep batteries out of your rubbish, 24 February 2021

- Construction begins on Coppid Beech Park and Ride, 9 March 2021
- Garden waste sign-up and renewals announcement, 9 March 2021
- Local cycling and walking infrastructure plan, 15 March 2021
- Increases in recycling rates across the country, 15 March 2021
- Badgers settle into new home, 16 March 2021
- Council adopts government guidance on active travel infrastructure, 16 March 2021
- Council set to plant 250,000 trees across the borough, 16 March 2021
- Matthewsgreen Primary School opening delayed, 22 March 2021
- Council looking to better understand EV charging demand, 23 March 2021
- Council receives government grant to continue school air quality projects, 23 March 2021
- Council supports local businesses becoming more energy efficient, 25 March 2021
- Halfway through recycling bag deliveries, 31 March 2021

Copy of these is available in Appendix 1.

Towns & Parish Councils

- WBC started hosting climate emergency drop-in sessions with the towns and parish councils to share the latest initiatives, funding opportunities, projects, and updates on the delivery of the action plan.
- February session focus on Transport Electrification. Following the session, WBC has identified new potential locations for electric vehicles charging point installation.

Engaging with Businesses

- The first Climate Conversations - The road to decarbonisation was hosted in March. Invited guest speakers include

Deliverables planned for the next three months

The following projects are planned to be delivered over the next three months:

- The Low Carbon Transport Strategy report will be available for internal consultation in June 2021.
- WSP has been commissioned to support the revision and development of The Local Transport Plan (LTP). An internal consultation process of the policy areas that may be applicable to Travel and Transport across the Borough will start from May 2021.
- Following the outcome on the Electric Vehicle Charging Points survey, we will put forward an application for the On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme from Office from Zero Emission Vehicle
- New chargers with Solar PV canopies providing part of the energy at the Dinton Activity Centre
New Solar PV and charger at Grovelands Park
- Scooter training booked in 10 schools summer term – 500 Y1 pupils
- Re-starting both balance bike club and learn to ride sessions at FBC and WP after Easter every Thursday during term time

- cycle training (beginners and improvers) re-starting after Easter at WP during term time
- Re-starting Over 60s rides on Wed and Inclusive rides on Thurs after Easter at FBC during term time
- Arranging Dr Bike events at 4 locations in the Borough after Easter, options being Shinfield/Dinton/Spencers Wood/Winnersh/Emmbrook/Arborfield
- Catch up with postponed live shows for Louis Taylor booked week commencing 28 June (will also be booking up more schools due shows this year for summer term (pre-recorded and live)
- Planning to re-book bike maintenance courses after 21 June
- E-bike event planned at Shute End for 26 June though not confirmed
- Expected progress on the solar farm include results from planning application.
- More school / corporate projects will be pencilled in (asbestos dependant). These projects include the replacement of lights for LED, insulation of a suspended ceiling, replacement electric heating.
- 12 Rectory Road will be completed in May, potential carbon savings could achieve 5.2 tCO₂ annually.
- Solar PV arrays to be installed at three new sites
- 75 London Road will be completed June, potential carbon savings could achieve 3.7t CO₂ annually
- New activity centre at Dinton Pastures will be completed in June, potential carbon savings could achieve 39.4 tCO₂ annually.
- New primary school at Arborfield SDL will be completed in June, potential carbon savings could achieve 12.8 tCO₂ annually.
- The council is developing a partnership with the Woodland Trust to support the delivery of large woodland creation in the Borough. We are expected to have a clearer plan by the end of Summer 2021.
- Design and launch the School's Climate Emergency Newsletter.
- Put forward a proposal for a climate emergency headteachers summit where headteachers can see the journey of Holme Grange school (an independent school which has become sustainable leader in the area).
- No-idling plates to be finalised and orders with locations mapped.
- Continue with the delivery of the climate emergency drop-in sessions with Town & Parish Councils to identify opportunities for engagement and collaboration through the different projects.

Additions and changes to the action plan

- Waste Strategy added to the plan

National Context

COVID-19

The Coronavirus Pandemic led to countries going lockdown across the globe, drastically altering our behaviours. It is estimated that these behaviour changes led to a 26.3% fall in carbon emissions across Europe as countries went into lockdown¹. Although, reports have concluded that the respite in

¹ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/science-environment-55412079>

environmentally damaging activity was too short to counter decades of change, however the restrictions did give the world an understanding of what a less impactful lifestyle would look like.²

Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution

With the key objectives of Building Back better, supporting green jobs and accelerating the UK’s path to net zero, the Government’s 10 point plan will mobilise £12 billion of government spending and up to £42 billion in private sector investment to create 250,000 green jobs. The plan introduced several upcoming policy documents such as the Energy White Paper, the National Bus Strategy and the England Tree Strategy. The ten points cover plans to advance renewable energy production, invest in more sustainable transport options, retrofitting buildings, investing in carbon capture, usage and storage (CCUS) and protecting our natural environment.

Environment Bill

The Environment Bill brings about urgent and meaningful action to combat the environmental and climate crises we are facing and acts as a key vehicle for delivering the bold vision set out in the 25 Year Environment Plan. The Environment Bill, currently going through Parliament, will be new environmental legislation aimed at filling the governance gap created by Brexit. The bill is due to have its report stage and third reading in Parliament on the 26th January. Amendments can still be made at the report stage.

Future Homes Standards

The Government responded to a consultation on the Future Home Standards to ensure the ability for Local Plans to set higher energy performance standards for all new homes. The government has set out plans to radically improve the energy performance of new homes, with low carbon heating and be zero carbon ready by 2025.

These homes are expected to produce 75-80% lower carbon emissions compared to current levels. To ensure industry is ready to meet the new standards by 2025, new homes will be expected to produce 31% lower carbon emissions from 2021. Existing homes will also be subject to higher standards – with a significant improvement on the standard for extensions, making homes warmer and reducing bills.

Funding Opportunities

A summary of the funding opportunities for climate emergency that have been released over the last quarter and the application status is presented below:

Scheme	Purpose	Eligible	Officer	Status
Green Homes Grant LAD 1a, direct application - August 2020	Household energy efficiency retrofit	Low-income households*, social housing, private rented and owner-occupier Average spend £10,000 per property*	Ian Gough	Joined bid for £900,000 with Bracknell Forest Secured

² <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/dec/29/could-covid-lockdown-have-helped-save-the-planet>

Scheme	Purpose	Eligible	Officer	Status
LAD 1b – December 2020		combined maximum household income of £30K		Joined bid for £1,400,000 with Bracknell Forest Unsuccessful
Green Homes Grant LAD2 – South East Energy Hub March 2021	Household energy efficiency retrofit	Low-income households*, social housing, private rented and owner-occupier Average spend £10,000 per property* combined maximum household income of £30K	Ian Gough	33 properties external wall insulation - looking to assist 5 properties with under floor insulation heating £ 380 secured
Green Homes Grant Voucher Scheme - September 2020 - March 2021	Household energy efficiency retrofit works must be completed by the end of March 2021	Open for direct application by households and landlords	CEM Team	Comms campaign to inform residents September 2020 - March 2021
Woodland Trust Funding	To help deliver the goals of Woodland Trust's Emergency Tree Plan.	This is a grant and agreement for reimbursement for the purchase and installation of trees to support the delivery of the 250K Trees project	Andrew Fletcher, Duncan Fisher	£300K Secured
Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund – Salix Dec 2020	Focus on the decarbonisation of heat, insulation, solar PV & supporting economic recovery	Available for capital energy efficiency and heat decarbonisation projects within public sector non-domestic buildings. All public sector orgs including universities, academies Expect shovel ready projects	Arnab Mukherjee	£390,396 awarded for energy efficiency improvement works across a number of Council assets
DEFAR Air quality grant 2020 to 2021 – March 2021	Develop solutions over the longer term by increasing awareness and encouraging behaviour change	The council will work in partnership with the PPP on anti-idling projects, alongside a focus on the impacts of pollution around schools, encouraging a behavioural change.	Anne Smy	£259.000 Secured

Scheme	Purpose	Eligible	Officer	Status
DEFAR Air quality grant – March 2021	Grant extended -eco-travel officer	The purpose of the grant is to provide support to LAs to develop or implement measures that deliver air quality benefits, developing solutions to increase awareness and encourage positive behavioural changes	Anne Smy	£125K Secured
Active Travel Fund - Department for Transport	Improvements to cycling and walking facilities	https://wokinghamactivetravelschemes.commonplace.is/overview	Rosanne Coates	£576.650 Secured February 2021
Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) - April 2021 Funding TBC	Electric vehicle homecharge, workplace charging and on-street residential chargepoint scheme	The On-street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS) provides grant funding for local authorities towards the cost of installing on-street residential chargepoints for plug-in electric vehicles.	Sofia C., Rob Curtis	Just released
Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA) Fund - March 2021 Funding TBC	The Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA) 2021-2022 scheme will be a place based scheme that will allow areas, led by local transport authorities, working in close partnership with bus operators or as consortia with more stakeholders, to bid for funding to purchase ZEBs and the infrastructure needed to support them	Funding available to local transport authorities in England, outside London, to purchase Zero Emission Buses (ZEBs) and the infrastructure needed to support them	Rebecca Brooks	Just released
Bus Strategy £100K - March 2021	By October 2021 all bus operators need to publish a Bus Services Improvement Plan and deliver this through the Bus Services Act 2017's Enhanced Partnership model.	Bus operators partnership to produce bus service improvement plan by October 2021. This needs to developed by LTAs in collaboration with local bus operators, community transport bodies and local businesses, services and people.	Rebecca Brooks	Just released

Scheme	Purpose	Eligible	Officer	Status
Capability Fund £94K revenue May 2021	The government will fund and work with local authorities across the country to help make it easier for people to use bikes to get around	LFT revenue funding to promote cycling & walking - This fund will support an infrastructure officer to deliver the LCWIP plan for October 2021	Rob Curtis	Just released

NEWS RELEASE



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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COUNCIL RAMPS UP FIGHT AGAINST FLY-TIPPING

Wokingham Borough Council is ramping up its efforts to fight fly-tipping, operating a zero-tolerance approach against this illegal activity that blights our borough. Last year we successfully launched a campaign to combat fly-tipping, this year we are doubling down on our efforts, reminding offenders that ‘We Are Watching – and we are catching!’

Over the past year we received roughly £11,500 through fine income, which we are investing back into our enforcement activities. In December alone, we also issued two fixed penalty notices for fly-tipping, totalling £800.

We also were successful in court, with a historic case dating back to 2018 involving an incident in Hurst. Through legal proceedings the council has secured more than £1,000 against a man who illegally dumped a mattress in the village.

We’ve increased our efforts in historic hotspots, setting-up large earth bunds at Poperinghe Way in Arborfield stopping vehicles from driving up on the grassed areas. We also installed CCTV at this site, as well as along the A329, which is regularly targeted. We cleared more than 10 tonnes of rubbish from this stretch of motorway in the past 12 months.

“We are actively monitoring hot-spot areas, inspecting evidence and using CCTV to ensure we can take appropriate legal action against this unlawful activity,” said Cllr Parry Batth, executive member for environment and leisure.

“We will continue to crack down on criminals who engage in the activity, but we need your help. We are asking all of our residents to support by disposing of their waste responsibly and to help us in keeping our borough clean and green.”

Please remember that ‘your waste, is your responsibility’ meaning you must ensure all your household rubbish is disposed of properly and legally. Failure to do so could land you with £400 fixed penalty notice.

Ensure anyone you use to remove waste from your property has a proper license and is authorised to do so. Use the waste carrier quick check tool on the [Environment Agency’s website](#) or visit the [Right Waste Right Place website](#) to help you check.

If you’re redecorating your home in the New Year, make use of Wokingham Borough Council’s large unwanted items service, which collects a wide range of goods from carpets to washing machines. You can dispose of up to five large items for a charge of £56 using this service. [Find out more here.](#)

In addition, waste and recycling can also be disposed of at our recycling centres, including Longshot Lane, Bracknell, or Smallmead, Reading. Visit the [re3website](#) for more details.

Further information:

1. More from Cllr Parry Batth at parry.batth@wokingham.gov.uk or on 07969 683595

2. For further information on fly-tipping visit:

<https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/roadworks-and-outdoor-maintenance/fly-tipping/>

NEWS RELEASE



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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PARK AND RIDE PROJECTS SET TO BEGIN CONSTRUCTION

Construction of a new park and ride, and expansion of another in Wokingham borough are set to begin, with nearly £10million being invested in the facilities. Work is to start on the new Coppid Beech Park and Ride in Wokingham and adding an additional decked floor to the Winnersh Triangle Park and Ride will start next month (February).

Winnersh Triangle is estimated to cost £6.8million, while the Coppid Beech project will see about £3million invested. Both are being supported with a £6.6million injection from Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership's (LEP) Local Growth Deal with Government, which backs both plans to create better sustainable transport infrastructure in the area. It also helps the council towards its goal of a carbon neutral borough by 2030.

"We're investing in infrastructure across the borough and both these park and ride projects have been backed with significant funding due to the benefits they will bring," said Cllr Pauline Jorgensen, executive member for highways and transport. "These projects are part of our work to accelerate the reduction of congestion on key transport routes across the borough. The links with existing bus services mean our residents will be able to travel easily to where they want to go in an environmentally responsible way."

Bob Mountain, vice chair of the Berkshire Local Transport Body added: "We are delighted that these schemes are now underway and that the contribution from the LEP's Local Growth Fund will help ease congestion for commuters and residents in the Wokingham and Bracknell area."

Work on Coppid Beech, with construction carried out by AH Willis, should be finished near the end of 2021/start of 2022. The Winnersh project, overseen by our Wokingham Highways Alliance partners VolkerHighways, expects to be finished in early 2022. Both projects link up to existing bus routes, with Winnersh also linking up to the Winnersh Triangle train station. They will help residents to travel around the borough as well as into other nearby towns such as Reading and Bracknell.

Both projects are including significant investment in electric vehicle charging points, to further help the borough on its journey to carbon neutrality. The council will be providing regular updates on the project via the council's weekly traffic and travel newsletter, which [residents can sign up for now.](#)

Further information:

1. More from Cllr Pauline Jorgensen, executive member highways and transport, via pauline.jorgensen@wokingham.gov.uk

2. Alternatively, contact the council's communications, engagement and marketing team via CEM@wokingham.gov.uk

3. More from Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership here:

<http://www.thamesvalleyberkshire.co.uk/>

4. Local Enterprise Partnerships are playing a vital role in driving forward economic growth across the country, helping to build a country that works for everyone. That's why by the end of 2021 Government will have invested over £12bn through the Local Growth Fund, allowing LEPs to use their local knowledge to get all areas of the country firing on all cylinders.

NEWS RELEASE



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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NEW COMMUNITY ENERGY SCHEME FOR WOKINGHAM BOROUGH

An exciting initiative, which could see green energy projects rolled out across the Borough, could come a step closer this week as Wokingham Borough Council's decision-making Executive discuss plans for a local community energy scheme.

Part of the council's vision to help reduce local greenhouse emissions, encourage sustainable energy projects and tackle the climate emergency, the scheme would see a new independent Community Action Group set up called Wokingham Community Energy.

Wokingham Community Energy (WCE), would then seek to raise money by selling community shares in the scheme, with income raised used to roll out green energy projects within Wokingham borough. Profits made by the scheme, through the sale of green energy to customers or back into the national grid, would be used to pay interest to shareholders with the remainder going into a pot to fund green projects and initiatives within the community.

"Climate emergency is a massive issue and it won't go away unless individuals and bodies start to step up and make changes to the way things are done. Wokingham Community Energy is a fantastic opportunity to see more sustainable energy projects rolled out across the Wokingham Borough." Said Cllr Gregor Murray, executive member for resident services, communications and emissions. "This is a very much a local scheme, with funds invested to improve the amount of sustainable energy generated locally, and with excess profits put back into local green initiatives."

"It's also an opportunity for local people and businesses who are committed to tackling the climate emergency to get involved, either by becoming an investor in the fund, or by working with the Wokingham Community Energy scheme to identify and roll out local projects."

The new Wokingham scheme plans to work closely with Energy4All, the national body established to help implement schemes such as this across the UK, and the local Reading Community Energy Fund (RCEF) which was established in 2016 to implement a similar community energy project in Reading Borough.

Cllr Murray continued "By working closely with these well-established and successful groups we will be able to benefit from their advice and use their best practice in rolling out the new Wokingham Community Energy scheme. However we are adamant that any money raised from

shareholders will be ring-fenced for projects within Wokingham Borough and that the community pot will also be used locally.

Should the scheme be approved by the executive, Wokingham Community Energy will start the process of setting itself up as a Community Action Group, entering into agreements with RCES and Energy4All and establishing details such as the amount people can invest and the types of projects which can be invested in.

Potential projects are expected to include investments such as installing large banks of solar panels on top of public or large commercial buildings, with those leasing space to the scheme not only being able to benefit from their improved green credentials, but also the opportunity to buy green sustainable energy back from the scheme at preferential fixed rates.

It is hoped the scheme would launch in the spring with more information for interested investors provided in March.

Further information:

1. More from Cllr Gregor Murray, Executive Member for resident services, communications and emissions, at gregor.murray@wokingham.gov.uk or on 07486 455760

NEWS RELEASE



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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PROPOSALS FOR A NEW SOLAR FARM IN BARKHAM

The vision for a net carbon zero Wokingham Borough is starting to look a lot closer now as Wokingham Borough Council shares its ideas for a new solar farm in Barkham prior to submitting a planning application in the next month.

“Tackling climate change is incredibly important for Wokingham Borough and its residents.” Said Cllr Gregor Murray, executive member for resident services, communications and emissions
“We’ve committed to going net carbon zero by 2030 and finding ways to generate renewable energy within the borough forms a massive part of our plans.

“Solar energy offers a fantastic opportunity to help us address climate change. Not only is it truly renewable, but it does not produce greenhouse gas emissions, is quick and easy to install and runs silently with minimal maintenance or running costs once in place.

The proposals, which would see solar panels installed on council-owned farmland adjacent to Barkham Ride (High Barn Farm and part of Brook Farm), would generate around 23 to 32 MWh’s a year depending on final layouts, producing enough energy to power thousands of homes and businesses across the borough for years to come.

The solar farm would also save around 6,325 Tonnes of CO2 a year when compared to using traditional fossil fuels.

Cllr Murray continued: “During the past months we’ve been surveying the land and working with solar farm experts to fully understand the site and how it might work. We have also made the existing tenant farmers aware of our plans and continue to discuss options with them moving forward.

“We wanted to share our plans with resident’s before we submit the planning application as we know people will have lots of questions about what’s proposed. We’re keen to give them the opportunity to discuss their thoughts, especially given the importance of sites like this in addressing climate change.

“We know some people may have concerns such as if the scheme would mean lots of new cars travelling to the site, if it will be noisy whilst it operates or if it might make the site easier to change to residential in the future. The answer to all these is no. After it’s installed the site would only require the occasional visit from engineers and the equipment is designed to be quiet. The planning status of the land would also remain unchanged with it reverting back to farmland after the solar farm reaches the end of its lifespan in 40 years.

“We’re also aware from other similar applications in the borough that some people worry about the visual impact of solar farms like these on the look of an area and this will always be harder to address. In the majority the lay of the land and existing hedgerows and trees mean the panels

won't be visible in all locations and, where they can be seen, we will be working with planning to look at whether we can add more planting or screening to reduce impact. However, we also have to remember the massive importance of schemes like these, which generate clean and green energy, in tackling the climate emergency and making decisions that will strike the right balance to protect future generations.”

Further details of the proposals can be viewed by downloading the Barkham Solar Farm leaflet on the council website at www.wokingham.gov.uk and searching for Climate Emergency. Comments can be submitted until Friday February 26 to CommercialProperty@wokingham.gov.uk. Feedback made will help shape the planning application and any final designs.

The council's climate emergency action plan includes four solar farms to be built across the borough, each anticipated to generate enough energy to power 5,000 homes.

For more information about how the council is working to tackle carbon emissions across the borough, and to read the climate emergency action plan, go to the councils website at www.wokingham.gov.uk and search climate emergency.

Further information:

1. More from Cllr Gregor Murray, Executive Member for resident services, communications and emissions, at gregor.murray@wokingham.gov.uk or on 07486 455760

NEWS RELEASE



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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Version: 0.1

WASTE AND RECYCLING BAG DELIVERY STARTS SOON

New waterproof recycling bags, green food waste bags and blue general waste bags will start being delivered in Wokingham Borough from 22 February. These will be dropped on doorsteps over a seven-week period, with all residents receiving them by mid-April.

WATERPROOF RECYCLING BAGS

The [new waterproof recycling bags](#) will eventually replace the existing black boxes and can be used as soon as residents receive them. Each household will initially get two bags. Additional recycling bags will be available once the deliveries are complete. Check our website for details on how to order more recycling bags.

Please use the recycling bags as soon as you get them. If you need more than two bags, please use your black boxes initially, but only for non-paper/card items such as cans, tins and plastics.

In late 2019, paper and card reprocessing plants stopped accepting wet materials. We are replacing the black boxes with sealable waterproof recycling bags to ensure the paper and card our residents put out for recycling stays dry and meets the new standards. The waterproof bags will help the council towards its target of 70 per cent recycling by 2030.

The waterproof recycling bags have a weight at the bottom to prevent them blowing away. They are made of long-lasting materials which should last for up to five years. They also weigh less than the black boxes, making handling easier. Collection crews will leave the bags in the location where they collect them.

The only change for residents is the container for recycling; collections will remain weekly on the same day as they are currently.

“We know our residents are keen to recycle as much as possible and the change to these waterproof bags will help us towards our recycling goals,” said Cllr Parry Batth, executive member for environment. “Recycling wet paper is more difficult than it used to be due to changes in the world market for recycled paper. We’ve made this change to address this problem, which also saves the council and therefore the Council Tax payer money. The new bags also offer more capacity to residents for each container to allow them to recycle more per household.”

BLUE BAGS

More than five million blue bags will also be rolling out across Wokingham borough this spring. These are for general waste, with each household receiving 80 bags in two rolls of 40 to cover the period between April 2021 and March 2022. These are being sent to residents a couple of weeks later than usual to allow us to deliver them with the waterproof bags.

If residents need more blue bags before they are due to be delivered, they can be ordered on our website. Additional blue bags can be delivered within 10 working days or collected from one of the locations listed on the website. Later this month, the council's website will contain information on the date of deliveries for the blue, food waste and recycling bags.

The size and quality of the two handled blue rubbish bags remains the same. Crews can only collect waste in these council branded bags. Blue bags were first introduced back in 2012 and can take 90-litres of waste. With 80 bags per household this works out at approximately 120 litres per week. This is the equivalent of a fortnightly 240 litre wheeled bin collection but with the extra flexibility of weekly collections and the ability to put out more waste in some weeks and less in others.

FOOD WASTE BAGS

All households will also receive an allocation of about 100 food waste bags. Food waste put into the blue general rubbish bags often ends up in landfill, where it rots and releases methane, a harmful greenhouse gas. When recycled, food waste can generate energy to power our homes.

Half a caddy of recycled food waste would power a toaster for four slices of bread; six recycled tea bags would produce enough electricity to boil a kettle for a cup of tea. Food waste also breaks down into a liquid fertiliser, rich in nitrogen, used in fields to improve the soil and help grow crops.

“Residents can look forward to receiving rubbish and recycling bags in one go this year, with deliveries of food waste bags, the new waterproof recycling bags and your annual allocation of blue bags starting later this month,” added Cllr Batth.

You can [sign up to our weekly rubbish and recycling newsletter](#) for updates on the rollout.

Further information:

1. More from Cllr Parry Batth, executive member for environment, on parry.batth@wokingham.gov.uk

2. Alternatively, contact the council's communications, engagement and marketing team via CEM@wokingham.gov.uk

NEWS RELEASE



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Date: 16/02/2021
Issued by: Connor McLoughlin

Issue No: 35/21
Version: 1.0

MODULES DELIVERED FOR NEW SCHOOL

Construction of a new school for Wokingham took a major step this week, with the first phase of modules lifted into place for the buildings. The Keys Academy Trust will run the 210-place school in Matthewsgreen, which is being built on land off Queens Road.

The first modular frames were lifted into place last week as the new school begins to take shape. Phase one of the installation included 50 modular frames which have been landed in place and make up the majority of the primary school building. The new multi-use games area is also nearing completion.

Seventy-five per cent of the building work for the new block will be completed modularly offsite, a decision made to cut carbon emissions in the construction process by our contractor Reds10. This helps the council towards its goal of making Wokingham a carbon neutral borough by 2030.

“It’s great to see the buildings taking shape now the modules have arrived on site at Matthews Green,” said Cllr UllaKarin Clark, executive member for children’s services. “Investing in new schools is vital for the borough and ensures we support families by providing a school place close to home.

“The Keys Academy Trust are proven to provide an excellent education to hundreds of students in our borough, running successful schools in Shinfield, Earley, Hurst, Sonning and Twyford. We look forward to seeing them provide this standard of schooling to more students in the borough when this school opens.”

Michael Ruddick, director at Reds10, said: “We are pleased to have reached an important milestone on another project with Wokingham Borough Council. Our partnership is shaping the future of the local community and Matthewsgreen is set to be one of the key projects, whilst helping the council reach its carbon agenda.”

A new 500sqm community facility will be built on the same site as the school as part of the North Wokingham major development. It will have a separate entrance but will be linked, with the school and community centre sharing facilities if and when needed. A decision has not yet been made on who will run the facility.

The new school and community amenities are funded through developer contributions as part of the four major new communities at Arborfield, Shinfield and North and South Wokingham, and includes an investment of £98million in new schools.

In total these developments will bring seven new primary schools, with two already open at Montague Park in Wokingham and Alder Grove in Shinfield. Two others are under construction including this one in Matthewsgreen and another at Arborfield Green, and three still to come.

This is on top of the Bohunt Wokingham Secondary School at Arborfield Green which opened its doors in September 2016.

“New schools are one of the most important improvements we are seeing across the borough,” said Cllr Wayne Smith, executive member for planning and enforcement. “It’s vital we support our current and future residents by providing the facilities they need nearby. The new school at Matthewsgreen is a great example of this with a community facility being provided at the heart of the new development, alongside the school.”

Further information:

1. More from Cllr UllaKarin Clark, executive member for children’s services, via ullakarin.clark@wokingham.gov.uk

2. More from Cllr Wayne Smith, executive member for planning, via wayne.smith@wokingham.gov.uk

3. Alternatively contact the council’s communications, engagement and marketing team via CEM@wokingham.gov.uk

NEWS RELEASE



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Date: 23/02/2021
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RUBBISH AND RECYCLING BAGS ON THE WAY TO YOU

Delivery of new waterproof recycling bags, blue general waste bags and food waste bags to residents across Wokingham borough has begun. All items will be dropped at doorsteps together during the next seven weeks, with all residents receiving them by mid-April.

Residents will be able to [check when their delivery is due by using the street name checking tool](#) on our website. This explains when deliveries should happen and what to do if you think you have been missed during the drop off period for your street.

Each delivery will include two new waterproof recycling bags, 80 blue general waste bags and about 100 food waste bags. The waterproof bags can be used as soon as residents get them. If residents need more than two bags, they should keep using their black boxes, but only for non-paper/card items such as cans, tins and plastics. Additional recycling bags will be available after the rollout is complete. More information on how to get additional recycling bags will be added to our website later in the spring.

Cllr Parry Batth, executive member for environment and leisure, said: "As soon as you get your new waterproof recycling bags you can start using them. If you need extra space for your recycling until you can get more waterproof bags, you can continue to use black boxes for non-paper and card items. Once the bags are fully rolled out we expect the borough's recycling rate to rise as more paper and card will be able to be recycled as it will be kept dry, helping us towards our goal of 70 per cent recycling in the borough by 2030."

In late 2019, paper and card reprocessing plants stopped accepting wet materials. We are replacing the black boxes with sealable waterproof recycling bags to ensure the paper and card our residents put out for recycling stays dry and meets the new standards.

The waterproof recycling bags have a weight at the bottom to prevent them blowing away. They are made of long-lasting materials which should last for up to five years. They also weigh less than the black boxes, making handling easier. When our crews collect recycling from the bags, they will leave them in the location where they collect them.

The only change for residents is the container for recycling; collections will remain weekly on the same day as they are currently. The waterproof bags will help the council towards its target of 70 per cent recycling by 2030.

You can [sign up to our weekly rubbish and recycling newsletter](#) for updates on the rollout.

Further information:

- 1. Find attached pictures of Cllr Parry Batth with the new recycling bags**

2. More from Cllr Parry Batth, executive member for environment and leisure, on parry.batth@wokingham.gov.uk

3. Alternatively, contact the council's communications, engagement and marketing team on CEM@wokingham.gov.uk

NEWS RELEASE



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Date: 24/02/2021
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Version: 1.0

DON'T PUT BATTERIES IN YOUR RUBBISH BAGS

Don't put batteries in your rubbish bags. That's the message from our waste collection crews who escaped serious injury after a fire in their lorry earlier this month.

A car battery left in a resident's rubbish caused a fire which could have destroyed one of our waste collection vehicles and injured staff. Smoke was spotted coming from the rear of the vehicle around midday on 12 February, so Berkshire Fire and Rescue were called and came to extinguish it where the vehicle was stopped in Spencers Wood.

Once the blaze was under control it was found a resident had put a car battery in with their general waste. Fortunately, the crew spotted the fire early and took appropriate action to stop the fire before it became too serious. The vehicle was fairly empty but if it was full it could have been a much worse situation.

The vehicle was considerably damaged and is now out of service. It will take a long time to fix and bring it back into action. This will have significant financial impact, including sourcing a temporary vehicle to keep collections running at full capacity.

"I'd like to thank the crew for spotting the fire early and local fire service for their swift response to deal with the incident," said Cllr Parry Bath, executive member for environment and leisure. "Fortunately none of the staff were injured and they were so proactive in dealing with the incident, but this situation is easily avoidable. All residents should dispose of all batteries, and small electrical devices, correctly at the household waste recycling centres or other local collection points to help prevent future vehicle fires."

Dave Crease, group manager at Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, said: "Batteries in household waste and recycling can lead to a challenging incident for fire and rescue services to deal with which can cause significant disruption to communities. Many people may not realise the importance of correctly disposing of batteries, so we are urging residents to please act responsibly by using widely available local battery recycling services."

Batteries of all kinds, from the triple AAAs in your TV remote right up to car batteries, should not be put in any bin. They should be taken to one of our recycling centres where we will ensure they are reused as much as possible. The batteries contain important resources and chemicals so should always be recycled.

There are dozens of recycling points for small batteries across the borough, including at local supermarkets. You can [check your nearest points by going onto the Recycle Now website.](#)

Cllr Batth added: “Fires involving batteries and electrical items incorrectly discarded into kerbside collections have a significant impact on our resources, as well as the fire services. This incident was small but it could have been much worse and been a further drain on public resources – both for the council and the fire service.”

Visit the council’s website to check what can and can’t go into your kerbside collections. [Sign up for our rubbish and recycling newsletter](#) to get weekly updates on our waste service.

Further information:

- 1. More from Cllr Parry Batth, executive member for environment and leisure, on parry.batth@wokingham.gov.uk**
- 2. Alternatively, contact the council’s communications, engagement and marketing team via CEM@wokingham.gov.uk**

NEWS RELEASE



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Date: 09/03/2021
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Version: 1.0

CONSTRUCTION BEGINS ON COPPID BEECH PARK AND RIDE

A new £3million park and ride for Wokingham has begun construction. Wokingham Borough Council's contractor AH Willis has started to create the 250-space Coppid Beech park and ride.

It will provide a key facility for residents wanting to travel into nearby town centres due to its proximity to Wokingham town centre, the borough boundary with Bracknell Forest and the A329M. The bus services linked to the park and ride could be used for employment trips during weekdays, and leisure trips during weekends. The council is looking for opportunities to link the park and ride to other parts of the borough including Twyford.

Works so far have seen site fencing set up, including access gates and tree protection fencing. Our contractor will then begin site clearance and creation of a site entrance road. Later in the spring there will be further enabling works on site before the construction and creation of the car park takes place in the summer months.

The project has been given significant financial support (£2.4million) by the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) with the rest paid for by the council through developer contributions. The land allocated for the application, which also includes cycle and motorcycle parking spaces and electric car charging points, was previously agreed for this use as part of the Keephatch Gardens development east of Wokingham town centre.

"The new park and ride at Coppid Beech will help support the borough with the transport infrastructure it needs for the years ahead," said Cllr Pauline Jorgensen, executive member for highways and transport. "Car journeys will rise as we come out of lockdown and this kind of facility helps us encourage residents out of their cars and onto public transport, which is better for the environment. We thank our partners at the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership for their significant support on this project."

Tim Brown, group chairman at contractor A H Willis and Sons Ltd, added: "We are delighted to have been awarded the contract to provide a new community asset that will benefit local residents, businesses and visitors to Wokingham, improving accessibility to the town and travel links to the surrounding area.

"We are proud of our association with Wokingham Borough Council and equally proud to have been chosen to deliver this infrastructure scheme. We will shortly be establishing ourselves on-site and welcome feedback from the local community on our progress and conduct while delivering on our promise to provide Wokingham with this excellent new facility."

Work will continue throughout the year, with completion expected to be in Autumn 2021 when it will be opened. Further announcements will be made on an opening date in due course.

The council will be providing regular updates on the project via the council's weekly traffic and travel newsletter, which [residents can sign up for now](#).

Further information:

- 1. More from Cllr Pauline Jorgensen, executive member for highways and transport, on pauline.jorgensen@wokingham.gov.uk**
- 2. Alternatively, contact the council's communications, engagement and marketing team on CEM@wokingham.gov.uk**

NEWS RELEASE



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Date: 09/03/2021
Issued by: Connor McLoughlin

Issue No: 49/21
Version: 1.0

WASTE SIGN UP AND RENEWALS SET TO OPEN FOR 2021-22

Green fingered residents across Wokingham Borough will soon be able to apply for a garden waste collection for 2021-22. Anyone signed up for a collection for 2020-21 will get an email or letter asking them to sign up for use of a brown wheelie bin for the new financial year.

More than 23,000 residents are already signed up for the service, which takes away garden clippings, grass cuttings, leaves and weeds fortnightly from the kerbside in a 240-litre brown wheeled bin. Making use of the service means residents are able to have 6,240 tonnes of green material collected from the kerbside each year – more than one large skip.

Residents will be directed to [sign up via our website](#) from mid-March, with the cost covering the period from 1 May 2021 until 30 April 2022. The renewal period will start later this year due to an additional month given to all subscribers for 2020-21 due to the Covid-19 pandemic and disruption to garden waste collection services.

The price of a collection has increased slightly by £5 to £65 for the year. The price of individual brown garden waste sacks, which have a 75-litre capacity, has also increased, from £1 to £1.10. This is the first price increase since the service launched in 2012 and is to cover increased running costs. A graded price structure has also been introduced so residents will pay £50 if they join after 1 July or £35 if they join after 1 October.

“Our garden waste service continues to be popular across the borough with more than 23,000 residents now using it,” said Cllr Parry Bath, executive member for environment and leisure. “We have introduced a small price increase for the first time since the service started nine years ago and this is only to cover additional costs of running it.

“Garden waste is a perfect example of closed loop recycling, where residents can turn what used to be in their gardens into compost, which can then be used to help grow new plants.”

Once collected all the materials are turned into re3regrow compost, which is sold at the borough’s recycling centres. It’s transformed at a composting facility in Oxfordshire, before being put into 40-litre bags and sold for £3.50 each, which covers the cost of producing it.

If residents do sign up, they will get a teal sticker delivered to place onto their bin to show they have paid. This should come within 10 working days of the order being completed. If they are getting a brown bin for the first time, it will come with the teal sticker attached.

Further information:

- 1. More from Cllr Parry Batth, executive member for environment and leisure, on parry.batth@wokingham.gov.uk**
- 2. Alternatively, contact the council's communications, engagement and marketing team on CEM@wokingham.gov.uk**

NEWS RELEASE



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Date: 15/03/2021
Issued by: Joanne Hinton

Issue No: 62/2021
Version: 1.0

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan for Wokingham Borough

Wokingham Borough Council is reaching out to residents to find out how it can encourage more walking and cycling throughout Wokingham borough.

The council is currently developing a local cycling and walking infrastructure plan (LCWIP) for the borough, as well as a plan specifically for Wokingham town centre. Residents, local businesses and visitors are being invited to give feedback on any issues that are currently discouraging or preventing them from choosing to walk or cycle when traveling around the borough.

Equally, the council would like to hear about any opportunities for improving the streets in the borough for walking and cycling.

The aim is to determine where best to focus future investment in active travel infrastructure to support walking and cycling across the area. This might include providing new cycle routes, improving footways and crossings, creating 'school streets' or reducing the impact of through-traffic in local neighbourhoods.

“We are at an early stage in the plan development process and would like input from across the local community to help shape where we look to invest future funding,” said Cllr Pauline Jorgensen, executive member for highways and transport.

“We would like to hear from our residents, as well as local businesses and visitors, so we can understand what are the existing issues and barriers that prevent you from walking or cycling within the borough.

“We are particularly interested in those shorter journeys that you may take, popping to the shop for a few essentials or driving your child to school – what improvement could we make to allow you consider more active travel for these shorter journeys around your local area?”

To help shape the walking and cycling network across the borough visit wokinghamlcwip.commonplace.is where you will have the opportunity to leave your thoughts and opinions.

This platform provides an interactive map where you can place a 'pin' on any location in the borough and leave specific comments. This engagement platform will remain open for comments until 18 April.

A further public consultation will follow later in the year with more detailed proposals. If you have any queries, please email us at transportplanning@wokingham.gov.uk.

The council are also currently asking for feedback on separate consultations including the [Active Travel Fund](#) and [Greenways](#).

The [Active Travel Fund](#) consultation looks at plans to improve connections between the A329 London Road and Wokingham town centre, and linking Woodley and Earley to Reading. Scheme improvements are being developed after the council was awarded £576,650 towards improvements to cycling and walking facilities in these areas by the Department for Transport. This consultation closes on 26 March.

The council is also currently working on a [Greenways Project](#) to add to the existing network of paths to create a sustainable alternative way to get around the borough. The greenways consultation is seeking views on the next stage of its greenways project, which will create a new route through Woosehill Meadows from A329 Reading Road to Heron Road.

For further details on all current council consultations visit the council website and [search consultation](#).

Further information

- 1. More from Cllr Parry Bath, executive member for environment and leisure, on parry.bath@wokingham.gov.uk**

NEWS RELEASE



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Date: 15/03/2021
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SECOND LARGEST INCREASE IN RECYCLING RATE IN THE COUNTRY

Wokingham Borough Council had the second largest increase in recycling rates across all local authorities in England last year, according to new Government data. The borough's recycling rate jumped by 9.8 percentage points to 50.3 per cent according to the data for 2019-20 from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

The sharp increase in recycling rate is due to the introduction of the council's food waste recycling service in April 2019. The increase was second only to the Isles of Scilly, which saw an 11.2 percentage point increase. Only four councils across the country saw an increase of more than five percentage points during the data collection period.

Food waste recycling has proved a huge hit since its introduction in Wokingham borough, with more than half of households using it regularly. It's part of the regular weekly collection service, alongside general waste and mixed recycling. Since the collections started more than 9,000 tonnes of food waste has been recycled. The food waste is turned into energy to power homes or into fertiliser to help grow crops.

The data shows Wokingham borough has the highest recycling rate of all Berkshire local authorities and the third highest amongst unitary authorities in the South East. Residents who are not taking part can get more information on the council's website on how to start using it and get your indoor and outdoor caddy, as well as liners for the indoor caddy.

"We know our residents have really embraced our food waste recycling service with just over half of households now using it on a regular basis," said Cllr Parry Batth, executive member for environment and leisure. "I'd like to thank every resident who makes the effort on a daily basis with their food peelings, meat bones and other items, which is the cause of this huge jump in recycling rates.

"This data showcases the huge impact it has had on recycling rates in our borough and it's a trend we hope to see continue in the years ahead. If we can get even more residents to start using the service regularly we will see even more of a positive impact so go onto our website to find out more. It's easy to do and good for our environment, I'd urge anyone not using the service to start doing so."

The council is currently rolling out new waterproof recycling bags to residents across the borough. The council urges all residents to start using them as soon as they get them. Doing so will help boost the borough's recycling rates even further.

The council continues to work towards its target of 70 per cent recycling by 2030. This is part of the commitment for a carbon neutral borough by 2030, set out in the climate emergency action plan.

Further information:

- 1. More from Cllr Parry Batth, executive member for environment and leisure, on parry.batth@wokingham.gov.uk**
- 2. Alternatively, contact the council's communications engagement and marketing team via CEM@wokingham.gov.uk**

NEWS RELEASE



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Date: 16/03/2021
Issued by: Connor McLoughlin

Issue No: 66/2021
Version: 1.0

BADGERS SETTLE INTO NEW HOME

Badgers have taken to a new home created for them in Finchampstead. Two artificial setts have been created by Wokingham Borough Council and its partners after a sett was found near the area planned for the extension of Nine Mile Ride.

The collaboration builds on dedicated monitoring within the borough by the Binfield Badger Group, who have watched over the species in the borough for decades. Its members keep the council informed of badger setts across the area, which inform our decisions on where infrastructure is located.

Thanks to several years of work with the group and regular mapping by ecological surveyors expert advisors could understand the area and why the badgers chose to live there. This allowed us to create the two new artificial setts in a better location for them to thrive in the long run.

When a new sett was discovered the council and its partners worked quickly to secure a long-term future for the badger clan. The tunnel and chambers were created last year and then peanuts and scent trails were used to attract the animals to their new homes. Monitoring has shown that the badgers adopted their new home almost immediately.

The location chosen for the sett is in an improved habitat for the species, as it has better access to a mix of foraging habitats to sustain the clan throughout the year and moves them further away from residential areas and the new road. All work was agreed with Natural England, the council's ecologists, contractor Stantec's ecologists and badger specialists Pearce Environment Ltd.

Cllr Parry Batth, executive member for environment and leisure, said: "While some infrastructure works can disrupt wildlife we will always do our bit to provide them a new home safely, allowing projects to continue for the benefit of residents while looking after animals like badgers. I commend all those involved in the creation of the artificial badger setts and it's fantastic to see them already being put to use by the animals."

New infrastructure, such as road building, incorporates safety measures for badgers such as crossings under new roads as well as supporting new housing development in the borough. The Nine Mile Ride Extension is one of these major projects, with outline planning permission for the extension agreed in January 2019, with detailed designs currently being finalised.

The council, working alongside its Major New Roads contractor Balfour Beatty, is aiming to begin construction later this year with the road expected to open in summer/autumn 2022.

The extension is part of with the major development at Arborfield Garrison. It will be the main route out of the southern part of the development and will connect to the existing A327 Eversley Road. This new section of road will help to mitigate the impact of additional traffic on existing routes through Arborfield Cross and Shinfield.

Further information:

1. More from Cllr Parry Batth, executive member for environment and leisure, on parry.batth@wokingham.gov.uk

2. For more on the plans for the Nine Mile Ride extension, visit:

<https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/roadworks-and-outdoor-maintenance/roadworks-and-road-maintenance/nine-mile-ride-extension/>

NEWS RELEASE



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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Council adopts new government guidance on active travel infrastructure

Wokingham Borough Council has approved plans to put cycling and walking infrastructure at the centre of future highways design plans.

Plans approved by an individual executive member decision earlier this week will see the council adopt the Department for Transport's (DfT) Local Transport Note (LTN) 1/20 and embrace the principles of Gear Change which set out the actions required to radically increase active travel.

LTN 1/20 is a new national cycling design guide that sets out minimum requirements for cycle infrastructure, including cycle lanes, junctions and crossings, construction and maintenance, and cycle parking.

LTN 1/20 identifies five core design principles which represent the key requirements to encourage more cycling and walking:

- Coherent – people must be able to reach their destinations easily, along routes that are well connected, simple to navigate and of consistent high quality.
- Direct – cycle routes should provide the shortest and fastest way of travelling from place to place.
- Safe – cycle infrastructure must be safe and most important must be perceived to be safe by users.
- Comfortable – cycle routes should be of a good quality, well-maintained, smooth, wide enough to accommodate the volume of users, have minimal stopping-starting and avoid steep gradients.
- Attractive – cycle infrastructure should help deliver public spaces that are well designed stimulating cyclists

Gear Change describes DfT's vision for cycling and walking, setting out the actions required at all levels of government to radically increase active travel. Increasing cycling and walking can help achieve some of the key priorities for the council – improving air quality, combatting climate change, improving health and wellbeing, addressing inequalities and tackling congestion on our roads.

The recommended actions set out in Gear Change range from the provision of higher standards of cycling facilities to ensuring that all future schemes and developments are sustainable transport focused.

Cllr Pauline Jorgensen, executive member for highways and transport said, “We are committed to putting the infrastructure in place that allows our residents to consider walking or cycling as an alternative to car travel when planning their journeys. We welcome the guidance offered by the Department for Transport to implement changes that will see active travel as a key consideration for future highway design plans.”

“I am delighted to say Bader Way is just one example of our current walking and cycling infrastructure projects where we have successfully adopted the government’s Gear Change guidance”.

Phase one of the Bader Way project has seen a new footway and cycleway linking east Woodley, Dinton Pastures Country Park and Loddon Bridge, providing an alternative route to the busy Bader Way.

Plans are now in progress to extend the new footway and cycleway to provide a direct link for cyclists to Winnersh Triangle business park and railway station. This will include a signalised crossing on the A3290 near Showcase cinema and a new replacement bridge that will incorporate ramps and make the bridge more accessible for both cyclists and wheelchair users.

The council currently have a number of consultations running in regards to walking and cycling infrastructure and are inviting residents, local businesses and visitors to share their thoughts on how it can implement effective change to encourage more active travel opportunities.

To help shape the walking and cycling network across the borough visit wokinghamlcwip.commonplace.is where you will have the opportunity to leave your thoughts and opinions.

The council is also currently asking for feedback on [The Active Travel Fund scheme proposals](#) to improve connections between the A329 London Road and Wokingham town centre, and linking Woodley and Earley to Reading.

The [Greenways consultation](#) is also seeking views on the next stage of the council’s greenways project, which will create a new route through Woosehill Meadows from A329 Reading Road to Heron Road.

For further details on all current council consultation visit the council website and search consultation.

To find out more about the DfT’s [Gear Change](#) and [LTN 1/20](#) guidelines visit the gov.uk search Gear Change and LTN 1/20.

Further information:

1. More from Cllr Pauline Jorgensen at pauline.jorgensen@wokingham.gov.uk

NEWS RELEASE



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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Council set to plant 250,000 trees across the borough

Wokingham Borough Council has gratefully received a grant of £300,000 from Woodland Trust to allow it to plant over 250,000 trees across the borough.

This funding, which is part of the Woodlands Trust's £2.9 million campaign delivered from the charity's new Emergency Tree Fund, will provide much needed support to local authorities including Wokingham borough to boost tree cover and tackle climate change.

The Trust is working with Wokingham Borough Council and ten other authorities across the UK in the first phase of the project and aims to expand the scheme further in 2022.

It is a key part of the charity's recently announced ambitious aim to establish 50 million more trees by 2025 to help tackle both the nature and climate crises.

The council declared a climate emergency in July 2019 and committed to play as full a role as possible in achieving carbon neutrality by 2030, 20 years sooner than the government's target of 2050.

Cllr Gregor Murray, executive member for resident services, communications and emissions at Wokingham Borough Council said, "As part of our goal to reach carbon neutrality by 2030, we committed to planting 250,000 trees over the next five years and this funding from the Woodland Trust is fantastic news for Wokingham borough.

"To get such a large financial contribution not only helps kickstart our tree planting programme but shows that the Woodland Trust thinks we are doing the right thing and has faith in our future tree maintenance as well. We welcome the invaluable advice and support from such a well-informed charity on the wide range of benefits that trees and woods can deliver over the next few years in relation to health, climate change, amenity and water management."

Growing trees can help remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Not only is wood a great way of storing carbon but the right tree in the right place can help restore the soil around it and a significant amount of carbon dioxide can be sequestered here. Trees can also help communities to adapt to a changed climate by providing a cooling shade.

John Tucker, the Woodland Trust's director of woodland outreach said, "The Trust's Emergency Tree Fund has the power to inspire tree planting and woodland creation and galvanise the need to treasure trees and green spaces in neighbourhoods across the UK.

"What the country's fight against covid has shown is how communities have come together in a time of crisis. As the pandemic hopefully abates, getting outside and planting, maintaining and

enjoying trees will be a way for this spirit to be harnessed once again in a different but a very important way - to tackle the climate and nature crises which also affects us all.”

For further information about the council’s Climate Emergency Action Plan visit the council website and search [‘climate emergency’](#).

Further information

1. Contact Cllr Gregor Murray at gregor.murray@wokingham.gov.uk

NEWS RELEASE



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Date: 22/03/2021
Issued by: Connor McLoughlin

Issue No: 70/2021
Version: 1.0

MATTHEWSGREEN PRIMARY SCHOOL OPENING DELAYED

The opening of the new primary school in Matthewsgreen, Wokingham, will be moved back due to delays and continuing risks caused by Covid-19.

The pandemic has delayed many construction programmes across the country, including this school and the new homes it has been built to serve. Despite the best endeavours of all involved the completion of the school has been delayed until after the start of the new school year in September.

Opening the new school in 2021 in these circumstances would create a range of risks to children and their education that the council sees as unacceptable. The council and the Keys Academy Trust, which will be running the school, have reviewed the risks around opening in 2021 and have agreed that opening should be deferred until 2022.

Opening in September would mean the contractor actively working on site for a period of time while children were using the school. In normal times, opening the school with the contractors on site may have been acceptable, provided that a safe environment could be achieved and conflict with construction activity avoided.

However, due to Covid-19, there is an additional risk for the health and safety of the children and staff, even with the best endeavours. The decision has been made by the council with the support of its partners, the Keys Academy Trust, and the Department for Education to delay the opening of the school. There will be no impact on places in local schools for children living in the area, with places available at other well-established schools which are within close proximity.

“We’re lucky to have excellent primary schools across the borough which will be able to provide a place close to home for children in the area near the Matthewsgreen site,” said Cllr UllaKarin Clark, executive member for children’s services. “Though it was a difficult choice it is better to know for certain children will be on a safe site where construction work is not ongoing. I look forward to seeing progress on construction at Matthewsgreen continuing ahead of it being due to open next year.”

Hester Wooller, chief executive at The Keys Academy Trust, added: “The Keys Academy Trust has been working closely with the council and the contractors during the last year. We are delighted to have the opening date of September 2022 confirmed and we will be launching the school's website with information about the school and inviting prospective parents to a series of open events in the summer and autumn terms later in 2021.”

All involved in the project for the 210-place school will continue to work on it, with the aim of opening the school in September 2022. Updates will continue to be provided on the project, including the new community centre which is being built as part of it.

Further information:

1. More from Cllr UllaKarin Clark, executive member for children, on ullakarin.clark@wokingham.gov.uk

2. Alternatively, contact the council's communications, engagement and marketing team on CEM@wokingham.gov.uk

NEWS RELEASE



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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Council looking to better understand demand for electric vehicle charging

Wokingham Borough Council is seeking the views of local residents, businesses and visitors to understand which locations within the borough would benefit most from electric vehicle charging points.

The UK took a historic step on the road to ending its contribution to climate change last year, as the Prime Minister, Transport Secretary and Business Secretary announced the end of the sale of new petrol and diesel cars in the UK by 2030.

With this in mind, the council has launched a survey on its website asking for feedback to help plan where to locate new charging locations for electric vehicles to help meet demand. The results will also assist the council in demonstrating this demand when seeking funding from the on-street residential chargepoint scheme, overseen by the office for zero emission vehicles.

Since declaring a climate emergency nearly two year ago, the council has shown its commitment to reaching carbon neutrality by 2030 through eight key steps:

- Reduce carbon dioxide emissions from transport
- Reduce carbon dioxide emissions from domestic and business property
- Generate more renewable energy in the borough
- Create a local plan that specifies net zero construction and infrastructure
- Engage with young people and support sustainable schools
- Reduce waste sent to landfill
- Encouraging behaviour change

Increase the levels of carbon sequestration the borough through greening the environment
Reducing carbon dioxide emissions from transport remains top of the list and encouraging the use of electric vehicles throughout the borough is just one of many steps it is taking to help facilitate this.

ClIrr Pauline Jorgensen, executive member for highways and transport said, "We're dedicated to making active travel more accessible to our residents, businesses and visitors across the borough, but we realise that this may not be appropriate for every journey you need to take.

"We want to help to make sustainable transport like electric vehicles a valid consideration within the borough and we want to understand how we can help to achieve this. I would like to encourage you to share your thoughts through this short survey to help us understand where charging points would be most appropriate".

To take part in the survey please visit the [council website and search consultations](#). Here you will also find current consultations where you can share your thoughts on the [walking and cycling infrastructure](#) around the borough.

Further information

1. contact Cllr Pauline Jorgensen at pauline.jorgensen@wokingham.gov.uk

NEWS RELEASE



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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Council receives government grant to continue vital air quality projects with our schools

Wokingham Borough Council has announced that its vital air quality improvement project has been extended after [receiving £125,000 grant from the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs](#) (DEFRA).

The purpose of the grant is to provide support to local authorities in England to develop or implement measures that deliver air quality benefits, developing solutions to increase awareness and encourage positive behavioural changes.

The council has used previous funding to employ a dedicated eco-travel officer who has been working directly in schools with teachers, pupils and their families to increase active travel and improve the air quality within Wokingham Borough with a focus on health and the environment.

The council eco-travel officer will continue to deliver a series of one-off events, active travel initiatives, campaigns and educational resources to increase active travel and reduce air pollutant emissions, with particular attention on key target areas within the borough.

As part of the council project, led by its My Journey team, the eco-travel officer has been working with a number of primary schools, monitoring Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) around the outside of the schools. The schools have also been working towards Modeshift Stars, a national awards scheme providing recognition to the schools who demonstrate excellence in promoting active and sustainable travel.

My Journey encourages schools across Wokingham Borough to sign up, offering a £2,000 grant to those which achieve a new Modeshift stars accreditation to spend on further promotion of active and sustainable travel to and from school.

Through the air quality project, the council is working on lessons and activity packs for primary schools to teach pupils about the sources and impact of air pollution as well as allowing children to consider what actions we can all take to improve air quality.

The council's eco-travel officer has recently worked with Hawthorns Primary School in Wokingham, inviting pupils to design an air quality poster to encourage drivers to stop idling in their cars outside of their school. Out of over 100 amazing entries, three winners were selected and their designs will be displayed on a banner outside their school.

Sarah Mapleston, a year 2 teacher at Hawthorns Primary school who has been working closely with the council's My Journey team said, "Our pupils and families have positively engaged with the opportunities that have been provided by the council's My Journey team which has allowed us to fully take advantage of the various offerings.

“Our travel surveys have shown that many children wish to walk, cycle or scoot to school and we will continue to encourage this as we know children benefit from having fresh air and exercise”.

Cllr Pauline Jorgensen, executive member for highways and transport said, “we are thrilled to receive this grant from DEFRA that will allow our My Journey team to continue to help schools promote the benefits of active travel for our children’s health and concentration as well as the air quality across our borough.

“It is great to hear that schools around the borough are continuing to work towards their Modeshift stars and how pupils have been walking, cycling and scooting to school more. I cannot wait to visit, when restrictions allow, to congratulate them in person for their hard work and see them in action when our My Journey classes can recommence.”

For further information about active travel visit our [My Journey website](https://myjourneywokingham.com) at myjourneywokingham.com.

Further information

- 1. Contact Cllr Pauline Jorgensen at pauline.jorgensen@wokingham.gov.uk**

NEWS RELEASE



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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Council supports local businesses to become more energy efficient

Wokingham Borough Council has continued to lead the way towards carbon neutrality this week, hosting its first online 'Climate Conversation' with local businesses, as well as another inspiring webinar for other local authorities across the UK.

Local businesses were invited to join host Cllr Gregor Murray, executive member for climate emergency, and special guests to discuss how they could make their businesses more energy efficient to benefit both the environment and their bottom line.

The event was the council's first 'Climate Conversation', titled 'The road to decarbonisation', which saw Cllr Murray and expert guest speakers openly explore the challenges we all face and opportunities available to help us become more energy efficient at work and at home.

Panellists included Tom McDonald from [Low Carbon Workspaces](#) who works with small and medium businesses across Berkshire to provide grants of between £1,000 to £5,000 to cover up to a third of the cost of making energy improvements.

They were joined by Sarah Hitchcox, technical director from [Anesco](#) who shared her expertise on renewable energy and battery solutions that can both save local businesses and residents money while reducing carbon emissions.

Amira Hashemi, sustainability manager for [Frasers Property](#), helped explore how collaboration can support organisations to deliver net zero carbon ambitions and discussed what they have been able to achieve at one of their properties Winnersh Triangle Business Park.

The expert panel welcomed questions from attendees and talked about how climate change can affect businesses including supply chains, transport, new consumer behaviours as well as new regulations. They also covered topics including de-carbonising business operations and what schemes and grants are available that can help fund these actions.

Cllr Gregor Murray said: "We are so pleased that so many local businesses took the time to join our first climate conversation and we are thrilled we were able to provide a stellar panel of experts in this field.

"We are committed to helping local residents and businesses to become more energy efficient. There are many small changes that can have a big impact on our energy bills while reducing carbon emissions. We found out during our climate conversation that LED lighting can reduce the cost of lighting our homes and businesses by between 50 and 90 per cent – imagine the savings we can all make."

The council has also been inspiring local authorities again across the UK. Council officers, together with Cllr Murray, received extremely positive feedback after hosting their second online conference this week. They discussed how local authorities can achieve carbon neutrality, using the ambitious new carbon neutral Dinton Activity Centre as a fantastic case study.

To watch the council's first 'Climate Conversation' visit [youtube and search 'Wokingham Borough Council'](#). Its [first conference](#) 'From policy to delivery – How local authorities can achieve net zero carbon' recorded back in December can be viewed at cutt.ly/NhIU64E (part one) and cutt.ly/mhllaWu (part two).

To find out more about the council's commitment to climate emergency visit the [council's website](#) and search [Climate Emergency](#). To sign up to the council's new Climate Emergency newsletter launching soon visit cutt.ly/shK8Cpq.

Further information

- 1. Contact Cllr Gregor Murray at Gregor.Murray@wokingham.gov.uk**

NEWS RELEASE



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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HALFWAY THROUGH RECYCLING BAG DELIVERIES

More than half of Wokingham Borough's households have now had their annual waste delivery, including the new waterproof recycling bags. 43,000 households have now had their items dropped at their doorsteps, with the packages also including 80 blue general waste bags and 100 food waste caddy liners.

Additional delivery crews are joining the rollout from this week, as planned, to help the council get the items to all residents by mid-April. The waterproof bags can be used as soon as residents get them. If residents have more recycling than the two bags can hold, they should keep using their black boxes, but only for non-paper/card items such as cans, tins and plastics. Additional bags will be available following the roll-out. More information on how residents will be able to get additional bags will be released in due course.

The council and its contractor expect to deliver to more than 10,000 properties each week from this point. All refuse and recycling collections will remain weekly on the same day as they are currently, only the container is changing. The waterproof bags will help stop valuable paper material getting wet and help the council meet its target of 70 per cent recycling by 2030.

"Thank you to all our residents who have got their bags and are putting them to good use," said Clare Lawrence, assistant director for place. "It's really important for everyone to start using their waterproof bags as soon as they get them and keep them sealed at all times other than when they are adding items to the bags. In the months and years ahead these bags will help us to boost the borough's recycling rate as we continue to work towards our goal of 70 per cent recycling by 2030."

Once residents have enough recycling bags, we are encouraging them to find a way to reuse the old black boxes if they can. Suggestions include using them for storage in the garden/shed/loft, making a planter or growing vegetables, using them for storing glass to take to the bottle bank or passing them to a neighbour who wants them.

Later this year there will be an organised collection for those who cannot repurpose their boxes at home. Residents will be sent more information on this during the summer.

Residents can [check when their delivery is due by using the street name checking tool](#) on our website. If residents check and find they've been missed, they should [report the undelivered items](#) on our website. They will then be added to our mop up deliveries when the initial rollout is complete.

Further information:

1. For more information, contact the council's communication, engagement and marketing team via CEM@wokingham.gov.uk

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