

Motions Agreed by Council – 2019/21 – Full Wording

Motion 416 by Sarah Kerr:

RESOLVED: That Local Authorities have a statutory requirement to demonstrate their compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) of the Equalities Act 2010. This Act requires Local Authorities to consider how their work affects people of different ages, disability, sex, sexual orientation, religion or beliefs, marital status, pregnancy and maternity and gender identity. Everyone that lives in, works and visits Wokingham Borough needs to have confidence that this is being done throughout the Borough. This Council will evidence its compliance with the PSED through undertaking Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA's) when required, and ensure they are included in public reports and are easily accessible on the Council's website. In addition, all newly elected Members will have PSED and EqIA training as part of their induction. Executive Members will also have to undertake PSED and EqIA training.

Motion 417 by John Halsall:

RESOLVED: That Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) believes the world is now in a climate emergency. More concerted and urgent action is needed at local, national and international level to protect our planet for future generations. As such, this Council commits to playing as full a role as possible – leading by example as well as by exhortation – in achieving a carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030. The Executive Member for Climate Change will set up a cross-party working group on the climate crisis to investigate and propose further recommendations to help achieve a carbon neutral Borough, reporting back within six months. The working group will invite, consult and involve as wide a participation from our local community as possible, in order to create a broad consensus of how we contribute to the fight against the climate crisis.

Motion 418 by Wayne Smith:

RESOLVED: That Wokingham Borough Council understands and supports the need to provide homes, as it does the Government's desire to speed up delivery. That is why we are a proactive planning authority, seeking to shape future development through a carefully managed approach, which is enabling the delivery of sustainable, infrastructure rich new communities, including schools, new strategic roads, neighbourhood centres, sports hubs and improved public transport, in addition to 35% affordable housing. Since 2006, over 8,200 new homes have been provided and outstanding planning permissions are in place to deliver a further 7,000 new homes.

In addition, current allocations will deliver a further 2,300 new homes. Looking at future delivery from now: our housing permissions, allocations and windfalls are capable of delivering 10,700 homes between 2019 and 2036 (equates to an average of 630pa). This compares with the projected demographic growth of new households of 555pa calculated by the 2014-based ONS projections used by the standard method for calculating local housing need (despite more recent ONS figures in the 2016-based ONS projections demonstrating that this figure is an overestimate; the real growth is more likely to be around 486pa). The standard method for calculating local housing need is designed to require more homes to be built above that required by demographic growth, which is flawed for Wokingham Borough. Building more homes drives up house prices rather than lowering it because of the 20-30% premium on the cost of new homes. Developers will not build housing for sale at lower prices. Also the focus on workplace earnings fails to recognise that residents travel out of the borough to high value, well paid jobs, and that flexible working with work registered out of the borough, where in reality work is undertaken locally, often at home. The real and necessary response would be to allow us to focus on affordable housing and self-build products, both of which directly help our residents. The Council oppose any housing need calculation over and above the demographic growth by whatever means the Executive has at its disposal and agrees to ensure that what is actually built meets the needs of residents.

110 **Motion 418 by Keith Baker:**

RESOLVED: That recently a major political party has been embroiled in a large number of allegations of statements and speeches which express serious anti-Semitic sentiments. Up until now this had not really emerged locally but recent local newspaper reports have suggested that this area is not immune. Get Reading reported on 22nd May that "Reading Labour scraps anti-Semitism training session because of a pro-Palestinian speaker." This was followed up by an article in the Jewish Chronicle on the same day, 22nd May expanding this same story. Nationally the Equality and Human Rights Commission have now opened an investigation into the Labour Party following complaints about anti-Semitism. On 28th May they posted "The Equality and Human Rights Commission is today launching a formal investigation to determine whether The Labour Party has unlawfully discriminated against, harassed or victimised people because they are Jewish." I do not envy the Reading Labour Party or any other political party as they wrestle with how to deal with these matters and I wish them well in dealing with anyone who has expressed anti-Semitic views. I hope all Councillors will put party politics aside and support this motion: This Council abhors any attack on individual groups, including our Jewish residents and commits to lend support to anyone attempting to drive out such anti-Semitic views from our local political scene regardless of any political allegiance.

Motion 420 by Paul Fishwick:

RESOLVED: National statistics indicate that emissions from transport continue to grow - increasing by four percent overall since 1990, including by six percent since 2013. Road transport is the primary source of this increase. Whereas vehicles have become more fuel efficient this has been offset by increased travel demand. These emissions are a key pollutant to the air that we breathe, causing major environmental and health issues. The negative impacts on the environment include the direct effects of pollutants on vegetation, and indirect effects on the acid and nutrients status of soils and ground and surface water. In terms of health, in 2016 a landmark report published by the Royal College of Physicians and the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health suggested that ‘...every year in the UK, outdoor pollution is linked to around 40,000 deaths’ ... and that ‘...air pollution can have a damaging effect from when a baby is in the womb and continue throughout life to older age, playing a role in many chronic conditions such as cancer, asthma, heart diseases and neurological changes linked to dementia’. This report concluded that "Real change will only occur when everyone accepts this responsibility and makes a concerted effort."

11 As the Highway Authority, Wokingham Borough Council has a specific duty to bring forward measures to improve air quality. Wokingham
11 Borough Council has three declared Air Quality Management Areas but tackling the overall poor air quality across our Borough is the key
11 objective. There are significant opportunities for sustainable transport options to simultaneously support clean economic growth, increase physical activity, and reduce emissions contributing to local air pollution.

This Council commits to introduce a Strategy to lower transport emissions that will sit under the Local Transport Plan and will include clearly stated objectives, SMART targets, strategies and tactics”.

Motion 432 by Clive Jones:

RESOLVED: That this Council wants the political leadership to more than redouble their efforts to challenge the housing numbers which are being inflicted on this Borough by central Government which we consider do not meet our local needs. Since the beginning of the year, our lives have changed considerably and local circumstances are now very different to what they were in January and February. We would therefore like to again and again invite Ministers and senior Civil Servants from MHCLG to come to Wokingham to see for themselves the beautiful semi-rural nature of our Borough. We would like them to meet local residents, Borough Councillors from all political groups, Town and Parish Councillors from all parts of the Borough including Remenham to Swallowfield and everywhere in between; so they can understand for themselves the strength of feeling that residents have about the high housing numbers that have been forced on us by successive past and current Governments.

Motion 433 by Gregor Murray:

RESOLVED: That at its meeting on July 18th 2019 the full Council voted unanimously to declare a Climate Emergency across Wokingham Borough and to commit itself to being carbon neutral by 2030. In order to achieve this crucial aim, and to live up to our environmental responsibilities we understand that it is essential we take steps to immediately reduce the amount of carbon we either directly or indirectly use each year. It is clear that no responsible Council can take action on climate change without seeking to drastically reduce the amount of single use plastics consumed by both its residents and by the Council in its every day operations. In face of the overwhelming evidence about the impact that single use plastics have on our lives, climate, seas, rivers and broader environments, Wokingham Borough Council commits to ensuring that – wherever possible – single use plastics are eliminated from use within the Council, and all Council controlled environments, as soon as possible. This would be achieved by:

- Phasing out the purchase of single-use plastic products through services commissioned by the Council where possible and as soon as practicable.
- Bringing regular reports to future committee meetings, describing the Council's plans to eliminate single-use plastic from the organisation, including a timetable for doing so.
- Working with Wokingham's businesses, community groups and residents to share advice, ideas and best practice on using sustainable alternatives
- Working with schools to support the aspiration of Wokingham's young people to eliminate plastic waste from our environment.
- Seeking to work with neighbouring Councils to tackle single use plastic use across the wider Berkshire area.
- Sign-posting on all Council buildings and properties to forbid the bringing of single use plastics onto the property.
- Sign-posting on all Council buildings and properties once it has become single use plastic free.'

Motion 434 by Sarah Kerr:

RESOLVED: That this Council notes that:

- Air pollution poses a serious threat to the health of everyone and in particular the development of young people. Epidemiological studies show that symptoms of bronchitis in asthmatic children increase in association with long-term exposure to pollutants, as well as stunting lung growth.
- Our residents and visitors are exposed to unsafe levels of pollutants, particularly outside of schools at peak times in the morning and afternoon, next to taxi ranks, at level crossings and along our major roads.

- Road transport is one of the biggest contributors to particulate matter and pollution in Wokingham Borough.
- While many of the policy interventions to rectify this problem would have to come from central Government, this Council can do more and needs to be proactive on this issue.
- Only a handful of areas across the country are trialling “No Vehicle Idling zones” yet they bring many health benefits, and could be introduced around the borough, particularly outside schools, taxi ranks and at level crossings.
- It is important to provide our residents and visitors with healthier and less polluting alternatives to move about the borough, and in particular, parents taking their children to school.

Therefore, the Council should invest more in walking and cycling. This Council resolves to:

- Monitor the level of particulate matter 2.5 across the Borough.
- Continue to review the work done on No-Vehicle-Idling nationally in other local authorities and continue with the Action Plan for No-Vehicle-Idling zones covering the Wokingham Borough Council area with a view to implementing No-Vehicle Idling zones, around as many schools in the Borough as possible, by the end of 2022, and in other identified areas such as taxi ranks and close to level crossings.
- Continue to encourage local businesses to sponsor green walls and tree planting and the Executive Member for Environment includes this in his action plan.
- Continue to increase spending on active travel in future budgets, especially safe cycle lanes.
- Produce a strategy for implementing a car club scheme across the Borough.’

Motion 439 by Rachel Burgess

RESOLVED: That this Council will adopt the Council Tax Protocol agreed by Citizens Advice and the Local Government Association (June 2017) during the municipal year 2020/21. This protocol includes, inter alia:

- Wokingham Borough Council will work with enforcement agencies and Citizens Advice to help people pay their council tax bills while accessing debt advice.
- All communication with residents about council tax will be clear.
- Wokingham Borough Council will consider using the Standard Financial Statement when calculating repayment plans.
- Flexible payment arrangements will be offered to residents.

- Where a resident receives Council Tax support, Wokingham Borough Council will consider matters carefully, including refraining from using enforcement agents.
- Wokingham Borough Council will publish their policy on residents in vulnerable circumstances. The full protocol can be found here: [Citizens Advice Council Tax Protocol 2017.pdf](#)

Motion 440 by Rachel Bishop-Firth:

RESOLVED: That EU nationals are our family members, parents, friends and colleagues. They care for our elderly and they teach our children. They are an integral part of a vibrant and thriving Wokingham. In the Referendum campaign, we were promised that "there will be no change for EU citizens already lawfully resident in the UK and [they] ...will be treated no less favourably than they are at present". This promise has not been honoured. Many EU27 citizens are unaware that if Brexit goes ahead, they risk deportation from their homes of many years unless they are granted settled status. Home Office figures show that many EU nationals have not applied for Settled Status, or have applied but have been refused. We don't know how many Wokingham residents, perhaps elderly or vulnerable people, are unaware that they may become illegal immigrants. We risk a Windrush-style scandal here in Wokingham, with families broken up. We also need to think of the 1.3 million British citizens who have made their homes in other EU countries, who may be forced to return to the UK, particularly if Brexit means they lose their access to healthcare. Many of these people are elderly, and many have made their homes overseas because of difficulties making ends meet on their pensions. How many will come to Wokingham, needing assistance with social housing and other support?

Therefore, the Council asks that Officers urgently undertake a review of the effects of Brexit on local residents and publicise what we intend to do and what mitigations we have already implemented including:

- a) How we promote and assist with applications for settled status particularly for residents who face language or technology barriers.
- b) What we provide to help landlords and employers to be trained on immigration status, to avoid potential discrimination against EU27 nationals.
- c) How Brexit is likely to affect EU27 nationals accessing services provided by the Council, and steps that we can take to mitigate difficulties.
- d) The likely impact on Wokingham of British citizens returning to the UK and how we can best prepare for this.

Motion 441 by Pauline Helliard-Symons:

RESOLVED: That on 22nd November 2018, this Council adopted a Sprinkler Policy centred on our schools. After work by Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service, the Fire Authority's Management Committee on 22nd July 2019 adopted a wider policy which they proposed be considered by each of the Berkshire Unitaries. This goes further to support promotion of Sprinklers in their Council areas and to put pressure on Central Government to legislate on Sprinklers, following the successful introduction of legal powers in Wales. To be specific it is proposed: That Wokingham Borough Council supports the proposals of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority to extend the promotion of Sprinklers and to lobby central government to bring in legislation or regulations which make installations a necessary part of new builds and major refurbishments in the categories identified. The policy agreed by the Council on 22nd November 2018 regarding schools remains, but additionally: Wokingham Borough Council:

- a) Recognises that Sprinklers and other Automatic Fire Suppression Systems (AFSS) save lives, protect property, reduce the impact of fire on the environment, reduce interruption to business and improve safety for individuals the community in general and firefighters, especially in the case of schools.
- b) Commits to installation of sprinklers or other AFSS within its own building stock when planning for and constructing new buildings or as a retrofitted solution when undertaking major refurbishments of existing buildings where the extent of the refurbishment makes the fitting of sprinklers viable.
- c) Through the planning application or building control process, promote and support the installation of sprinklers or other AFSS for all new or refurbished buildings and particularly those that present the most significant risk to the public and firefighters.
- d) Supports the National Fire Chiefs Council position on sprinklers and will write to Central Government to express support for the creation of a legal requirement to fit sprinklers or AFSS in buildings.

Motion 467 by Ian Shenton:

RESOLVED: That this Council resolves to refer to the Tree Protection and Biodiversity Task and Finish Group to examine the benefits of formally declaring an ecological emergency and the actions below. This will be reported back to a future Full Council Meeting.

1. Address ecological issues alongside climate emergency actions and ensure that opportunities to gain co-benefits from addressing both the climate and ecological emergencies are maximised.

2. Add ecological implications alongside those for climate in committee and Council reports.
3. Ensure the delivery of biodiversity and environmental enhancements through our planning policy and development control functions by providing guidance through a biodiversity supplementary planning document.
4. Strive to enable the development of a 20% mandatory biodiversity net gain policy for Wokingham through the new local plan.
5. Create a Developing Nature Toolkit and direct developers to use the toolkit to assist them in demonstrating a net gain in biodiversity, to be used from the very outset of planning new developments, and ideally at the time of selecting sites to acquire for development.
6. Re-establish the Wokingham Biodiversity Forum to allow the Council to collaborate effectively with partners and the wider community.
7. Where possible, embed ecological initiatives within all Council work areas, including Covid-19 recovery projects and programmes.
8. Promote woodland planting and rewilding in the right places and with the right species, peatland restoration, natural flood management, wild flower meadows, and habitat creation and restoration.
9. Work with local, county, regional and national partners to increase wildlife habitats, green infrastructure and natural capital in Wokingham Borough ensuring robust connectivity between them.
10. Manage Council services, buildings and land in a biodiversity-friendly manner, including by reviewing the use of harmful chemicals, such as pesticides and taking opportunities to create new wildlife habitats and corridors.
11. Provide advice for local communities and businesses on how to incorporate biodiversity, green infrastructure and natural capital into Neighbourhood Plans and other initiatives.
12. Encourage residents to take biodiversity measures in their own homes by, for example, wildlife gardening and home composting.
13. Working collaboratively with the Berkshire Local Nature Partnership, Wokingham Biodiversity Forum, a cross party working group and other stakeholders, produce a local nature recovery strategy and associated action plan with an annual progress report to full Council.

Motion 468 by Gregor Murray:

RESOLVED: That building on our commitment to planting 250,000 new trees, this Council commits to achieving 'Tree Cities of the World' status for our Borough as part of the creation of a Borough wide Tree Strategy. This will be done by:

1. Maintaining clear responsibility within the Council for the care of trees across our Borough.
2. Agreeing a policy for the care and management of our forests and trees across the Borough. This must include standards for tree care, where and when they apply and penalties for non-compliance.

3. Working with external partners to create and maintain an inventory of the local tree resource so that effective long-term planning for planting, care and removal can be established.
4. Setting aside an annual budget for the implementation of the tree management strategy and management plan.
5. Holding an annual celebration of our Borough's trees and acknowledge the residents schools, charities and Council staff that contribute to our city tree programme.
6. Creating a 'Garden Forest' program to allow residents the opportunity to plant some of our 250,000 new tree commitment in their own gardens.
7. Developing a continuous education process aimed at informing residents of the importance of trees, tree planting and tree protection and how best to care for the trees in their own gardens and communities.
8. Committing to planting a Covid-19 memorial wood within the Borough, of native trees, as a long-lasting memorial to those who have lost their lives during the 2020-21 Pandemic.

117 Once the above conditions are met an application for Tree Cities of the World status should be made as soon as possible. Further information on the Tree Cities of the World status and benefits can be found at www.treecitiesoftheworld.org.

Motion 469 by David Hare:

RESOLVED: That White Ribbon UK is a leading charity engaging with men and boys to end violence against women and girls. Their mission is for all men to fulfil the White Ribbon Promise to never commit, excuse or remain silent about male violence against women and girls. It is not enough for men to not be violent towards women and girls. Men need to take responsibility for helping to make change happen. All men can help prevent physical, mental, or emotional violence against women and girls by speaking out whenever they encounter such behaviour. If men do not act to correct this, women and girls will continue not feeling safe to do many of the things men do without thinking, making us a morally corrupt and emotional poor society, as we trivialise the sickness that is any type of violence against women and girls.

Wokingham Borough Council resolves to refer this matter to the cross-party Equalities Working Group at its meeting in January 2022, to examine the benefits of the actions below and to report back to a future Full Council meeting:

- Seek White Ribbon Accreditation for the Organisation within the next 6 months and encourage all male councillors to take the White Ribbon pledge, never to take part in, condone or stay silent about violence against women. As part of this Wokingham Borough Council will appoint a male Councillor as an Ambassador for White Ribbon.

- Promote the Our Streets Now campaign to make street harassment of women a crime; ask the Chief Executive to write to the Home Secretary to ask them to make street harassment a specific crime; ask the Chief Executive to write to the four MPs who cover the Borough, as well as the Police and Crime Commissioner, to ask them to show their support for this campaign by signing the petition and by lobbying ministers to make street harassment a specific crime and encourage elected members and residents to sign the petition.
- Ask schools, academies and colleges in the Borough to each develop a clear policy on tackling physical, mental, emotional or spiritual harassment of female pupils or staff, separate to their bullying policy and ask them to include education to prevent public sexual harassment, as part of their PSHE education.