



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE PLAN: ANNUAL REVIEW 2020/2021

ACHIEVEMENT IN THE
FACE OF ADVERSITY





SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION:

In February 2020, we set out our vision of Wokingham Borough as “A great place to live, learn, work and grow and a great place to do business”. Later that same month, the first case of Covid-19 was reported in the borough signalling the start of the most challenging 12 months we have faced as a local authority.

Our vision is underpinned by our strategic priorities.

There are five outward focused priorities:

- Safe, Strong Communities
- Enriching Lives
- Right Homes, Right Place
- Keeping the Borough Moving
- A Clean Green Borough

Additionally, there are two inward focused enablers:

- Being the best we can be
- Changing the way we work for you

These set our ambition to continuously improve, whilst effectively and proactively meeting the needs of our communities.

This Annual Review sets out how we have risen to the challenge of Covid-19 and how we have made progress towards these priorities during 2020/21. It documents our achievement in the face of adversity.

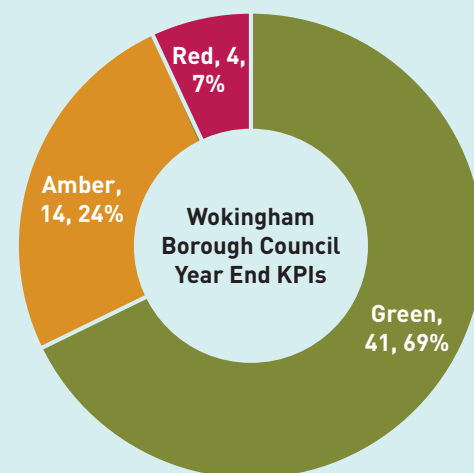
Summary of Operational Performance Indicators

Our key performance indicators (KPIs) show how we are performing against our priorities and statutory obligations. We have 59 KPIs, of which 55 were above or near target for the year 2020/21 despite the impact of Covid-19.

The 4 red results all had significant impact from Covid-19:

- Leisure Centre visitor numbers
- Leisure Centre participation
- Library visits
- People with long term care receiving a review

The first three of these were impacted through closure of the services.



SECTION 2: COVID-19 RESPONSE:

Through the spring and early summer of 2020, the need to respond to Covid-19 was almost all-encompassing for us and it continued to be a key area of focus throughout 2020/21, in particular in Adult Social Care.

- Adults Social Care along with 153 redeployed staff carried out 20,000 welfare checks to the vulnerable. Additionally, made 2,400 calls to adults known to social care were made and 500 calls to carers
- More 400,000 pieces of PPE distributed to frontline carers
- Care Home Taskforce created to rapidly put in place a cohesive protocol that could be immediately implemented to ensure providers were effectively supported to mitigate the risks of COVID. This ensured providers were well supported and enabled enduring relationships and partnerships to develop. This also enabled statutory oversight into care settings to be maintained

- The Public Health Team provide consistent Public Health and Health Protection data and advice to elected members, corporate leadership and the COVID Taskforce to ensure agile responses across the pandemic underpinned by evidence, national guidance and based on Public Health expertise
- Provided leadership in the management of outbreaks in high-risk settings across communities within the Borough
- Supported local children with free school meal provision during lockdown and over the school holiday periods
- 400 more people than the previous year were discharged from hospital back into the borough
- Voluntary and Community Sector action group was created to support the COVID response, in particular the development of the One Front Door initiative, access to prescriptions, social isolation and creation of the Food Hub - 5,000 food deliveries to 1,500 residents and more than 900 prescriptions delivered during the first lockdown





SECTION 3: SOUND FINANCES TO UNDERPIN ALL COUNCIL ACTIVITY:

- £53 million in support to local business through 1,147 separate grants worth £33 million and reliefs and discounts of £20 million
- 4,800 engagements with businesses through the Public Protection Partnership and COVID Marshall to businesses across the borough
- Provided accurate and timely information to residents with health advice, Government guidance and regulations, sign-posting to support and service update via Covid-19 e-newsletters with more than 40,000 subscriptions
- More than 500 volunteers worked at our vaccination clinics and 200 signed up to help at our rapid testing centres
- Public Health Co-leadership in the set up and running of the COVID data cell to ensure a data driven response considering the data and evidence to keep all communities within the Borough safe
- Test and trace - 1,292 calls made to residents who were self-isolating. 220 of these have been referred to One Front Door for additional support
- More than £360,000 paid out in the Covid Winter Grant Scheme
- Worked continuously with partners in the set up and ongoing planning and implementation of the COVID vaccination delivery programme for the protection of the health of our residents.
- Sourced emergency accommodation for care workers coming into the Borough to assist in our care homes
- Seamless move to almost all colleague working from home allowed for almost all services to continue uninterrupted
- Looked ahead by building a robust Recovery Strategy that will allow the community and local businesses to thrive.
- Retained face-to-face visits to the most vulnerable children and families, keeping them safe in unprecedented circumstances. This dual task was addressed through swift assessment and prioritisation of children and young people for retention of face-to-face visits, use of strict PPE and safety protocols, and introducing virtual visiting across the broad range of support activity. In 20/21 over 95% of visits to children subject to Child Protection Plans were conducted face-to-face, amounting to over 4000 visits.
- Enhanced support to schools to promote safe and effective learning. The Council provided a daily email update to all headteachers informing them of Department of Education guidance and legislative changes that affect schools in relation to COVID, weekly virtual drop in's for senior school leaders that have been well attended; weekly thematic sessions for teaching staff to support COVID related responses in schools; guidance in relation to accessing technology for pupils to support their remote learning, through periods of lockdown or bubble closure; support for Lateral Flow Testing arrangements and contact tracing (including outbreak management support); and celebrating the achievements of pupils, students and teachers who have worked tirelessly throughout these challenging times.
- During the early phase of Lockdown, our GP and Voluntary Sector Partners noted that people in the Borough were finding managing their mental health challenging. In response, a health and social care system wide Mental Health Training session was implemented
- Produced a library of free online workout videos for residents to help people stay healthy in lockdown

Following the start of the COVID pandemic, we took immediate action to set up robust, enhanced financial monitoring and reporting. Financial trackers were introduced across all Directorates with a Council wide tracker developed at both a summary level and a detail level. The finance team prioritised the monitoring of the financial impact, working closely with all services to understand the implications. This was a complex task.

Where known, implications were considered as part of budget setting for the 21/22 financial year and will also be considered in future budget setting rounds.

Despite the impact of COVID the Council was able to deliver on its savings targets. A revenue budget of £143.5m (£129.7m expenditure plus £13.8m depreciation) was approved at its meeting on 20 February 2020. The actual spend for 2020/21 was £0.8m favourable variance to budget.

The Council continues to invest in its asset base in order to improve services to residents and to support the financial sustainability of the organisation. Capital expenditure in the year totalled £123.5m (2019/20 £171.3m) as set out in report to the Council's Executive on 24 June 2021. Occupation levels in the Wokingham Town Centre Redevelopment site has remained on target with no losses of tenancy.

We adopted a sympathetic approach to the collection of both Council Tax and Business Rates through the pandemic that balanced the need to protect income streams against the pressures felt by residents and businesses. Collection of both of taxes has remained high, at similar levels to the year before, at a 99% collection rate with support mechanisms in place to implement government schemes for those in hardship.

For full details of the Council's financial performance please see the End of Year Statement of Accounts.





SECTION 4: DELIVERING ON OUR PRIORITIES



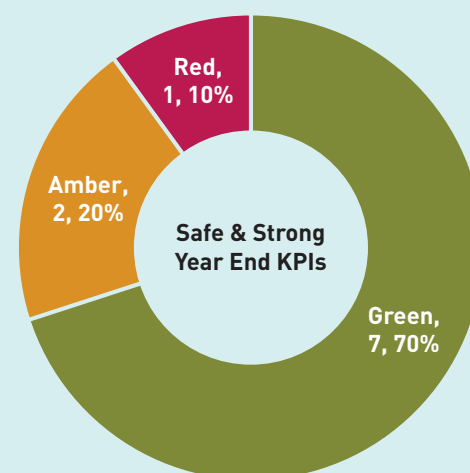
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SAFE, STRONG COMMUNITIES

Strong performance is shown in the KPIs set against this focus area, with nine out of ten KPIs on or near target. The single red KPI is as "Proportion of people receiving long term care who were subject to a review in the last 12 months" and this was due to a change of focus during COVID which has had an impact in the last quarter of the municipal year.



Formed the Adult Safeguarding Hub to improve the safety of vulnerable adults:

Adults Social Care maintained an average of 87% of safe guarding concerns raised having decisions assigned in 48hrs despite the number of safe guarding concerns increasing by 37.5% compared to the previous year.

Delivered core Adult Social Care responsibilities:

Adult Social Care managed 25% more demand, an increase of 1,193 contacts, whilst improving performance. Implemented a new way of working called the Strengths Based Approach. All staff have received training in an approach which enables them to spend more time with our customers to identify what is important to the person, to build on their own strengths and support networks, and to utilise the wealth of voluntary services available in the community. The emphasis of this approach is about positive outcomes for our residents.

Local Action Groups:

The Public Health team has facilitated the setting up and ongoing co-chairing of these groups to engage key partners and bring them together to deliver against health and wellbeing priorities.

Substance misuse provision:

Recommissioned a specialist substance misuse provision for local residents, including securing additional funding through successful bids.

Adult Healthy Weight Management programme and Active Movement Programme:

These two programmes have been recommissioned for schools, with national funding secured for additional local provision.

High Quality Care:

The borough has 52 care homes and 44 registered home care providers. These providers deliver a high level of quality and 100% of our nursing home providers were rated as either good or outstanding in their most recent Care Quality Commission inspections. 95% of residential care and 85% of home care providers are rated as either good or outstanding.

Adopted an Adult Social Care Strategy:

The strategy has four priorities

- Prevent, reduce and delay the need for formal care and support
- Keeping people safe
- Involve people in their care and support
- Work in partnership and commission services that deliver quality and value for money

Adopted our Learning Disability Strategy:

This aims to:

- Provide more social activities and social interactions for learning disability clients
- Improve housing for learning disability clients to maximise their independence
- Create a dedicated learning disability team within the Adults Social Care structure
- Create a transitions service that can help learning disability clients transition into adulthood safely.
- Improve partnerships with Health to ensure better health outcome for learning disability clients
- Support carers who care for learning disability clients

Launched 'Kooth' to provide online mental health support for young people:

Kooth provides young people a safe and secure means of accessing support from a professional team of qualified counsellors, therapists and support workers. In the first nine months, the 1,295 young people in the region registered for Kooth logging in approximately 10,000 times. 97.8% of children and young people would recommend Kooth to a friend. 92% found it what they were looking for.

Increased spending to domestic abuse support:

Awarded the £1.5million contract to provide domestic abuse to Cranstoun. Additional funding was included to manage the increased demand for services.

Mental health support:

Launched 18-month pilot service with Berkshire Community Foundation and Oxfordshire MIND to help people suffering problems such as anxiety, isolation and stress.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:



SECTION 4: DELIVERING ON OUR PRIORITIES



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SAFE, STRONG COMMUNITIES

Adopted our Voluntary Sector Strategy:

This aims to prevent, reduce and delay the need for formal care and support by providing information, advice and the right support at the right time so people can remain independent for longer. In the last municipal year it has:

- Created a VCS action group & Wokingham Borough Community Response. Delivering welfare checks in partnership with the Link Visiting Scheme
- Established the VCS Partnership Board
- Delivered improvements through the MIND mental health service
- Retendered VCS including a service gap analysis to ensure the services the Council commissions meets the needs of residents.

Provided more specialist accommodation:

A programme launched to source specialist accommodation for people with Learning and/or Physical Disabilities or Mental Health needs. Working with Place Commissioning, Housing Services and providers to match people with suitable properties to meet their needs. This has delivered:

- A Specialist bungalow built and now occupied
- Identified 10 schemes that will provide specialist accommodation for 45 people with complex needs over the next 2 years

Home for Hospital:

Worked with health and other key partners to ensure that residents can be discharged from hospital into the right setting as quickly and safely as possible. This approach resulted in 400 more people discharged back into the borough compared to the previous year. The Council now has:

- Robust system wide governance and performance monitoring in place
- Implementation of the Rapid Community Discharge Team
- Launched an additional service run by AGE UK, a voluntary sector partner, on behalf of the Wokingham Integrated Partnership. As Winter Pressure on the Hospital increased, alongside the pressures of COVID, the partnership sought support to safely discharge people without a care need into their homes. AGE UK supported with ensuring the person returned home safely, had the heating on, had shopping in the cupboards and medication all ready. They also then contacted the person for several weeks after the discharge. Over 150 people have been supported since April, with 464 referrals to 35 organisation made.

Optalis – Council owned company providing direct care:

Optalis has continued to provide high levels of good quality support. This is supported by effective quality assurance and governance systems, resulting in 'GOOD' Care Quality Commission ratings. Supported employment service has remained no.1 in the South East for two years running and no.3 in the UK for Learning Disabilities employment outcomes

Mental Health Support Teams in schools:

As part of the National Pilot, the programme has supported 205 children across 12 schools in providing immediate mental health and emotional wellbeing support. It is anticipated that following the National Pilot, MHST's will be rolled out to all schools.

Domestic Abuse:

Domestic abuse is a high priority for the Council as we recognise the significant impact living with domestic abuse has on individuals, families and the whole community.

A report commissioned on our response led to the appointment of a Domestic Abuse coordinator in November 2020 and the decision to substantially increase our investment in the commissioning of specialist support services.

A review of the training offer on domestic abuse was undertaken with refreshed e-learning packages and virtual training sessions delivered to increase understanding of the unique ways in which domestic abuse affects individuals and their children.

A new Partnership Board was formed to deliver expected new statutory duties linked to the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and prepare for in depth analysis of how domestic abuse is affecting residents across Wokingham borough. To support our wider response, we also created a new Networking Group to bring together the over 40 agencies working in Wokingham borough who can make a real difference to the lives of the over 2000 residents who reported domestic abuse in this year.

Public Protection Partnership:

In March 2021, the council took the decision to withdraw from the Public Protection Partnership so it can better focus on the real issues affecting residents' quality of life.

Dealing with many environmental health issues such as low-level nuisances and anti-social behaviour including noise and illegal bonfires had been the responsibility of the Public Protection Partnership (PPP) with West Berkshire and Bracknell Forest councils.

But from April 2022, most services previously provided by the PPP will be provided by a new Wokingham Borough Council team that will focus on residents' priorities and improve responsiveness to address local issues. The new enforcement and safety service will include anti-social behaviour, animal wardens, health and safety, food hygiene, and licensing and will be designed to respond swiftly to concerns whenever and wherever they occur.



SECTION 4: DELIVERING ON OUR PRIORITIES



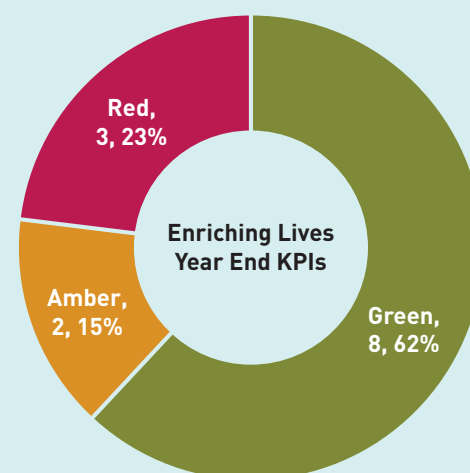
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ENRICHING LIVES

Ten of the 13 KPIs in this area are on or near target. The three that are not are a direct result of as a direct result of national restrictions caused by lockdown: usage of leisure centres, participation in leisure centre activities and number of visits to libraries.



Award for Addington expansion project:

The £4.4million expansion and new sixth form, which is allowing 50 more students with SEND to attend the school, won an Education Business Award in November 2020.

California Country Park destination play area:

Work started in October 2020 on the new play area that includes new equipment, an inclusive sensory and water play area, a new woodland adventure trail and tree houses.

Alder Grove Church of England Primary School in Shinfield West:

The state-of-the-art school was built as part of the Shinfield West development and will grow to become a 420-place free school for pupils aged 4 to 11, with a 26 place nursery class. It opened in September 2020

Dinton Activity Centre:

Work got underway in October 2020 on the £2.4million new centre that is the borough's first net zero carbon building project.

20

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

Rebuilt Bulmershe Leisure Centre:

Opened ahead of schedule in April 2020, the £14.5million centre includes a six-lane 25-metre swimming pool, a teaching pool with movable floor, a bigger gym plus a 'live well' (long-term condition) gym, a four-court sports hall, and an additional studio and café.

Carnival Hub:

Work started on the multi-million pound Carnival Hub, the last phase of our Wokingham town centre regeneration, this new centre will become the local destination for culture, sport and leisure and will feature two swimming pools (a six-lane 25m pool and teaching pool with moveable depth floor and splash pad); a larger fitness suite and specialist group cycling studio; two large studios; a four-court sports hall; a health and wellbeing centre; larger café; and space for children's parties. There will also be a large library including space for events and activities, a lending library, fun children's zone and space for exhibitions.





SECTION 4: DELIVERING ON OUR PRIORITIES



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ENRICHING LIVES

Improvements to Foundry College:

More space was created at the school in Budes Gardens thanks to the £1.7million project, with work completed to modify buildings, relocate the temporary classrooms and landscape around the school site. Foundry College was created in September 2011, and it provides education and support to pupils who have been permanently excluded or are at risk of permanent exclusion, as well as those with medical needs who cannot attend school regularly. It has 47 students who are educated there full time.

Kickstart scheme launched:

The scheme provides job opportunities for young people who are currently on Universal Credit and are at risk of long-term unemployment. Each job placement is completely new, lasting for six months and helping young people to build their confidence and experience in the workplace; all while earning a regular wage for up to 25 hours per week.

Stabilised the children's social work workforce:

with recruitment of more permanent staff and a significantly reduced reliance on interim workers. Despite a national shortage of social workers, the proportion of interim social workers reduced this year from 37% to 30% and is projected to be 23% by September 2021

Deployed a new Compass Team which is achieving positive outcomes:

Since inception the compass team has successfully worked with 21 young people to reduce their risk of coming into care or placement breakdown. The team continues to work intensively with many more young people to address often complex issues.

Improved services for children and young people with SEND:

An Ofsted and Care Quality Commission revisit in early 2021 found that the Council have made sufficient progress in 5 of 6 areas, with a short Accelerated Progress Plan in place for the final area. The timeliness and quality of Education, Health and Care Plans has improved. It is now one of the strongest performing in the South East and higher than national average performance (86% EHCP's completed within 20 weeks of referral as at Q1 2021/22). The Council has commenced a new SEND Innovation and Improvement Programme that will take on the lead from the SEND Improvement Board.

Expanded Virtual School supporting Children in Care to include children aged 0-25:

The Council now support looked after children as they start school and continue to provide support for learners beyond their formal post 16 further education and into higher education. In addition, a new Assistant Head of the Virtual School has been appointed to support the response to the newly expanded duties to champion the educational outcomes of all children and young people who have, or have had, a social worker. It is anticipated that this will close the gap on outcomes between children with a social worker and their peers.

Local Action Groups:

The Public Health team has facilitated the setting up and ongoing co-chairing of these groups to engage key partners and bring them together to deliver against health and wellbeing priorities

Substance misuse provision:

Recommissioned a specialist substance misuse provision for local residents, including securing additional funding through successful bids

Adult Healthy Weight Management programme and Active Movement Programme:

These two programmes have been recommissioned for schools, with national funding secured for additional local provision

Promoting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion:

We've adopted a four year plan to take forward the wider equality agenda and tackle inequality in the borough this is aligned to the equality framework for local government, supporting progress towards the "achieving" level. The delivery of the action plan will allow the Council to:

- Listen to and learn from our communities and use this to deliver services that work well for everyone
- Act on our commitments to equality, diversity and inclusion in the way we plan, deliver and shape our services
- Build a diverse and engaged workforce, where everyone is respected

Tackling social isolation through technology:

The Project 'Joy' app helps tackle social isolation by enabling individuals to access activities and it also enables referrals from a range of voluntary sector partners and adult social care.

Art and culture:

A new ten year strategy was approved in March with the focus of developing the quality and appeal of the cultural 'offer' across the borough. Launched the Wocca app to provide a one-stop real time guide to cultural events happening across the borough with a steady increase in take-up.



SECTION 4: DELIVERING ON OUR PRIORITIES



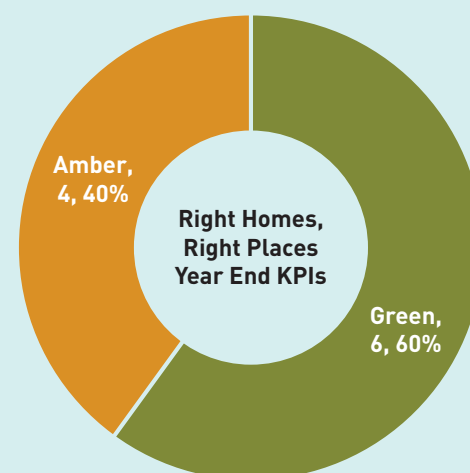
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RIGHT HOMES, RIGHT PLACES

All KPIs in this area were on or close to target. The amber KPIs are associated with the longer term planning: "New Home Survey", "Local Plan Update", "5 Year Housing Supply" and "Housing 1-4-5 Challenge". Even with these 4 amber KPIs the performance has been strong in this area.



The Central and East Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Local Plan:

The plan has been progressed with the publication consultation undertaken and subsequent submission of the plan to government for examination

South Wokingham major development:

Planning consent for 1,850 homes and accompanying facilities and infrastructure

Primary school building in Arborfield Green:

Progress on the new Farley Hill Primary. Hundreds of young people will be able to make the most of the new facilities, with space to expand for more than 600 pupils as and when it is needed.

Matthews Green Primary School:

construction progressing be ready for a potential opening in September 2022.

Work started on new community centre for Shinfield:

The community centre (a joint project with the parish council) is part of the Shinfield Parish major development which includes new homes and a district centre in Shinfield Village with a supermarket and other shops, as well as a neighbourhood centre in Spencers Wood. There are also two new primary schools, new playing fields and open spaces.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

Progress on the Local Plan Update:

Preparing a new Local Plan for the borough, including a revised strategy for consultation in autumn 2021, following the deliverability issues with the Grazeley garden town proposal which was a central plank of the Draft Local Plan consulted on in 2020:

- High level summary of responses to Draft Local Plan (2020) consultation published.
- Master planning work commissioned following cross party agreement.
- Technical evidence commissioned.
- New Local Development Scheme adopted in July 2021 outlining the revised programme, with commitment regarding the Local Plan Update to undertake a public consultation on a revised strategy in autumn 2021 and publication consultation of the full plan in summer 2022, with examination and adoption by the end of 2023.





SECTION 4: DELIVERING ON OUR PRIORITIES



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RIGHT HOMES, RIGHT PLACES

Wokingham Town Centre Regeneration:

The town centre regeneration continued to buck the national trend by attracting new businesses. 90% of council-owned regeneration units were occupied at the end of 2020/21, equating to approximately £2 million of committed income from Peach Place and Elms Field.

Homes and SEND school planned for Winnersh Farm:

Public engagement began on proposals to build a new SEND school alongside housing at Winnersh Farm

Housing Strategy 2020-24:

The strategy has an emphasis on COVID recovery, and assessing and addressing impacts. So far it has delivered:

- 187 affordable homes in 2020/21
- 61 houses in the 2nd year of the 1-4-5 programme with a further 139 units currently on site and an additional 890 units being progressed
- Completion of Gorrick Square scheme for learning disabled clients, with further specialist schemes currently being developed
- Over £1m funding secured to develop offer for rough sleepers
- Delivered an 18 unit key worker housing scheme in Wokingham

Gorse Ride redevelopment:

The regeneration is taking place in phases, progress in 2020/21:

- Phase One completion of the 10 houses for social rent and sale. These have been key for the relocation of residents living in following phases of the regeneration of the entire site
- Phase Two in preparation for future work, the Council relocated 11 Council tenants during the year and purchased two additional privately owned properties. Leaving 18 left to purchase across the site.

The Courts, Winnersh:

Demolished 75 garages in the Courts area of Winnersh and provided much needed car parking for the area.

Housing compliance:

Initiated after the social housing white paper was published, this project aims to monitor and ensure compliance within the council's housing service. As a result:

- Gas safety is at 100% compliance
- Reports were created highlighting impacts of the Social Housing White Paper. These were presented to the Tenant and Landlord Improvement Panel

Housing Ombudsman Complaints Code:

In 2020 the Housing Ombudsman launched the complaints code and linked new powers of determination along with closer relationship working with the Housing Regulator. Every Local Authority and Housing Association were asked to complete the self-assessment of their current complaints policy and procedures with a deadline of completion and publishing by the 31st December 2020.

- Self-assessment completed and published by 31st December 2020. A follow up one was completed recently and also published to ensure transparency.
- Full consultation completed on new proposed complaints policy with Involved Tenants and open to wider tenant base via website
- An Involved Tenant successfully applied and gained a place on the Housing Ombudsman resident panel.
- Staff and Involved Tenants attended Housing Ombudsman webinars on the new complaints code to ensure compliance

Housing First:

A government funded project to buy four self-contained properties for the borough's most entrenched rough sleepers, providing intense one to one support to enable tenants to sustain tenancies and make improvements in all areas of their lives as a result we have:

- Completed on 4 properties to meet their specific needs
- Commissioned support in place and actively supporting 5 residents who have been identified as potential Housing First tenants



SECTION 4: DELIVERING ON OUR PRIORITIES



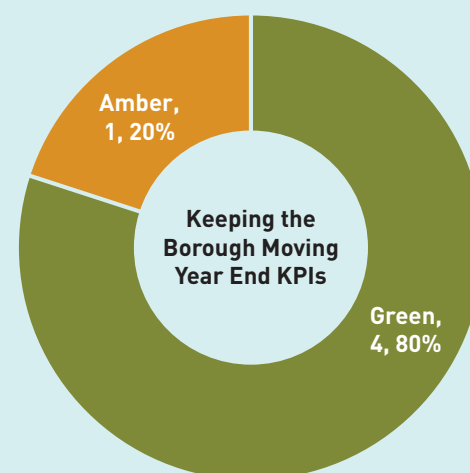
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KEEPING THE BOROUGH MOVING

During the COVID pandemic, the decrease in traffic levels combined with the proactive approach to address structural maintenance and improvements to the road network, detailed in the programmes below had a positive impact on these KPIs.



- Developed an Intelligent Transport Systems strategy Including rolling out Smarter traffic signals that combined with CCTV cameras helping to respond to traffic demands throughout the day improving journey times

Major new roads:

The £100million investment in new roads continued to deliver improvement with Observer Way (the Arborfield Cross Relief Road) opened, construction of the Winnersh Relief Road and North Wokingham Distributor Roads and the Eastern Gateway of the South Wokingham Distributor Road continuing.

My Journey:

A borough-wide active and sustainable travel behaviour change campaign that aims to help and inspire residents, employees and visitors to walk, scoot, cycle or use public transport. This year it has:

- Won the Bikeability Authority of the Year award
- Moved many of the borough's school-based programme online in response to lockdown
- Made bikes available to key workers

Local cycling and walking infrastructure plan:

Consulted residents and businesses on how we can encourage more walking and cycling throughout the borough.

Greenways project: Ongoing project to create a network of generally traffic free routes connecting the new major developments to each other and to the existing communities and places of interest and employment. Progress through 2020/21 included:

- Completion of California Way
- Construction started on Cantley Park to Woollah Greenway
- Consultation on Woollah Meadow Greenway

Active Travel:

We continue to invest in cycling infrastructure with more than £6million spent since 2014. In 2020/21 we:

- Finished the London Road cycle scheme, which completing the borough's elements of the national cycle route 422 linking Newbury, Reading, Wokingham, Bracknell and Ascot on one single cycle route.
- Successfully bid for both the Emergency Active Travel Fund and implemented temporary social distancing measures in the Borough's town centres
- Successfully bid for Tranche 2 of Active Travel Fund and identified suitable schemes for initial consultation. Securing £650,000 from the ATF this year

Community Transport Programme:

This has successfully implemented a new structure for the Community Transport delivery model and supporting policies to minimise cost and ensure quality in the provision of needs-based transport for children and vulnerable adults. As a result the Council has:

- Established a new Community Transport Unit
- Strengthening stakeholder engagement and relationship in SEND and co-production of the Home to School Transport Policy
- Improved outcomes for Children and Young people with SEND

Structural Maintenance Programme:

Invested £8million in improving the borough's roads - double the investment compared to previous years. We used the reduction in road use during lockdowns to undertake improvement works completed on borough's key commuting routes

Congestion Project:

A £20million project to reduce congestion in the borough. So far it has:

- Completed construction of Thames Valley Park Park & Ride and secured planning permission for both Winnersh and Coppid Beech Park & Rides. Reducing congestion on the boroughs key transport routes, improving key public transport infrastructure and helping to reduce the boroughs carbon emissions
- Upgraded streetworks technology

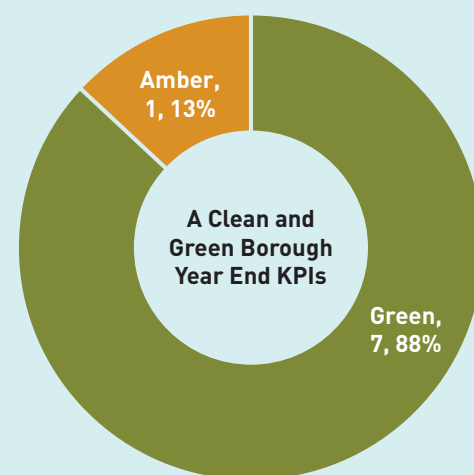


SECTION 4: DELIVERING ON OUR PRIORITIES



A CLEAN AND GREEN BOROUGH

Performance in this space was overwhelmingly positive as we put significant effort into tackling the climate change emergency. One KPI, "Percentage of household waste reused, recycled and composted" was held back by a change to recycling wet cardboard, but we promptly introduced waterproof recycling bags to tackle this.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP):

This sets out targets and actions for the borough to become net-zero carbon by 2030 and focuses on increasing awareness and educating residents about the importance of changing behaviours and adopting more sustainable lifestyles. In 2020/21 we:

- Started building Dinton Activity Centre as the first net-zero carbon building in the borough
- Approved our annual climate emergency action plan report
- Attracted more than £2 Million of external funding to support the CEAP projects

- Retrofitted 700 homes to improve energy performance through the Help to Heat Green Homes Grant schemes helping residents reduce energy bills, improve efficiency and decrease carbon emissions
- Retrofitted ten schools with improvements such as LED lighting, insulation measures, controls upgrades, heating upgrades
- Achieved a 56% reduction of the council's carbon footprint through home working
- Started the 250k tree planting project and successful bid for £300,000 grant from the Woodland Trust's Emergency Tree Fund.
- Submitted a planning application for solar farm, which would see solar panels installed on council-owned farmland adjacent to Barkham Ride (High Barn Farm and part of Brook Farm), would generate enough energy to power thousands of homes and businesses across the borough for years to come.



Adopt a Street programme:

This supports local communities to keep their areas clean and tidy through regular volunteer litter picking. During the year the number of streets participating in the scheme increased from 189 to 317.

Emerging Electric Vehicle Strategy:

The Electric Vehicles Strategy aims to develop a borough wide strategy to specify the infrastructure for Electric Vehicle charging point to encourage the uptake. As a result:

- New electric vehicle charging points have been installed
- Residents' have been consulted to assess off-street parking needs

Local Flood Risk Management Strategy:

This sets out how we will fulfil statutory obligations under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 and provides a framework to actively manage and reduce flood risk across the borough and deliver sustainable regeneration and growth. This year it has led to:

- The adoption of the Land Drainage Byelaws.
- Development of Surface Water Management Plans for Shinfield and Lower Earley.
- Development of a live asset database of critical flood assets in the borough.
- Development of numerous S19 Flood Investigation Reports

- Production of the Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs) Strategy
- Smart drainage trials in a number of locations across the borough.
- Successful bid for Defra flood defence funding for a surface water drainage scheme in Church Lane, Shinfield, to reduce flood risk to the road and to properties.
- Delivery of numerous capital drainage schemes to reduce surface water flood risk to properties in high-risk areas.

Fly-Tipping Strategy:

This details how we will deter illegal dumping of waste by investigating rubbish that is fly-tipped and taking enforcement action wherever possible. As a result, 863 fly-tips were investigated during the year resulting in 83 fixed penalty notices being issued.

Waste and recycling:

Rolled out waterproof recycling bags to replace black boxes in order to keep paper and card dry and therefore allow it to be recycled. Continued to expand use of food waste recycling with more than 500 tonnes recycled each month.



SECTION 4: DELIVERING ON OUR PRIORITIES



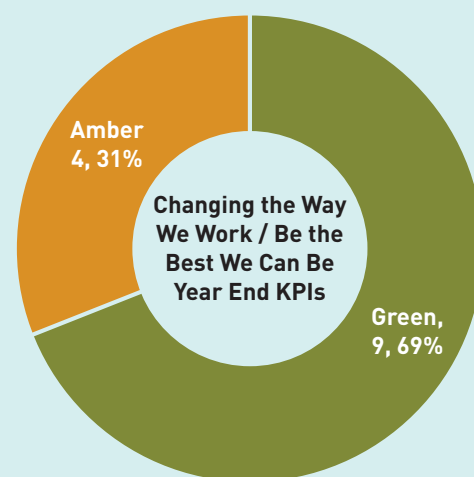
WOKINGHAM
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CHANGING THE WAY WE WORK FOR YOU AND BEING THE BEST WE CAN BE

We are evolving how we work, moving to become a data-led organisation that focuses on what matters most to our residents, businesses and customers. The KPIs in the area show strong results.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

Customer Experience Development:

We have deployed a customer feedback tool to gather views, including on our website and everyone who calls our main number on a mobile telephone being given the opportunity to feed back on the quality of their service.

This allows us to target where improvements are needed and plan what is possible over short, medium and long term. Many improvements can be actioned immediately in real time, as soon as the feedback is available.

Improvements have included:

- Almost 120 broken internet links have been identified across the Council website and fixed
- When new recycling bags were delivered, some road names were missed from the website, this was quickly identified and fixed

Online Blue Badge Application:

We've improved our online offer to enable friends or family to apply on behalf of someone and made it easier to upload evidence, photos and pay. We've continued to provide a prompt service, delivering badges within five working days of a successful application. As a result, in August 80% of applications were made online, an increase of 30%.

Registrars Booking:

This booking system and improvements in processes has resulted in:

An online booking system to register a birth, arrange a citizenship ceremony and book a marriage notice appointment

- All death registrations can now be completed without the need for a face to face appointment using a phone call and online registration
- Approximately 50% of birth bookings are now made online
- 344 virtual citizenship ceremonies were held since the beginning of the first lockdown.

IT Improvements:

Investment in IT software and infrastructure to improve security, productivity, resilience and reliability has included:

- Continuously developed our website resulting in 37,000 customer transactions online and 961,404 individual visits.
- Seamless transition from office to home working for over 1,000+ staff
- Redevelopment of Customer Relationship Management system based on customer journey feedback resulting in 25% increase in uptake of online services that are delivered using this technology
- Improved infrastructure with better connectivity, utilising modern technology and technical capability
- Upgrades and adoption of Microsoft 365 cloud-based solution to support remote working for over 1,000 workers
- Programme of education, information and change across the Council to improve cyber security awareness & practice resulting in a 96% increase in password security in annual cyber security audit



SECTION 4: DELIVERING ON OUR PRIORITIES



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People Strategy:

A package of colleague focused goals and plans which set out we will utilise the collective skill and talent of the Council's workforce. In 2020/21 it:

- Supported the COVID response by setting up redeployment processes to ensure the delivery teams were staffed. COVID response work included new internal health and safety measures for Council premises & school building and delivery of new wellbeing and remote working learning content to support employees
- Launch and delivery of new learning materials to support employees: management development of extended leadership team, new induction programme, performance management and wellbeing programme such as Mental health First Aiders
- Participated in the government's Kickstart scheme to support return to work
- Reviewed the current HR operating model
- Continued delivery of Apprenticeship programme
- Launch of new recruitment Application Tracking System in December 2020 to improve recruitment
- Improved employee engagement by launching open communication sessions with senior team such as 'the Big Chat'

The Graduate Academy:

In 2020/21, we recruited six National Management Trainee's via the Local Government Association's National Graduate Development Programme to our Graduate Academy, a 500% increase on the previous year.

This is not only the largest cohort in the Council's history, it is also the largest intake within Berkshire.

This Academy is set to grow and demonstrates the Council's determination and commitment to support and develop talent.

Continued Commercialisation:

During 2020/21 commercialisation projects included:

- The Grantfinder Scheme to enable officers to identify, bid and secure external funding
- The Premier Supplier Scheme enabling suppliers to be paid earlier for an agreed rebate on invoice charges.
- The ongoing success of the Community Investment Group, which has over £85 million invested in its portfolio that returns at over 5% per year gross

Digital Library Offer:

Providing more options to access services is a key element in continuing the increased usage of the library services. During 2020/21:

More than 300,000 items were accessed digitally, which is an increase of 135% on the previous year.

More than 11,000 pupils took part in the online Authors into Schools project.

Communication and engagement:

Direct communication and engagement with residents was improved by the introduction of e-newsletters (Wokingham Borough Connect). As a result, by the end of 2020/21, Wokingham Borough Connect had

- 65,000 subscribers signed-up to receive at least one newsletter
- 150,000 subscriptions (due to subscribers signing up to multiple newsletters)
- An average open rate above 50%

Public protection services:

Decision to take the majority of these service back in-house (from the current Public Protection Partnership). Moving services such as tackling anti-social in-house will allow us to focus on local residents' concerns.

