



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR THE PERIOD

25 May 2022 to 30 June 2022

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Susan Parsonage', written in a cursive style.

**Susan Parsonage
Chief Executive
Published on 13 July 2022**



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Our Vision

A great place to live, learn, work and grow and a great place to do business

Enriching Lives

- Champion outstanding education and enable our children and young people to achieve their full potential, regardless of their background.
- Support our residents to lead happy, healthy lives and provide access to good leisure facilities to complement an active lifestyle.
- Engage and involve our communities through arts and culture and create a sense of identity which people feel part of.
- Support growth in our local economy and help to build business.

Safe, Strong, Communities

- Protect and safeguard our children, young and vulnerable people.
- Offer quality care and support, at the right time, to prevent the need for long term care.
- Nurture communities and help them to thrive.
- Ensure our borough and communities remain safe for all.

A Clean and Green Borough

- Do all we can to become carbon neutral and sustainable for the future.
- Protect our borough, keep it clean and enhance our green areas.
- Reduce our waste, improve biodiversity and increase recycling.
- Connect our parks and open spaces with green cycleways.

Right Homes, Right Places

- Offer quality, affordable, sustainable homes fit for the future.
- Build our fair share of housing with the right infrastructure to support and enable our borough to grow.
- Protect our unique places and preserve our natural environment.
- Help with your housing needs and support people to live independently in their own homes.

Keeping the Borough Moving

- Maintain and improve our roads, footpaths and cycleways.
- Tackle traffic congestion, minimise delays and disruptions.
- Enable safe and sustainable travel around the borough with good transport infrastructure.
- Promote healthy alternative travel options and support our partners to offer affordable, accessible public transport with good network links.

Changing the Way We Work for You

- Be relentlessly customer focussed.
- Work with our partners to provide efficient, effective, joined up services which are focussed around you.
- Communicate better with you, owning issues, updating on progress and responding appropriately as well as promoting what is happening in our Borough.
- Drive innovative digital ways of working that will connect our communities, businesses and customers to our services in a way that suits their needs.

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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON 25 MAY 2022 FROM 7.00 PM TO 10.07 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Laura Blumenthal, Shirley Boyt, Peter Dennis (Chairman), Chris Johnson, Norman Jorgensen, Pauline Jorgensen, Gregor Murray and Alistair Neal

Officers Present

Callum Wernham (Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist), Narinder Brar (Community Safety Partnership Manager), Neil Carr (Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist), Graham Ebers (Deputy Chief Executive (Director of Resources and Assets)) and Steve Moore (Interim Director of Place and Growth)

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

It was proposed by Alistair Neal and seconded by Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey that Peter Dennis be elected Chairman for the 2022/23 municipal year.

RESOLVED That Peter Dennis be elected Chairman for the 2022/23 municipal year.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

It was proposed by Alistair Neal and seconded by Chris Johnson that David Cornish be appointed Vice-Chairman for the 2022/23 municipal year.

RESOLVED That David Cornish be appointed Vice-Chairman for the 2022/23 municipal year.

3. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted from David Cornish.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey attended the meeting as a substitute.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 23 March 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following minor point and correction:

- The breakdown of callouts to the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service and the reasons behind them be circulated to the Committee;
- Agenda page 13: It was noted that issues relating to commercial processes, construction sites and water supplies were covered by environmental ~~purposes~~ **permits** for some commercial processes.

5. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

6. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

7. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

8. WOKINGHAM DOMESTIC ABUSE UPDATE

The Committee considered a report, set out in agenda pages 15 to 20, which gave an update on instances of domestic abuse within the Borough.

The report outlined a number of progress updates within the Domestic Abuse Strategy, including an increasing awareness of safe accommodation choices, provision of an inclusive range of accommodation options, provision of support for victim-survivors in safe accommodation, strengthened partnership working to drive and improve outcomes, and support for individuals to help them to begin rebuilding their lives.

Narinder Brar (Community Safety Manager) and Steve Moore (Interim Director of Place and Growth) attended the meeting to answer member queries.

During the ensuing discussion, members raised the following points and queries:

- The Committee thanked Narinder Brar and her team for a great deal of hard work in providing an essential service;
- Was a detailed breakdown of where instances of domestic abuse took place within the Borough available? Officer response – A more granular breakdown was being worked on for the future, which would be reported on a quarterly basis.
- Would the strategy be taken to the residents' equality forum? Officer response – There was a real drive to reduce any barriers to accessing services where possible, and it was key to not homogenise different communities. The residents' forum was one area which could be included more in the future to help achieve these aims.
- Would a range of KPIs and their performance be available for the Committee to view at a later date? Officer response – A full suite of KPIs were being developed, and these could be reported to the Committee in future.
- Could officers confirm that no-one escaping domestic abuse within the Borough had been turned away? Officer response – This was correct. There was a 3-bed refuge available within the Borough, whilst housing and homelessness legislation was in place as a safety net to allow safe accommodation to be provided by Wokingham Borough Council (WBC).
- Was there an update on the 2021 Community Safety Partnership contract which included provision of services to schools to work with children who had seen or suffered domestic abuse? Officer response – This was quite a specialised area of work, and Cranstoun had recruited a young people's worker who was now on maternity leave. Plans were in motion to get play therapy, one to one counselling, drama therapy and counselling therapy back on track and delivered.
- What successes had been realised in the perpetrator intervention programme to help to address abusive behaviours? Officer response – There had been a number of challenges at the start of this programme, and more details on uptake and successes would be circulated to the Committee.
- How had the independent domestic violence advocate service been working? Officer response – Advisors were allocated to an individual once they had been risk

assessed. Advisors would work flexibly with victims dependent on their individual needs, with face to face meetings or advice given via phone call in a way that was safe. This strategy was front and centre of the overall service provided by WBC.

- It was noted that a list of the 30 and above partner organisations that worked alongside WBC to support the strategy would be circulated to the Committee.
- What additional actions, facilities and interventions would be put in place to ensure that Ukrainian refugees being housed within the Borough were being kept safe from domestic abuse? Officer response – Officers were working closely across departments and organisations on a number of different projects in relation to the introduction of a number of Ukrainian refugees locally, for example tying this in with the modern slavery agenda to ensure there was no abuse of power. Information was being translated to allow refugees to understand and access information first-hand, whilst there were pieces being circulated around education on what is culturally acceptable within the UK. Detailed training was being provided to case workers who would be working directly with guests to make them more acutely aware of indicators around all forms of abuse. Information was being provided to let refugees know that they can trust and talk to the police and WBC officers in case they were in need of help.
- It was agreed that an update report be provided in 6 months' time to update to Committee on any domestic abuse interventions that have had to take place, and any additional resources required to support Ukrainian refugees.
- What percentage of victims returned to their abusers, and what percentage of abusers were serial abusers? Officer response – Data was not currently being collected in relation to how many victims returned to their abusers, however national and global research was being undertaken within this area. Whilst a huge amount of work was being carried out with perpetrators in order to break the cycle of abusive relationships and harmful behaviours in relationships, the data around it was not currently available locally. Unfortunately the sad truth was that individuals who experienced domestic abuse as children tended to repeat that behaviour, either as an abuser or a victim, in their adult life. Children were now recognised as victims within their own right, which resulted in dedicated services and support being put in place for children to help break the cycle.
- Where were most referrals received from, and how quickly were they actioned? Officer response – Most referrals were received from the police and social care, whilst a number of self-referrals were also received. The new domestic abuse contract had introduced new SLAs which had increased the speed at which victims were contacted. Performance against these SLAs would be circulated to the Committee.
- How much did the service cost to provide, and how much of this was funded by central Government? Officer response – An overall contract breakdown and the total cost of the service would be circulated to the Committee.
- Would central Government funding likely be reviewed in future? Officer response – Officers had expected a three-year funding settlement, however only a one-year settlement was agreed. £250k was agreed this year, and a similar figure was expected this year.

- What was the occupancy level at the WBC refuge? Officer response – A sharp increase in people accessing the service was expected during the pandemic, however this was not quite realised in Wokingham, however since restrictions had been relaxed a steady increase in demand had been realised. Occupancy levels would be circulated to the Committee, however the refuge was almost always full and quite often full of people from neighbouring Boroughs as it was not always safe to access a refuge within your home Borough, whilst reciprocal arrangements were in place with other local authorities.
- What coverage was in place for single points of failure, for example the single officer working with schools? Officer response – This was a commissioned service for one children and young people worker, and a temporary member of staff would provide cover for the maternity period. Additional demand was being placed on this service than was originally anticipated. It was incumbent on the supplier to provide support to ensure that one full-time-equivalent member of staff was carrying out the work as required by the contract.
- Were figures available detailing how many victims were being housed via social services or homelessness provision? Interim Director response – From a relatively low base, those fleeing domestic abuse had quadrupled in Wokingham in the past 6 months. Demand was being met through a variety of appropriate provisions, whether that be the dedicated refuge or WBC owned housing.
- A number of questions were provided to officers prior to the meeting. Written answers to the below questions would be circulated to the Committee.
 - 1) Who has been consulted and given input into this report?
 - 2) The report acknowledges the need for more data and to compare it with the census results to check for representation. Of the 2700 women and 1500 men affected annually, what else do we know e.g. age, disability, LGBTQ+, ethnicity etc. How do these demographics impact the needs of the victims?
 - 3) What are the different needs of male and female victims (and other demographics)? Are they being met? We heard from Cranstoun the difficulties in getting ethnic minority women to come forward. Later in the report it suggests that men are under-represented when it comes to accessing services but why is this? Perhaps their needs are different.
 - 4) Refuge provision - It is clear that there is a need to get a long term strategy in place for this which considers current provision and future needs. Currently there is no local refuge provision for families or those with complex needs. This is a gap which we heard from Cranstoun and I've also heard this from Berkshire Women's Aid previously. How are we currently meeting the needs of these victims?
 - 5) Data and demographics - we are funding a pilot for a support worker for older people. How do we know this is a priority and best use of available funds?
 - 6) Could additional information be provided in relation to the "networking group that has regular attendance by 30+ representatives of local DA services". What is this group, how often does it meet, who attends, what is the purpose and impact?
 - 7) Are Cranstoun delivering according to what they are contracted for? Also, what specifically are the gaps on top of currently commissioned services - what's the process to find this out?
- How did the reciprocal arrangements with other local authorities work in practice? Officer response – There was a national data pool of refuge provision that professionals had access to, which allowed matches to take place between victims

and refuge provision. Provision was often sought where a victim had existing support, for example near family or friends, whilst allowing the victim to shop at a different supermarket but still often close enough to complete a school run or attend work. Each placement was carried out on a case-by-case basis dependant on the victim's individual needs. This was a flexible and victim orientated service, and just because Wokingham only had a three-bed refuge did not mean that is all it could access elsewhere.

- Once a victim had left the Borough to be placed in another area, did WBC officers remain in contact with the victim? Officer response – Liaison was undertaken for a period of time between local authorities, and if a placement was more permanent then a period of handover was undertaken with a variety of agencies including children's services, MARAC, and the local domestic abuse provider.
- Was there a standard level and quality of accommodation provided across the country? Officer response – The quality and standard of accommodation varied, however officers did visit accommodation within other Boroughs and also visited purpose built accommodation to see examples of best practice.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Narinder Brar and Steve Moore be thanked for attending the meeting;
- 2) A detailed breakdown of where instances of domestic abuse took place within the Borough be provided at a future meeting of the Committee;
- 3) The full suite of KPIs currently being developed be reported at a future meeting of the Committee;
- 4) Details on the uptake and successes of the perpetrator intervention programme be circulated to the Committee;
- 5) An update report be provided in 6 months' time to update to Committee on any domestic abuse interventions that have had to take place, and any additional resources required to support Ukrainian refugees;
- 6) Performance against SLAs be circulated to the Committee;
- 7) An overall contract breakdown and the total cost of the service be circulated to the Committee;
- 8) Occupancy levels of the Wokingham refuge be circulated to the Committee;
- 9) Written answers be provided to the list of seven questions sent into officers and detailed within the minutes.

9. PLACE AND GROWTH DIRECTORATE PRIORITIES

The Committee considered a report, set out in agenda pages 21 to 30, which outlined the key priorities for the Place and Growth Directorate.

A number of key priorities and issues were outlined, including a significant increase homelessness within the Borough, successfully accommodating a number of Ukrainian

refugees, reviewing bus routes within the Borough, updating the local plan, delivering the customer excellence programme, reviewing and delivering upon the climate emergency action plan.

Steve Moore (Interim Director of Place and Growth) attended the meeting to answer member queries.

During the ensuing discussion, members raised the following points and queries:

- Plans were in place to deliver 4 additional solar farms within the Borough, and a wider energy strategy would be key in delivering on the Borough's future energy needs. Interim Director response – This was an important part of the wider climate emergency action plan, and conversations were being had between directorates on a regular basis. To ensure the most effective and efficient use of officer time, it would be best for this to be considered alongside other related conversations at a future Committee meeting.
- Members received a considerable number of resident comments in relation to road maintenance, congestion, and any future increases in terms of recycling. Were these part of the Directorate's priorities? Interim Director response - These were key parts of Place and Growth's service delivery whilst being of significant importance to residents. Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) needed to look at how road maintenance was communicated with our customers, which could link in with the customer excellence programme. Congestion had strong links to other priorities including climate emergency and bus route provision, whilst a consultation was underway on the proposed waste strategy which would be reported to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- Members noted that road maintenance needed to be viewed as a wider project, as residents expected a consistent level of maintenance. Interim Director response – Road maintenance needed to be viewed within the wider financial landscape, as increased spending on maintenance projects might mean that savings would have to be found elsewhere.
- It was noted that there was a £16bn deficit nationally in highway infrastructure, whilst adoptable roads within new developments were not just a WBC problem. WBC would only adopt roads which were built to adoptable standards when developers agreed to pay WBC the required management fees.
- Members raised concerns that there appeared to be a two-tiered social housing system within the Borough, with good quality provision from WBC and a substandard provision from some housing associations. Interim Director response – This was an excellent and timely point, as the contract was up for renewal this year. The Directorate would support the creation of a task and finish group to review this aspect.
- How were developers being held responsible for delivering the required facilities within SDLs? Interim Director response – This was not always the fault of the developer, as WBC had various timings and triggers that needed to be managed. An item could be taken to a future Committee meeting which outlined the approach that WBC took when delivering SDLs within the Borough.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Steve Moore be thanked for attending the meeting;
- 2) The key priorities raised by the Interim Director be considered when agreeing the Committee's work programme;
- 3) A task and finish group be formed to consider how a 'one-tier' approach to social housing could be delivered within the Borough.

10. RESOURCES AND ASSETS DIRECTORATE PRIORITIES

The Committee considered a report, set out in agenda pages 31 to 36, which outlined the key priorities for the Resources and Assets Directorate.

The report outlined the significant programmes of work within a variety of service areas, including the implementation of the leisure strategy, the opening of the Carnival Hub in the summer of 2022, transitioning the internal-audit team in-house, enhancing Wokingham Borough Council's (WBC's) financial management practices, and delivering enhanced Legal Services.

Graham Ebers (Deputy Chief Executive (Director of Resources and Assets)) attended the meeting to answer member queries.

During the ensuing discussion, members raised the following points and queries:

- Could additional details be given in relation to WBC's intermediate risk management plan? Deputy Chief Executive response – The corporate risk register was produced by the corporate leadership team and reported to the Audit Committee on a quarterly basis.
- What impact might inflation have on the delivery of Council projects? Deputy Chief Executive response – Greater contingency had been placed into the capital programme, whilst a figure in excess of £8m was allowed for within the revenue budget. This figure of £8m may not be enough, however it was within the region of three times greater than allowed for in previous years. WBC was protected in a number of areas where we were tied into contracts at fixed prices which were being honoured, whilst project managers were working hard to ensure that contracts were being honoured across their whole term, whilst extensions were being sought where possible. A reconsideration of the budget mid-year might be required, and an update would be taken to the Committee in such a case.
- Had a return to pre-pandemic levels been realised within the leisure service? Deputy Chief Executive response – Heavy users were quick to return to leisure activities, whilst those who were more frail were more reluctant to return. Overall, around seventy to eighty percent of customers had returned to their normal leisure activities.

RESOLVED That:

- 4) Graham Ebers be thanked for attending the meeting;
- 5) The key priorities raised by the Deputy Chief Executive be considered when agreeing the Committee's work programme.

11. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered their work programme, set out in agenda pages 37 to 40.

Members prioritised a number of items for consideration during the municipal year.

Members commented that they wished for items including the Local Plan Update, the development of the LCWIP and the bus strategy to be considered by the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee this municipal year.

Members reiterated that they wished for a task and finish group to be set-up to consider how a 'one-tier' approach to social housing could be delivered within the Borough.

The Committee resolved a draft schedule of items for future meetings as set out below.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Callum Wernham and Neil Carr be thanked for attending the meeting;
- 2) The Bus Strategy and the LCWIP be added to the 4 July 2022 meeting of the Committee;
- 3) The Council Owned Companies update scheduled for 5 September 2022 be considered as a component of reviews of other relevant items in due course;
- 4) KPIs relating to the domestic abuse service and a breakdown from within the Borough as to where the most instances of DA are taking place, and an update on the implementation of the in-house enforcement and safety service be added to the 5 September 2022 meeting of the Committee;
- 5) An extraordinary meeting be scheduled for September 2022 to consider progress made in relation to the Local Plan Update;
- 6) An update report on actions being taken to address homelessness within the Borough be added to the 3 October 2022 meeting of the Committee;
- 7) An update report on the implementation of the Arts and Culture Strategy and efforts being made to include as many different communities and groups as possible be added to the 3 November 2022 meeting of the Committee;
- 8) A written report be circulated to the Committee with regards to burial capacity within the Borough;
- 9) A task and finish group to be set-up to consider how a 'one-tier' approach to social housing could be delivered within the Borough;
- 10) An update report be provided to the Committee in 6 months' time to update to Committee on any domestic abuse interventions that have had to take place, and any additional resources required to support Ukrainian refugees.

Appendix 1 to the Minutes

Updates on Actions Relating to the Domestic Abuse Item which were raised at the Meeting

- 1) A detailed breakdown of where instances of domestic abuse took place within the Borough be provided at a future meeting of the Committee; -

This had been noted and will be provided at a future meeting potentially November alongside a KPI's update.

- 2) The full suite of KPIs currently being developed be reported at a future meeting of the Committee; noted as above.
- 3) Details on the uptake and successes of the perpetrator intervention programme be circulated to the Committee;

Uptake from 1/7/2021 – 31/3/2022 there were 25 referrals received for the programme, of which 22 were offered a place on the Men & Masculinities programme; 1 was offered 1:1 support and 2 were not suitable (1 identifying as the primary victim and another referred in error). As at 31/3/2022, 17 were showing on the perpetrator worker's caseload.

We will get a better update on the success of the programme when this current funding quarter ends (1st July) for future meetings committee may want to consider putting this item on for the September meeting – to allow for a whole 12 months of data to be available.

- 4) An update report be provided in 6 months' time to update to Committee on any domestic abuse interventions that have had to take place, and any additional resources required to support Ukrainian refugees; noted this will be provided at the November meeting.
- 5) Performance against SLAs be circulated to the Committee; A full 12 month end of year report will be available at the end of July, I propose this is shared with the committee to consider as part of the November items.
- 6) An overall contract breakdown and the total cost of the service be circulated to the Committee; – After consideration of legal advice, this has been shared to members under a part 2 exemption.
- 7) Occupancy levels of the Wokingham refuge be circulated to the Committee;

9 women were referred into the refuge in the year 1/4/2021 – 31/3/2022 and the refuge was full as at 31st March 2022. Maximum number of adult female residents at any one time is 3.

- 8) Written answers be provided to the list of seven questions sent into officers and detailed within the minutes. Please see below.

1) Who has been consulted and given input into this report? e.g BWA, Kaleidoscopic, Cranstoun... The report was compiled by the Wokingham DA Coordinator and Community Safety Manager

2) The report acknowledges the need for more data and to compare it with the census results to check for representation. I would agree. Of the 2700 women and 1500 men affected annually, what else do we know e.g. age, disability, LGBTQ+, ethnicity etc. How do these demographics impact the needs of the victims?

The 4200 number is based on ONS estimates following a statistically representative sample of people's experiences of domestic abuse (regardless of whether these incidents have been reported to the police or not) – you can find out more information about this at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/domesticabuseprevalenceandtrendsendlandandwales/yearendingmarch2021> . It indicates that based on our local population 4200 residents will have been victims of domestic abuse during the past year. We use this information as a rough guide to try and understand underlying domestic abuse prevalence as the only other quantitative data we can access relates to police recorded incidents and crimes. There is higher prevalence of domestic abuse as well as specific ways in which the abuse may be experienced by those who share a protected characteristic or have complex needs. In order to gain a better understanding of the unique ways in which someone may experience abuse linked to their characteristic (eg LGBT+) as well as prevalence rates statistically within each group we use research findings (for example 80% of trans people are likely to experience domestic abuse; 25% of LGB victims) and it is estimated that between 5 – 8% of the population are LGBT. The Census returns of 2021 asked questions around sexuality, so we should hopefully be able to get a better estimate of the number of trans / gay / bi people in the borough to enable us to establish how many residents self-classify as being part of this community and therefore how many are likely to have been affected by domestic abuse over the past year as well as during their lifetime. We also need to consider where the abuse is coming from (eg intimate partners / ex-partners or family members) in order to tailor resources, literature and services to ensure that people from this demographic and increase accessibility by members of the community. Sadly members of the LGBT+ community can experience stigma, shame, threats of being outed and many other common issues and barriers to accessing support. Each demographic community faces different barriers so for example someone who is older may be being economically abused by a child or grandchild, but is worried about consequences of reporting, such as visits being stopped, care needs not being met etc. Whilst we have research to help our understanding of 'groups' they are not homogenous groups and each individual will have their own unique needs and concerns which need to be addressed in order for them to feel that support is realistic for them.

3) What are the different needs of male and female victims (and other demographics)? Are they being met? We heard from Cranstoun the difficulties in getting ethnic minority women to come forward. Later in the report it suggests that men are under-represented when it comes to accessing services but why is this? Perhaps their needs are different.

The basic needs for all victims are to be believed, be supported and to achieve safety but in order to achieve this, they will need to recognise that what they are experiencing is domestic abuse, be aware of services and laws which are in place and how they can access these services. Unfortunately it is only when individuals are 'visible' to services that they can be supported by the agencies, and there are a lot of people who are affected by domestic abuse who services aren't aware of – for example those from ethnic minorities

and male victims as well as those with other protected characteristics or complex needs. As a result, it is vital that we maximise opportunities to raise awareness of domestic abuse and reach out to communities where we know that we are not seeing statistical representation within police reported data and / or housing presentations and domestic abuse services, to educate on what domestic abuse is and what help and support is available. Concerns faced by victims from ethnic minority groups, can include cultural and / or language barriers (eg lack of laws, enforcement or support within their home country); concerns over immigration status as they may have been told (incorrectly) by their abuser that means that if they report domestic abuse they will be deported; may experience family and / or wider community pressure to stay within a marriage; or there could be many other reasons why they are nervous about voicing what is happening to them. Male victims often feel that they won't be believed (a message which is often reinforced through media messaging); shame (that as a man they aren't able to protect themselves); lack of 'role models' who have spoken up about the abuse they have experienced and many other reasons.

There are many excellent websites which provide a lot of information to help us understand more about the needs for those with different demographics and I also have loads of research papers if there is a group for which the resident would like to gain a more in-depth understanding of key barriers and concerns.

4) Refuge provision - little bit woolly on what is being provided and how it is being funded. Think it is clear that there is a need to get a long term strategy in place for this which considers current provision and future needs. Currently there is no local refuge provision for families or those with complex needs. This is a gap which we heard from Cranstoun and I've also heard this from Andrea at BWA previously. How are we currently meeting the needs of these victims?

Currently we have a 3 bed refuge within Wokingham borough for female victims of domestic abuse. This is run by BWA with the housing related costs (rent) paid by residents who are working or through housing benefit. The support element linked to the refuge is now funded by WBC through a contract with BWA, although this is only a recent development.

(Information for Sarah - Prior to the awarding of the DA contract to Cranstoun in July 2021, the support element was funded by WBC as part of the commissioned service but on contract change, BWA made the decision to retain the refuge and advised they were able to fund the support element through charitable donations, although a grant was subsequently awarded as a result of government funding being allocated to WBC linked to the Domestic Abuse Act which placed a new duty on local authorities to provide support in safe accommodation (deemed as refuge, home refuge scheme and designated DA temporary and emergency housing). The hope was, and remains to increase our refuge provision (best practice suggests 1 refuge space per 10K population) with Cranstoun seeking to secure an additional 3 refuge bed spaces. However, this has proved to be very difficult in the short term linked to the high cost of housing, lack of rental properties (would need planning permission to become a House of Multiple Occupation) and lack of suitable WBC owned properties which could be used for this purpose).

A plan is currently being worked on, in partnership with BWA and the Housing team to increase the refuge provision in Wokingham, and address the gaps in refuge provision which currently exist (eg for male, gay, trans victims as well as those who have complex needs and larger families). To ensure that any refuge provision meets the needs of the individuals it seeks to support, research has been commissioned to gain an understanding of what the needs are for male and LGBT victims of domestic abuse within refuge provision as there is currently very little research on what these needs are.

Whilst we recognise the need to increase refuge provision in the borough, it is important to re-iterate that no-one who presents to Wokingham Council as needing safe accommodation is turned away and suitable accommodation will be identified, be that a refuge in another area (victims from Wokingham wouldn't be housed in a Wokingham based refuge due to safety issues), through home refuge scheme measures, if this would be a safe option, or alternative accommodation options.

5) Back to the data and demographics - we are funding a pilot for a support worker for older people. I'm not saying this is not needed but how do we know this is a priority and best use of available funds? All organisations were eligible to apply for funding through a grant funding scheme we offered to address local needs linked to support in safe accommodation. Hourglass made an application through this funding stream and were successful in their bid for a pilot project linked to the very low numbers of older people who are reporting domestic abuse to the police and / or accessing specialist domestic abuse services locally, especially when the indication is that around 20% of Wokingham population falls into this age bracket. In addition many older people have many barriers to accessing help and support which reduces their opportunity or ability to recognise the abuse or seek realistic (from their perspective) help. The Hourglass project involves reaching out to community groups and holding awareness raising events as well as providing an IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy) service to support those who reach out for help and are aged over 60, which involves ongoing holistic support. The service is working very closely with Cranstoun, with most professional referrals being channelled through Cranstoun who will support the individual with safety planning and immediate support, but then referring clients who need more in-depth or longer term support to Hourglass. Hourglass additionally have a 24/7 national helpline to provide advice and support and those calling the national helpline from our area will be referred into our local Hourglass service. We will be able to monitor the impact of this service through the number of older domestic abuse victims who report to the police as well as who have engaged with the domestic abuse services.

6) Would like to know more about the "networking group that has regular attendance by 30+ representatives of local DA services". What is this group, how often does it meet, who attends, what is the purpose and impact?

The group meets bi-monthly and is responsible for delivering the Domestic Abuse Action plan aspects which aren't directly related to the council's duties under the Domestic Abuse Act. The group has agreed terms of reference and impact is measured through outcomes linked to the action plan and reported data. Membership is open to any organisations who are supporting those affected by domestic abuse in the Wokingham borough and please contact karen.evans@wokingham.gov.uk if you are aware of any groups who would like to be part of our work. Membership currently consists of statutory agencies (including police, schools, probation, adult social care, children's services, health); community groups (including The Cowshed, foodbanks, Citizens Advice, Flag DV, Victims First) and specialist domestic abuse services (Cranstoun, Kaleidoscopic, Support U, Hourglass, Paws Protect and Freedom Dogs Project)

Terms of reference state:

The group will continuously work to improve the quality of domestic abuse responses by:

- Developing and working as a strong multi-agency Group, allowing for information sharing, networking, collaboration and sharing of good practice.

- Enabling the 'voices' of those directly affected by domestic abuse to be heard and responded to.
- Working to identify and address barriers to information and support experienced as a result of having a protected characteristic or complex need.
- Providing expert advice and data to support the development and delivery of the Wokingham domestic abuse strategy, agreeing, and undertaking appropriate steps and actions to address identified issues.
- Influencing and informing local decisions by advising and making recommendations regarding gaps and opportunities in local services, using best available evidence and good practice.
- Supporting organisations to effectively engage with domestic abuse victim-survivors and expert services in order to understanding and respond to the range and complexity of each individual's needs.
- Escalating unresolved issues with individual or collective relevant representative / bodies within the relevant organisation or if this is unsuccessful, to the Wokingham Community Safety Partnership.
- Ensuring that training and support for front line professionals is available and regularly reviewed, including learning from Domestic Homicide and Serious Case Reviews, to meet ongoing and emerging training needs.

7) Are Cranstoun delivering according to what they are contracted for? Also, what specifically are the gaps on top of currently commissioned services - what's the process to find this out?

Cranstoun are contracted to provide a helpline, outreach and IDVA support, group based support, work with children and young people and perpetrator interventions. In addition they provide multi agency training, participate in child and adult case conferences and multi agency risk management meetings. The service specification was written early 2021 and as it is for a 5 year period it is likely there will be emerging needs identified – when this happens we will put in place options to address these needs. A robust contract management process is in place to ensure that the service delivers as contracted for.

Unfortunately, the number of people needing support due to being affected by domestic abuse continues to rise both nationally and locally. The main issue is capacity as demand is significantly increasing and case levels are now higher than anticipated demand.

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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
PERSONNEL BOARD
HELD ON 1 JUNE 2022 FROM 7.00 PM TO 8.45 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Rachel Bishop-Firth (Chairman), Stephen Conway, Pauline Helliar-Symons, Pauline Jorgensen, Ian Shenton (substituting Prue Bray), Paul Fishwick (substituting Clive Jones) and Stuart Munro

Officers Present

Madeleine Shopland, Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist
Steve Moore, Interim Director Place and Growth
Sally Watkins, Assistant Director Digital, and Change

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Councillor Rachel Bishop-Firth be elected Chairman for 2022/23.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Councillor Clive Jones be appointed Vice Chairman for 2022/23.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors Prue Bray and Clive Jones.

4. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

5. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended) as appropriate.

**6. SHORTLISTING FOR THE ROLES OF ASSISTANT DIRECTORS FOR:
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH; HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT;
AND ENVIRONMENT AND SAFETY**

The Board received a report regarding the shortlisting for the roles of Assistant Director Economic Development and Growth, Highways and Transport, and Environment and Safety.

RESOLVED: That the recommendations contained within the Part 2 report and presented at the meeting by the Interim Director Place and Growth, be agreed.

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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
PLANNING COMMITTEE
HELD ON 8 JUNE 2022 FROM 7.00 PM TO 10.25 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey (Chairman), Andrew Mickleburgh (Vice-Chairman), Chris Bowring, Stephen Conway, David Cornish, Gary Cowan, John Kaiser, Andrew Mickleburgh (Vice-Chairman) and Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey (Chairman)

Councillors Present and Speaking

Councillors: Sam Akhtar, Shirley Boyt, Stuart Munro and Rachel Bishop-Firth

Officers Present

Callum Wernham, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist
Brian Conlon, Operational Lead - Development Management
Chris Easton, Head of Transport, Drainage, and Compliance
Mary Severin, Borough Solicitor

Case Officers Present

Tariq Bailey-Biggs
Nick Chancellor
Mark Croucher
James Fuller
Simon Taylor
Graham Vaughan
Marcus Watts

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Stephen Conway proposed that Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey be elected Chairman for the 2022/23 municipal year. This was seconded by Andrew Mickleburgh.

RESOLVED That Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey be elected Chairman for the 2022/23 municipal year.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

David Cornish proposed that Andrew Mickleburgh be appointed Vice-Chairman for the 2022/23 municipal year. This was seconded by Stephen Conway.

RESOLVED That Andrew Mickleburgh be appointed Vice-Chairman for the 2022/23 municipal year.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Rebecca Margetts and Wayne Smith.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 11 May 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey declared a personal interest in items 16 and 17, on the grounds that she had spoken with the member who had listed the application. Rachelle added that she would leave the room for the duration of both items.

6. APPLICATIONS TO BE DEFERRED AND WITHDRAWN ITEMS

Items 11, 12, and 13 were withdrawn from the agenda.

7. APPLICATION NO.211508 - ROSA BUILDING MULBERRY BUSINESS PARK, FISHPONDS ROAD, WOKINGHAM, RG41 2GY

Proposal: Full planning application for the proposed raising of existing roof of Rosa Building to create 11no. apartments to the second floor.

Applicant: Mr Schneck

The Committee considered a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 25 to 50.

The Committee were advised that updates contained within the Supplementary Planning Agenda included confirmation that the applicant had agreed to enter into a S106 agreement with Wokingham Borough Council (WBC), including a clause known as a deferred payment mechanism.

Stephen Conway queried who would determine how much affordable housing could be delivered based on the profitability of the development. Mark Croucher, case officer, confirmed that an independent specialist party advised on this matter in consultation with WBC and the applicant.

Andrew Mickleburgh commented that whilst there was an overprovision of 8 spaces, an informative allocating a number of spaces to specific flats might be useful for future residents. Mark Croucher stated that condition 5 required parking details to comply with the approved plans, however an informative as outlined above would also be reasonable.

Gary Cowan queried how WBC space standards compared to the national space standards, commented that should each unit be delivered on green space then a contribution towards local facilities and provision of green space would ordinarily be required, and queried whether planning permission be given to applications that were not providing adequate levels of affordable housing. Mark Croucher stated that WBC space standards were slightly more generous than national standards, however planning inspectors always applied national standards. CIL payments would be required for each of the 11 units, whilst WBC had one of the highest CIL charges in the UK. In relation to affordable housing, Mark Croucher stated that the viability assessment was written into the policy.

John Kaiser queried what the total CIL amount payable would be, and queried whether sprinklers would be included as part of the development. Mark Croucher stated that he would circulate the CIL amount to John outside of the meeting after calculating the total figure. Mark stated that inclusion of sprinklers was not a material planning consideration as this was covered by building regulations.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey queried whether the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) had made any comments with regards to sprinkler provision. Mark Croucher clarified that that the RBFRS had not commented on this application, and added that they tended to comment on issues such as the siting of water hydrants.

Andrew Mickleburgh proposed an additional informative, encouraging the applicant to consider allocating a number of car parking spaces to individual units. This proposal was seconded by Stephen Conway, carried, and added to the list of informatives.

RESOLVED That application number 211508 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 26 to 29, additional informative encouraging the applicant to consider allocating a number of car parking spaces to individual units, and subject to legal agreement.

8. APPLICATION NO.213106 - HEADLEY ROAD PARK, HEADLEY ROAD EAST, WOODLEY

Proposal: Full planning application for the proposed erection of 5 no. buildings for commercial development to provide flexible light industrial, general industrial, and storage and distribution uses, with ancillary offices, associated car parking, formation of new accesses, and landscape planting, following demolition of existing buildings.

Applicant: HE2 Reading 1 GP Limited

The Committee considered a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 51 to 134.

The Committee were advised that updates contained within the Supplementary Planning Agenda included:

- Correction to paragraph 11 to state that the scheme would produce 222 to 433 jobs;
- Clarification that Members had received an email from a resident at Lily May Court, located to the west of the site, however the concerns raised related to existing impacts which occurred outside of the red line boundary of the site. Therefore, it was not considered materially relevant to the scheme as the planning application was only required to resolve impacts caused by the proposed development;
- Confirmation that an increase of 3 HGV movements per hour was expected as a result of the proposals, which was considered a minor increase which would not result in harm in planning terms to the extent as a reason for refusal.

Keith Baker, Woodley Town Council, spoke in objection to the application. Keith stated that officers had often repeated that applications must focus on the red line boundary and could not be expected to rectify existing issues outside of this area, which was correct up to a point. Keith added that the cumulative effect of this application on the immediate area must be considered, and there had been no response from officers with regards to this. Keith stated that an additional 3 HGV movements per hour had been identified within the Supplementary Planning Agenda, however no justification had been provided for this, and Keith queried how many HGV movements were currently carried out on site. Keith stated that the access for HGVs was via a very narrow strip of land, which restricted the number of HGVs that could access the site currently, which gave an artificially low basepoint for the suggested increase of 3 HGVs per hour. Keith added that there was in practice one company operating on site, and the narrow access suggested that the nature of their work did not require many HGV movements, whilst the contrasting proposals included 10 new units each with their own HGV parking slots with many having 3 slots for HGVs. Keith stated that assumptions had been made in relation to the suggested increase of 3 HGV movements per hour, however this information had not been made public. Keith asked that the application be refused.

Kai Meade, resident, spoke in objection to the application. Kai stated that with regards to the letter received from Lily May Court, one of the core NPPF objectives was to ensure that planning decisions were made to provide appropriate development for its location including the cumulative effect of pollution on health. Kai felt that the Committee was being asked to consider this application under the caveat that the development was not new, when in reality the development would have a much larger industrial footprint than the existing development. Kai felt that the fact that Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) environmental health officers had not raised an objection to this application was beyond belief. Kai questioned how an additional 20 individual HGV loading bays had been calculated to increase HGV movements by only 3 per hour, whilst the previously requested thorough detailed assessment of additional HGV movements had not been provided. Planning and environmental health officers had stated that the applicant had agreed to only allow access to the site from Headley Road East except for a short section of Viscount Way required to access units 9 and 10, whilst the impact of the assessment report stated that there would be an adverse impact by day and a significant adverse impact by night on residents due to units 9 and 10. Kai questioned how this application could be approved when it was going to hurt people.

Julian Temple, resident, spoke in objection to the application. Julian stated that his comments were made on behalf of local residents and subject specific experts within Aviation Heritage UK and the wider Miles Aircraft community, whilst he had over 40 years of experience with historic aviation buildings. Having carried out consultancy works for Historic England, Julian felt that their own specialist knowledge of aviation was limited. Julian added that his own site visit last week found much more additional historic fabric surviving inside the main offices than was reported, suggesting that Historic England inspectors unfamiliarity with buildings of this type. As a non-designated heritage asset the offices were inherently locally important, and how far the later use and the loss of the airfield setting diminished their importance was debatable. Julian stated that the exterior of the building was relatively unaltered, and it was easy to imagine its former aviation use, especially within the context of local aviation related road names. Julian was disappointed to see nothing noticeably new in relation to heritage issues within the planning officers report, and he had also expected a longer deferral to properly address the issues previously raised.

Andy Ryley, agent, spoke in support of the application. Andy stated that the site was within a core employment area, with intensification of employment use required by policy. Andy added that the determination of any application must focus on the red line boundary, and the application could not be used to fix wider issues outside of this area beyond the applicant's control. Andy stated that the cumulative impact issue raised at the previous Committee could only be material if the scheme was for new employment development, and not redevelopment of previous employment development as proposed. With regards to air quality, Andy stated that the current uncontrolled heavy industrial use was more harmful than the proposed light industrial use, whilst the neighbouring residents would have been aware that they were moving next to an industrial site and HGV movements at the adjacent site moved within 3 metres of Lily May Court whereas there be no movements closer than 63 metres from the building at the proposed development. Andy stated that the proposals would not exacerbate the existing levels of particulates, which were at low levels as identified within the TRL report as commissioned by WBC. As such, Andy stated that there would be no decrease to the air quality and any noise impacts could be successfully mitigated. Andy added that the site had been fully assessed by Historic England and the Secretary of State, whilst the site was not locally or statutory listed or within a conservation area of an area of local character. Andy stated that it was recognised

that the site was of local interest due to its former use at Woodley airfield, and as such it was regarded as a non-heritage asset where a balanced judgement was required. In assessing this balance the significance and site context were important, however little historic fabric remained and there was no understanding or experience that aircraft manufacturing or repair occurred there. Andy stated that the airfield was long gone, and the buildings had been significantly altered and used for non-aviation commercial uses for a significant period of time. Andy stated that the benefits of the scheme included between 222 and 433 new jobs, both skilled and unskilled, in addition to the existing occupier remaining within Wokingham whilst relocating to the Suttons business park, whilst 20 vehicle movements would be removed from Viscount Way per day, in addition to around 2700m² of additional commercial floorspace within modern energy efficient buildings. Andy added that other benefits included increased separation distances to homes on the eastern side by at least 7.5m with enhanced landscaping, reduced noise from the current use due through improved design and orientation of buildings, 100 trees being planted, new wildlife habitats created, a contribution to WBC's employment skills plan, whilst the applicant was also willing to provide a small memorial or plaque at the front of the site to recognise the previous use of the site. Andy agreed with the planning officer's judgement that the balanced judgement weighed heavily in favour of the benefits of the scheme whilst according with national and local planning policy, and asked that the application be approved.

Shirley Boyt, ward member, spoke in objection to the application. Shirley stated that she was disappointed to see that whilst some of the concerns raised by members and residents at the last meeting had been listened to, others had been discounted or ignored. Shirley stated that nothing new had been presented by officers in terms of the heritage aspects of the building, and queried what steps had been taken to evaluate whether the façade of the building could be maintained, or whether alternative protections such as local listing had been explored. Shirley stated that existing HGV movements on the site were between 7 and 10 per day, whilst the additional information received showed an additional increase of 3 HGV movements per hour, or over 100 movements per week. Shirley noted that if one or more of the units were to become a distribution centre this number would significantly increase, and asked for modelling on this and the worst case scenario for HGV movements. Shirley felt that signage alone would not stop drivers using a navigation system from turning into Viscount Way using Miles Way. Shirley queried how vehicles turning onto Viscount Way in error would be prevented from using Gemini Road, a residential road, to access Headley Road East. Shirley felt that the splay would have to be redesigned so that no vehicles could turn right into that service road. Shirley raised concern that if enforcement of the access condition and implementation of the delivery and service plan was left to the site owner or the tenant, it would not be carried out. Shirley queried what power WBC would retain to ensure that good practice was maintained at all times. Shirley questioned why the cumulative impact of pollution was not material, as it was material to residents who were in despair at the prospect of additional noise and pollution. Shirley stated that unit 10 would be far too close to dwellings at Bakers Place and felt that the proposed mitigation was inadequate, and queried why an environmental impact assessment was not needed. Shirley stated that the cumulative impact of noise and airborne pollution from this development must be considered within the context of the wider area as per paragraph 185 of the NPPF. Shirley acknowledged that the new application could not be expected to resolve existing problems, but equally it should not be allowed to make things worse. Shirley stated that the health and wellbeing of residents should outweigh all other considerations, and urged the Committee to refuse the application.

Stephen Conway stated that there were three main concerns with this application, being noise, air quality and the design and heritage aspect of the proposals. Stephen added that the expert professional advice presented in relation to highways including HGV movements and environmental health concerns including noise and air pollution would require the Committee to evidence convincing data to be able to challenge this advice, as otherwise this would be difficult to defend at appeal. Stephen stated that the air quality survey carried out at Lily May Court was undertaken during the winter months when air particulate levels were lower, and noted that a deferral could allow for a further survey to be undertaken over the summer to assess whether the situation was any different. Stephen noted that in the event of a further deferral, the applicant would be very likely to go straight to appeal on non-determination, which would be unfortunate as residents wanted to find a way to retain the heritage asset. Whilst Historic England did not feel the site was worth of listing, the NPPF stated that a balanced judgement was required when assessing non-designated heritage assets. The officer judgement was that the benefits of the scheme outweighed the significance of the building, whereas the alternate view of a significant amount of local residents was that the building was of significant historic value and should be preserved. Stephen was of the opinion that the only ground to refuse the application at present was as it failed to preserve the non-designated heritage asset, as the NPPF allowed for a balanced view to be taken on this particular ground, whereas issues such as highways and environmental health would require specific data and evidence to go against the expert professional advice given.

Gary Cowan stated that there was a balanced view to be taken with regards to the non-designated heritage asset. Gary added that paragraph nine of the report outlined benefits including reduced noise from the current use through improved design and orientation of the buildings, which could not be quantified as information had not been provided as to what would be present within the buildings, for example a distribution centre. With reference to not making existing problems outside of the red line worse, Gary stated that the red line could be seen as inconsequential as at the Arborfield Garrison SDL a portion of land outside of the red line was granted development due to the proximity to facilities within the red line boundary. Gary felt that until the specific details of vehicle movements and use of the site were provided, he could not support the application. Gary added that you could not stop drivers using the road with a sign unless there were barriers in place. Gary commented that the trees planted on the site should be monitored to ensure that they survived and grew. Graham Vaughan, case officer, stated that any reference to a distribution centre was incorrect as the scheme was not for a large scale warehouse but instead was an application for mixed use B2,B8 and E(g)iii, within relatively small units. The current site had no restrictions on the amount of hours worked or on delivery times, whilst proposed units 1 to 8 were deliberately placed to allow all activity to occur within two buildings. Graham stated that the officer recommendation, supported by technical consultees, was that the impacts in terms of noise and pollution would be no worse than at present, and it was important to understand the red line boundary and what development surrounded it. Graham noted that whilst it did fall to WBC to monitor tree planting, the resources required to monitor all trees relating to planning applications in the Borough was unrealistic. Graham stated that the delivery and service plan would assist in stopping HGV vehicles using the wrong roads, whilst signage would also be included and the applicant would write this into the lease of the units, though this specific aspect was not materially relevant to the scheme. Gary raised concerns that the site could be allowed to operate at all times, creating considerable issues for residents, whilst it was disappointing that trees were not surveyed during the 5-year plan which went against the declared climate emergency.

Chris Bowring stated that if the Committee were minded to refuse the application on highways or environmental health grounds, this would go against the professional technical advice given. Chris queried how members might consider the additional HGV movements as a reason for refusal when this was currently unrestricted. Graham Vaughan stated that determination needed to be made of the harm in planning terms of additional HGV movements as a result of the proposals whilst considering the existing situation. Chris Easton, Head of Transport, Drainage and Compliance, commented that the existing floorspace was approximately 14,000m², and the proposals did not show a significant increase, whilst officers had assessed the trip rates on the floorspace of the existing buildings and added the increase in floorspace, giving an additional 3 HGV movements per hour. The parking management plan was conditioned, and additional details could be worked up with the Parish Council and local members, whilst a lot of buildings would not facilitate HGVs due to their smaller size.

Chris Bowring commented that should the application be approved, environmental health officers could get involved with the site should the situation be worse than anticipated.

John Kaiser felt that very little information had been provided with regards to the future use of the site, whilst it was known that residents would be living next door to it 24/7. John stated that he could not support the application in the absence of these details. John felt that a residential and industrial mix was not the best use of the land.

Andrew Mickleburgh queried what the NPPF said in terms of cumulative impact, sought details as to what investigation had taken place to retain the façade of the building, queried what the main sources of noise and air pollution were currently on the site and the reasoning for an expected reduction based on the proposals, and queried whether the secretary of state had responded to Historic England's decision to not list the building. Graham Vaughan stated that no discussions had been undertaken in relation to the façade as this was not a requirement of the planning process, and the Committee were here to determine the planning application in front of them and officers had made a balanced judgement which was that the benefits of the proposals were deemed to outweigh the local impact. However, the Committee was perfectly at liberty to overturn this recommendation if they felt the balance went the other way. Historic England had visited the site and had considered local evidence and had decided not to list it, whilst the Secretary of State had confirmed this decision.

David Cornish stated that the site appeared in need of work during the recent site visit, and noted that if the site remained as industrial use, then this would attract additional HGV movements. Whilst highways officers could come up with measures to restrict vehicle movements, air pollution would not respect the red line boundary. David questioned whether the heritage concern was with the fabric of the building or with the historic use of the building, in which case a monument could represent the previous use. David added that there had been a significant amount of comments and concerns raised by residents, and felt that deferral would be an appropriate option to allow an updated proposal from the applicant, an updated air quality assessment carried out during the summer months, and additional details relating to vehicle movements. Graham Vaughan stated that deferral of the application would increase the risk of an appeal, and the application needed to be deferred or refused on the right grounds to avoid costs being awarded at an appeal. In addition, an inspector may not necessarily concur with the recommended conditions which may result in the same development with less conditions and costs being awarded.

Stephen Conway stated that the Committee was faced with a difficult decision, as a deferral would very likely result in an appeal, whilst the only solid ground for refusal was that the NPPF allowed local planning authorities to take a balanced view on non-designated heritage assets. Stephen stated that he placed very significant weight on the views of a vast number of local residents, who saw this building as a vital part of the built heritage of Woodley.

Chris Bowring commented that the petition of 4,500 residents in favour of retaining this building carried weight.

Gary Cowan felt that the report was flawed as it did not provide sufficient information regarding HGV movements, whilst he was disheartened to hear about costs being awarded as that was not a material consideration. Stephen Conway stated that a refusal based solely on failure to retain a non-designated heritage asset did not prejudice interested parties addressing a future planning inspector on issues such as air quality.

Stephen Conway proposed to refuse the application based on the failure to preserve the Miles Aircraft Factory Headquarters building or façade. Stephen sought officer guidance on this reason for refusal.

Brian Conlon, Operational Lead – Development Management, stated that this was a complex application with lots of competing issues, and the officer balance was not a binary decision with some aspects being more quantifiable and others, such as future occupancy, less so. If the Committee were minded to defer the application, clear reasons needed to be given as to what differences were present at this point compared to when the application was previously deferred. With regards to the proposed wording for a potential refusal motion, Brian stated that reference to the façade was not necessarily as strong as the proposal was to remove the building and therefore that removal was the harm in planning terms.

Stephen Conway proposed that the application be refused as it failed to preserve the Miles Aircraft Factory Headquarters building. This was seconded by John Kaiser, and upon being put to the vote the motion was carried.

RESOLVED That application number 213106 be refused as it failed to preserve the Miles Aircraft Factory Headquarters building.

9. APPLICATION NO.220654 - 14 CHILTERN DRIVE, CHARVIL

Proposal: Application to vary condition 2 of application 212989 for the proposed erection of a single storey rear extension with 1 no. roof light following demolition of existing conservatory and existing rear extension (part retrospective). Condition 2 refers to the approved plans and the variation is to allow an increase in the height of the roof. (Retrospective).

Applicant: Mr Harguns

The Committee considered a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 135 to 152.

The Committee were advised that updates contained within the Supplementary Planning Agenda included:

- Clarification that Councillor Sam Akhtar listed the item due to the potential impact on neighbours due to loss of privacy;
- Updated condition 5.

Danny Murphy, neighbour, spoke in objection to the application. Danny stated that the ward member for Charvil, Sam Akhtar, had previously addressed the Committee to advise that he had made comments on the application and had acted as a mediator between the local residents and the owner. Danny added that Sam had in fact not commented on the original retrospective application, nor did he comment on this application, and not even to have it listed. Danny commented that Sam had not acted as a mediator between the applicant and any residents, and the Supplementary Planning Agenda had noted the reason for listing as the application having a potential impact on the neighbours due to loss of privacy. Danny queried whether this was the only point that the Committee could base their decision on, or whether other issues that residents raised concerns about could be considered. Danny stated that he objected to the application based on persistent breaches and breaching on and over his boundary, resulting in the cumulative loss of light and amenity. Danny stated that whilst he was happy that so many members managed to attend the site visit, he was disappointed that residents were not allowed to engage in discussions, and members subsequently had to rely solely on the word of the planning officer, who Danny noted had knowingly accepted inaccurate drawings and had used them in decision making for the previous retrospective planning application. Danny added that the planning officer had used an image at the last Committee meeting from a Google Street view to prove that the extension could not be seen from the street, despite this image being from July 2019 and showing no recent extensions. Danny referenced a recent photograph which showed the recent extension from the street and the obtrusive angles which were also visible from the street. Danny stated that a photo was shown at the previous Committee meeting which was taken in November 2021, prior to the retrospective application being decided whilst being in contrast to the up to date photograph. Danny stated that the plans had since changed again, however no attempt had been made to correct the inaccurate details that had hidden the changes on the western boundary. Danny felt that these issues were indicative of his experience in dealing with the Council over the past 11 months, whereby anguish and stress had been caused through 3 sets of plans, 2 enforcement investigations, 2 retrospective planning applications, 2 Committee meetings and a site visit. Danny added that the reasons for this retrospective application, including the steel and additional height, were all known prior to the original retrospective application being decided however they were not dealt with at the time. Danny queried why the planning teams accepted and continued to accept inaccurate plans. Danny felt that it was clear to see why residents had lost faith in the planning process when their voices were constantly dismissed whilst the Council manipulated facts to support their decision. Danny asked that the Committee refuse the application, and consider the previous developments and breaches and cumulative effects on neighbours within the wider area.

Jeff Asemi, agent, spoke in support of the application. Jeff stated that the application was to vary condition 2 of application 212989, which was approved for a rear extension of number 14 Chiltern Drive. Jeff stated that the extension replaced the previous structure which was higher than the current extension, where there was a pitched room adjacent to number 12 Chiltern Drive which was higher than the current flat roof that replaced it. Jeff stated that the current extension was smaller in length than the original structure, whilst photos had been submitted to the planning officer showing no shadows being cast to the adjacent property at number 12. The properties on Pennine Way were unaffected by the development because of the walls at number 14, and Jeff felt that their objection should be

dismissed. Jeff stated that the small height increase was on the roof away from number 12, and it was an existing steel structure which replaced the previous extension. Jeff added that the skylights were in the centre of the extension away from the adjacent properties, resulting in no overlooking or loss of light impacts on the neighbouring properties. Jeff added that the applicant had never tried to hide the height increase, and had invited neighbours from number 12 round to discuss the changes. Jeff condoned some of the language used by objectors, and thanked the Committee for taking their time to visit the site for consideration of this application, whilst the applicant was refused a meeting with the parish Council to discuss the application.

Sam Akhtar, ward member, commented on the application. Sam thanked the Committee for their time and consideration of this application, and added that he was really keen for both parties to get a resolution matter with a view to move on in the future.

Andrew Mickleburgh sought clarity that the previous structure was a glass conservatory and not brick, and stated that the impression he got at the site visit was that the increased height was an issue and the building was overbearing, whilst querying whether an informative might be reasonable if the application was approved encouraging the applicant to install blinds in the skylight to shield neighbouring properties from light pollution. James Fuller, case officer, stated that the previous structure was a glass conservatory, and added that the size of the rooflight was not excessive. Brian Conlon, Operational Lead – Development Management, stated that there was no legal strength given to informatives, and should the extension have been 25cm lower there would have been no restrictions on how much light could be emitted, in the same way that planning policy could not restrict how much light an individual emitted from their bedroom window.

Stephen Conway stated that he had not been able to attend the site visit, which had not allowed him to fully appreciate any bulk and massing. Stephen stated his sympathy for Mr Murphy, who appeared to have persistent problems with multiple applications with several being retrospective, with differences in built form compared to what was approved, which had created tension. Stephen commented that he would rely on the impressions from members who attended the site visit as to whether the development was overbearing.

Gary Cowan stated that he felt sorry for the neighbours, and added that he would likely abstain as he had not been able to attend the site visit. Gary queried whether more than one retrospective planning application was allowed. Brian Conlon confirmed that an application could not be refused purely based on the fact that it was retrospective, and noted that the same substantive application could not be submitted twice.

David Cornish was of the opinion that officers had clearly felt that the original condition was proportional and necessary, and saw no reason to agree the condition was wrong in the first instance and should now be changed. Brian Conlon stated that the Committee needed to consider whether the change between the approved plans and the proposal was sufficiently harmful to refuse, and not the principle of the change.

John Kaiser queried whether this application would be approved as a whole if it was submitted now. Brian Conlon stated that as this application was being recommended for approval, considering it was built in its entirety, suggested that the Council supported the development, whilst noting that this application was not seeking permission for the whole development as all but 25cm of the structure was approved already.

Chris Bowring was of the opinion that such a small increase in height was not detrimental in planning terms, and questioned what impact a reduction of 25cm would have.

Andrew Mickleburgh stated that after considering all comments made in addition to the agenda paperwork, he wished to move a motion to approve the application.

RESOLVED That application number 220654 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 136 to 137, and updated condition 5 as set out within the Supplementary Planning Agenda.

10. APPLICATION NO.220391 - LAND AT ARBORFIELD GARRISON PARCEL P (WEST OF PRINCESS MARINA DRIVE, EAST OF SHEERLANDS ROAD, SOUTH OF ROWCROFT ROAD), BARKHAM, RG2 9ND

Proposal: Application for approval of Reserved Matters pursuant to Outline Planning Consent O/2014/2280 dated 02/04/2015. The Reserved Matters (access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale) comprise details of 43 dwellings within Parcel P with access via Princess Marina Drive, associated internal access roads, parking, landscaping, open space, footpaths and drainage.

Applicant: Taylor Wimpey West London

The Committee considered a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 153 to 188.

The Committee were advised that there were no updates contained within the Supplementary Planning Agenda.

Ettore Poggi, resident, spoke in objection to the application. Ettore stated that residents of both new and existing dwellings had objected to the application due to the lack of anticipated infrastructure and facilities. There had been a lack of progress on the district centre, the linear parks, alternative green spaces, allotments and sporting facilities. Ettore stated that one of the conditions for approval was that nothing shall be deemed to effect or vary the original conditions imposed by the original planning permission. However, Ettore stated that the northern neighbourhood centre had not materialised and was now used as a Crest Nicholson sales office. Ettore stated that various conditions related to the green infrastructure with requirements to submit phasing plans had not been adhered to, whilst the linear area from the stables to the lake should have been landscaped years ago, and the park near the lake which should have opened this summer had not. Ettore stated that the lead developer should have refurbished the sports field and pavilion and made them available for use according to the triggers within the S106 agreement, whilst these triggers had passed and progress had not been realised. Ettore felt that commitments to the community were continuously broken and the community was repeatedly being misled. Ettore queried what confidence the community could have in the lead developer of the Council that the district centre would materialise, that the sports pitches and pavilion would be a reality, or that alternative green space and linear parks would be completed. Ettore stated that the application for the district centre was scheduled for later this year, with completion in phases between 2023 and 2024. Ettore asked what assurances could be given that the timelines would be followed and adhered to, and asked that the Committee defer this application until some of the significant outstanding infrastructures were undertaken. Should the application be approved, Ettore asked that this be subject to plans for the district centre being submitted for approval within specific time limits, linear parks and sports field being completed within specified time limits, a reasonable start and end

date for each project being agreed and non-compliance dealt with, and the current site allocated for the district centre being cleared of rubble. Ettore noted that the application felt within the village green character area, Parcel P, and hoped that the relevant planning history would be adhered to.

Michelle Quan, agent, spoke in support of the application. Michelle stated that the Arborfield Garrison site was granted outline planning permission in 2015 for a mixed-use development including 2,000 new homes and supporting infrastructure. Taylor Wimpey acquired Parcel P from Crest Nicholson in October 2021, while Crest Nicholson remained the primary development delivery partner for Arborfield Garrison, and are responsible for delivery of the wider site and surrounding infrastructure, whilst Taylor Wimpey were solely responsible for the delivery of Parcel P. Michelle stated that the application before the Committee sought reserved matters approval for 43 high quality new homes ranging in size and type from two-bedroom apartments to four-bedroom houses. Michelle added that the proposals included 9 affordable homes, ensuring that the provision of affordable housing complied with the S106 requirement for the development. The applicant had worked hard alongside planning officers to ensure that the scheme complied with local and national planning policies, and met the aspirations of the associated design code. The development incorporated a variety of house types, materials and architectural details to provide interest and variation, whilst all dwellings met or exceeded national space standards. Michelle stated that the application provided parking provision up to Wokingham Borough Council's (WBC's) adopted standards, and included both visitor and unallocated parking spaces. The proposals also incorporated capacity for electric vehicle charging points for each property in addition to communal charging points. Michelle stated that 55 new trees would be planted as part of this development, in addition to new hedgerows, whilst the scheme had been carefully designed to retain all of the existing trees on site. A number of ecological enhancements were included, including hedgehog highways, bat boxes and bee bricks distributed throughout the development. Michelle commented that the proposals would realise a ten percent reduction in carbon emissions via a range of methods including the installation of photovoltaic panels. Michelle urged the Committee to approve the application.

John Kaiser stated that he was disappointed that Crest Nicholson had not delivered the infrastructure required for the wider SDL, and whilst some slowdowns could be expected due to the pandemic WBC had managed to deliver a new school during this time. John added that he would like to see officers working harder to ensure Crest Nicholson delivered on their requirements, however he did not feel that WBC could use a Taylor Wimpey application to remedy the issues caused by Crest Nicholson.

Gary Cowan commented that refusing an application for 43 houses would not speed up the delivery of the district centre or other infrastructure. Gary added that a bus would serve this development, whilst the car parking provision was at a reasonable level, and it was good to see the inclusion of electric vehicle charging points and photovoltaic panels.

David Cornish stated that housing developments were required to fulfil the Borough's housing number requirements, however he did share the frustrations raised by residents in relation to the lack of infrastructure. David felt that WBC needed to do more to pressure Crest Nicholson to deliver on their requirements, whilst there were innovative approaches to be able to get retailers into the district centre. Nick Chancellor, case officer, stated that officers were in regular discussions with Crest Nicholson, and it was vitally important that the development was delivered correctly and stood the test of time whilst being a commercial success which involved a process of pre-application and engagement. Nick

stated that there had been issues in attracting a supermarket operator for the district centre however they did now have interest to take on a tenancy which was of vital importance and was now driving things forward.

Stephen Conway commented that the Committee needed to focus on this specific application, and in his view the appearance of the site was acceptable for a reserved matters application.

Chris Bowring queried that if Parcel P was reliant on the district centre, why a condition was not included requiring the district centre to be built prior to occupation of units. Nick Chancellor stated that there were conditions attached to the outline planning permission which discussed phasing to some extent, however this was a different developer and consideration of the phasing was a separate matter to consideration of whether the application itself was acceptable.

John Kaiser stated that community interest companies charged residents between £300 and £400 per year, which meant residents were paying both WBC and these companies rates whilst the developer was not holding up their end of the agreement and delivering infrastructure. WBC had delivered on their requirements by delivering the roads and a new school. John felt that pressure should be placed on developers wherever possible to stop them putting in community interest companies which were just a way of making money, which caused nothing but heartache for residents and ward members. John added that if S106 and CIL contributions were paid rather than these companies being set up then WBC would deliver the required infrastructure at such developments, which was more preferable all round.

RESOLVED That application number 220391 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 154 to 157.

11. APPLICATION NO.220359 - BRICK BARN, WHITE HILL, REMENHAM HILL, WOKINGHAM, RG9 3HN

This item was withdrawn from the agenda.

12. APPLICATION NO.220321 - BRICK BARN, WHITE HILL, REMENHAM HILL, WOKINGHAM, RG9 3HN

This item was withdrawn from the agenda.

13. APPLICATION NO.220332 - BRICK BARN, WHITE HILL, REMENHAM HILL, WOKINGHAM, RG9 3HN

This item was withdrawn from the agenda.

14. APPLICATION NO.221007 - 302 LONDON ROAD, WOKINGHAM, RG40 1RD

Proposal: Full application for the proposed conversion of existing integral dog kennel to an end of life/care room and erection of a single storey side/rear extension to form a replacement kennel.

Applicant: Mulberry House Vets

The Committee considered a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 289 to 308.

The Committee were advised that there were no updates contained within the Supplementary Planning Agenda.

Stephen Conway was of the opinion that this was a modest application and he could not see any material harm should it be approved.

Gary Cowan queried how long the vets had been in-situ. Simon Taylor, case officer, stated that the vets had been operating from the site since 2018 and no complaints had been received by the Council in relation to noise from dogs.

RESOLVED That application number 221007 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 290 to 292.

15. APPLICATION NO.220034 - LAMBS FARM BUSINESS PARK, BASINGSTOKE ROAD, SWALLOWFIELD

Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of 3No business units within the business park with additional vehicle parking and ancillary works.

Applicant: Winkworth

The Committee considered a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 309 to 344.

The Committee were advised that updates contained within the Supplementary Planning Agenda included clarification that the application had been listed by Councillor Stuart Munro due to the impact of the development on the countryside and the increased level of activity on the site having further adverse effects on traffic levels and highway safety.

Ian Fullerton, Swallowfield Parish Council, spoke in objection to the application. Ian stated that there had been an increase in intensity on the site over the past years, and whilst the Parish Council supports the applicants contribution to the rural economy and local employment, there comes a point when the growing intensity of this otherwise beneficial development became unsustainable for the local community whilst being a threat to the safety of neighbouring residents. The Parish Council's primary concern related to the proximity of the site to Lamb's Lane Primary School, which was situated a short distance from the entry to the site. The school felt that existing traffic levels were already excessive, and there was already anxiety amongst parents with regards to the risks to their children. Ian stated that the school operated from the morning till early evening, and the catchment area for the school meant that many pupils and parents used pavements immediately opposite the site entrance to walk children to and from school. In addition, there were two houses directly opposite the site entrance which had been misrepresented within the original application. With the risk of accident a real possibility, the Parish Council felt that traffic levels needed to be reduced on Back Lane, and not increased even marginally. Ian queried when incremental growth of the site would end, and stated that the Parish Council strongly opposed the application.

Roderic Vaughan, resident, spoke in objection to the application. Roderic stated that the business park was established in 1998, and 35 subsequent planning applications had since been submitted. Over this time, the site had expanded by eight-hundred percent from 0.5 hectares to 8 hectares, with the site operating 24/7 and 365 days per year. Roderic added that the entrance to the business park was situated just 50m from the junction on Back Lane and a similar distance to Lambs Lane primary school, with two

residential properties located directly opposite the site entrance which had been ignored in this planning application. The business park was located within the rural parish of Swallowfield and was not located within a designated area for major development. Roderic stated that expansion in this sensitive area had continued despite Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) stating in 2012 that there was only scope for limited further development. In 2016 it was stated that development was fully developed when a proposal to build towards Lambs Lane to the west was refused at appeal. Roderic was of the opinion that expansion under the pretext of limited further development had become deeply flawed, and the cumulative negative impacts on the environment, highway safety, the local amenity and on need for any development to be sustainable were now being ignored. Roderic added that the proposal conflicted with a number of WBC policies, including sustainable development as there was no contribution to net zero carbon. Roderic stated that residents had objected to this application on the grounds of high building density, whilst attempts to previously list the site as a core employment area had failed which would have allowed for planned future development. Roderic concluded by stating that any development needed to be sustainable and not negatively impact its surrounding area, and on this basis the application should be refused.

Chris Hough, on behalf of the applicant, spoke in support of the application. Chris stated that the applicant was a private family-owned business which had owned and managed the business park for over 20 years. Chris added that the site met the needs of a variety of small businesses through the provision of flexible space, whilst the site was predominantly occupied by local businesses. The site was meticulously managed and maintained and enjoyed a high level of security, with close access to the motorway and a spacious layout. Chris stated that there was a continued strong demand for space on the site which operated at a one-hundred percent occupancy level with any vacancies usually filled very quickly through local advertisement. The business park had grown incrementally over time in accordance with planning policies, whilst this proposal was for 3 additional small commercial units. The site was previously developed land and needed to be viewed in the context of the existing large adjacent buildings. Chris stated that no objections had been received from highways officers, and he urged the Committee to approve the application which was of small scale and was in accordance with planning policies and guidance.

Stuart Munro, ward member, spoke in objection to the application. Stuart stated that he had lived near the site for 36 years and had seen the site change from a small farm building to a very large site through incremental development. Stuart commented that he did not list applications lightly, however there was so much local resistance to this application and the previous inspectors decisions citing the lack of need for additional development needed to be considered. Stuart stated that there was so much concern in relation to the school that there was a project underway within the highways department to consider restricting traffic from the north to the builders' merchants only and from the south to the business park only, not allowing it to traverse to the schools. Stuart noted that this evidenced that the highways departments did have some concerns regarding this site. Stuart stated that the site had increased in size by eight-hundred percent, and urged the Committee to be consistent with previous appeal decisions and refuse further development within this countryside area.

Stephen Conway stated that a lot of concerns had been raised with regards to highways, and the Committee had been given professional advice from highways officers stating that this application had been assessed and no objection had been raised. With regards to further expansion within the countryside, the officer opinion was that this application constituted an appropriate rural enterprise within the countryside. Stephen queried why

this application did not represent excessive encroachment significantly away from the original buildings. Marcus Watts, case officer, stated that the three proposed units represented further limited development of the site within the constraints of the site. The planning history indicated that the east of the site was considered as being in close proximity to the original farm buildings, which was referenced in the appeal decision in 2016. Towards the west of the site was far more open than the southeast corner. The NPPF was clear that previously developed land needed to be considered, including the curtilage of the developed land, and the officer opinion was that the proposed development sat comfortably amongst the existing buildings and were within the curtilage of the site.

Stephen Conway queried whether there would come a point where further applications to expand the site to the western boundary and the open countryside would become unacceptable. Marcus Watts stated that any future application would need to be determined on its own merits, however the inspector had indicated that the west was moving towards open countryside whilst the east had already been identified as acceptable for these business units.

Gary Cowan stated that the site had grown over time and was located next to a local primary school. Gary felt that what was being proposed was in all likelihood a limit to the possible development on the site, and he would be comfortable to approve this application if further expansion to the west was deemed inappropriate.

John Kaiser queried whether this additional proposed development would force vehicles to park off-site and on the road. Marcus Watts stated that highways officers had assessed the scheme and were content that it was very unlikely for off-road parking to occur as a result of this application. Chris Easton, Head of Transport, Drainage and Compliance, stated that there was already a fair section of double yellow lines and zig-zag zones outside of the school and very near to the application site. Only one slight accident had been recorded on this road over the last 5 years involving only 1 vehicle, whilst the school had a good pick up and drop off zone which kept the road clear.

David Cornish queried whether the speed limit on Back Lane was 20mph already, and if not whether this could be a consideration, as many schools in the Borough had this arrangement. Chris Easton stated that physical measures were usually required to restrict an area to 20mph at all times, and required enforcement from the police. Marcus Watts confirmed that 20mph advisory flashing signs during school drop of and collection times were in place along Back Lane.

RESOLVED That application number 220034 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 310 to 313.

16. APPLICATION NO.220825 - 39 THE TERRACE, WOKINGHAM

Items 16 and 17 were debated together due to their associated nature, with separate votes having taken place. The substantive combined minutes are contained within minute item 16.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey declared an interest in this application and left the room for its duration. Andrew Mickleburgh became the Vice-Chair in the chair.

Proposal: Householder application for proposed single storey rear extension, installation of glazed turret spiral staircase, extension of existing first floor roof terrace with 2No.

rooflights, new terracing, lawns and stone pathing to the rear, and associated fenestration, following removal of integral spiral staircase.

Applicant: Mr and Miss Paul and Sarah Warn and Perkins

The Committee considered a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 345 to 382.

The Committee were advised that there were no updates contained within the Supplementary Planning Agenda.

Imogen Shepherd-DuBey, Wokingham Town Council, spoke in objection to the application. Imogen stated that this application involved a listed building within the conservation area of Wokingham and was the former home of William Martin who was the mayor of Wokingham Town Council. Martin's pool was an outdoor pool area which was built by Martin using his own money, and it included bridges, fountains, rockeries and caves within a grotto. Imogen recalled the outrage when the pool was sold and demolished by Wokingham District Council. Imogen raised concerns in relation to the rockery, which was constructed in the 1920's in the same style as Martin's pool whilst originally being open to the public. Imogen felt that the information contained within the third party heritage report did not fully acknowledge the full heritage of the site. Imogen understood that the current family wished to modernise their space, however felt that Wokingham would lose some of its heritage should the rockery be removed completely, which the Wokingham Society concurred with.

Paul Warn, applicant, spoke in support of the application. Paul stated they had purchased the property as they loved its history and they had previously owned a listed building in Barkham. On purchase, they had accepted that the property did require significant investment to move it towards its next stage and to futureproof it for future owners. The design brief was to preserve and blend with significant historical features whilst improving upon some of the functional aspects to be more in keeping with modern living. A lot of work and efforts had gone in to ensuring that guidelines and policies were followed, including working closely with architects, undertaking historical research, and commissioning a detailed heritage assessment. There was a desire to restore the prominent historical Italianate aspect of the garden, the cross pond and associated brick works and to bring this design into a new terrace to replace the current rockery transition from the back of the house and the existing Italianate aspect. Paul stated that it was a key to the redevelopment was to use reclaimed bricks and replicating wall and pillar design seen in the existing Italianate garden and within the former Martin's pool. The current circular design feature seen in the pond would also be replicated within the lawn terrace design. Paul added that it was neither the expectation or the intention for the new terrace design to be of lower maintenance than the rockery, however the garden as a whole did require a lot of maintenance without direct access from the rear as previously existed when the meadow and pool were present, nor from the side. A such, a functional aspect of the design was to create more direct access through the garage and house but not via the utility space. Paul stated that other functional aspects to the scheme included the repair of the porous roof and back wall to the utility room, increased kitchen size, and to create an occasional bedroom and study. The house designs were of modest scale and follow on from work carried out in the 1980 and 2000. Paul added that the design drew on original characteristics including landscaped steps in a contemporary manner whilst maintaining the narrative of the building. It was difficult to determine how much of the rockery was original, and the rockery did not feature within the historic plans. The paths had been augmented and materially redesigned in the 1980's, whilst the water features within the

rockery contained plastic piping within concrete and modern electrics. Paul noted that the bridge structure constituted of reinforced concrete and was in disrepair, which would require material amendment and repair in any case to improve its safety to a modern standard. Mature TPOd trees at the rear of the garden were to be retained, whilst some younger and poorer quality trees were due to be removed and replaced with a greater number of trees and a number of oak species. The staircase within the Victorian part of the house was not being removed, whilst the steel staircase installed in the 2000's was proposed for removal.

Kate Cooper, architect, spoke in support of the application. Kate stated that this had been a thorough and lengthy process which had taken into account a wide range of considerations. Kate felt that the application needed to be viewed in its current context and condition with no public access, whilst officers had not called for it to be retained. Kate asked that the Committee approve the application.

Rachel Bishop-Firth, ward member, spoke in objection to the application. Rachel stated that she was not opposed to the development overall, and understood the wishes of the family to extend and modernise their house and garden so that it was easier to maintain. Rachel hoped that in the process a piece of Wokingham's history was not lost. Rachel stated that properties on The Terrace were some of the most beautiful and distinct within Wokingham, whilst the Wokingham Society felt that the removal of the staircase would affect the layout of the listed building. The bridges, sunken pathways and rockery area were uniquely designed and are the last remnants of the unusual design found at Martin's pool before it was demolished. Rachel asked that trees were retained wherever possible. Should the application be approved, Rachel asked that as much of this unique garden as possible was retained.

Stephen Conway commented that there was no longer any public access to the garden, and noted that should the rockery be retained it would still not be publicly seen.

John Kaiser queried whether the garden area counted as part of the built heritage. Tariq Bailey-Biggs, case officer, confirmed that the gardens were listed.

Gary Cowan commented that he had lived in a Grade 2 listed building, and he had found in general that occupiers of these properties were people who go on with the very best of intentions, and he believed that this was the case for this application.

Stephen Conway was of the opinion that certain historical features, for example the Italianate style, were being retained which was central to the design.

Andrew Mickleburgh noted that the heritage statement included comment that the existing structure in that part of the garden were totally unsuited to domestic gardens.

RESOLVED That application number 220825 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 346 to 348.

17. APPLICATION NO.220826 - 39 THE TERRACE, WOKINGHAM

Items 16 and 17 were debated together due to their associated nature, with sperate votes having taken place. The substantive combined minutes are contained within minute item 16.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey declared an interest in this application and left the room for its duration. Andrew Mickleburgh became the Vice-Chair in the chair.

Proposal: Application for Listed Building Consent for the proposed single storey rear extension, installation of glazed turret spiral staircase, extension of existing first floor roof terrace with 2No. rooflights, new terracing, lawns and stone pathing to the rear, and associated fenestration, following removal of integral spiral staircase.

Applicant: Mr and Miss Paul and Sarah Warn and Perkins

The Committee considered a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 383 to 418.

The Committee were advised that there were no updates contained within the Supplementary Planning Agenda.

RESOLVED That application number 220826 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 383 to 386.

18. APPLICATION NO.221355 - 251 LONDON ROAD, WOKINGHAM

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey resumed the Chair.

Proposal: Householder application for the proposed erection of a single storey rear extension.

Applicant: Mrs Anita Walker

The Committee considered a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 419 to 436.

The Committee were advised that there were no updates contained within the Supplementary Planning Agenda.

Chris Bowring proposed that the meeting be extended by 30 minutes to a maximum finishing time of 11pm. This proposal was seconded by Stephen Conway and carried.

The Committee noted that this application was only before the Committee due to the applicant being a member of staff, and there appeared no material reason to go against the officer recommendation.

RESOLVED That application number 221355 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 419 to 420.

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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
WOKINGHAM BOROUGH WELLBEING BOARD
HELD ON 9 JUNE 2022 FROM 5.00 PM TO 6.05 PM**

Present

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| David Hare | Wokingham Borough Council |
| Prue Bray | Wokingham Borough Council |
| Clive Jones | Wokingham Borough Council |
| Charles Margetts | Wokingham Borough Council |
| Philip Bell | Voluntary Sector |
| Tracy Daszkiewicz | Director Public Health - Berkshire West |
| Nick Fellows | Voluntary Sector |
| Susan Parsonage | Chief Executive |
| Belinda Seston | NHS Berkshire West CCG |
| Viki Elliot-King (substituting Helen Watson) | Assistant Director Strategic and Operational Delivery |
| Ingrid Slade (substituting Matt Pope) | Assistant Director Population Health, Integration and Partnerships |

Also Present:

| | |
|--|--|
| Madeleine Shopland | Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist |
| Gabriel Agboado | Public Health |
| Lyndon Mead | Public Health |
| Amanda Lyons, Interim Director Strategic Delivery and Partnership, BOB ICS | |
| Ashlee Mulimba | Healthy Dialogues |

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN 2022/23

RESOLVED: That Councillor David Hare be elected Chairman for the 2022/23 municipal year.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN 2022/23

RESOLVED: That Dr Debbie Milligan be appointed as Vice Chairman for the 2022/23 municipal year.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Graham Ebers, Debbie Milligan, Steve Moore, Matt Pope and Helen Watson.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 10 February 2022 was confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

6. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

7. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

8. PHARMACEUTICAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT (2022-25) CONSULTATION

The Board received a report on the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (2022-25) consultation.

During the discussion of this item, the following points were made:

- Gabriel Agboado explained that Health and Wellbeing Boards had responsibility for developing and updating the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA). It had to be updated every three years or sooner if there were significant changes in the needs for pharmaceutical services.
- Due to Covid pressures Healthy Dialogues Ltd had been commissioned to develop the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment by the Berkshire East Public Health Hub. The Board noted the membership of the PNA Steering Group.
- A key element of changes in need related to population growth. It was anticipated that within the lifetime of the iteration of the PNA the Borough's population would increase by 2.4% to 179,888. The population aged 15-24 years was expected to increase by 7.3% by 2025, and the population aged 65 and over was expected to increase by 6.4%. With regards to housing development there could be an increase of approximately 3,451 dwellings, with the biggest increase expected to be seen in Finchampstead South.
- Gabriel Agboado outlined the accessibility considerations for the location of pharmacies, including using a 1-mile radius from the centre of a postcode of each pharmacy. In addition, 20 minutes by car was considered accessible. Where areas of no coverage were identified other factors were taken into account.
- Overall, there was a good pharmacy coverage to provide essential services across the Borough within and outside normal working hours. There was also sufficient provision for advanced services to meet residents' needs and sufficient provision of other NHS services. There was potential for demand for some of the services to outstrip supply in the future. This prospect was potentially being mitigated by the availability of such services being provided by other providers.
- There would be a statutory consultation period running from 10 June to 9 August. The final PNA would be published on 1 October, following sign off from the Board.
- In response to a question from Councillor Bray, Ashlee Mulimba stated that if there was a major change to the population or housing levels during the lifetime of the PNA that had been unforeseen, the Board could opt to revise the PNA earlier or add an appendix to it.
- Councillor Margetts commented that very few pharmacies had signed up to offer Covid vaccinations. Ingrid Slade explained that any pharmacy could have applied to provide this service but only two had done so. Councillor Bray added that some pharmacies had been advertised online as being bookable vaccination centres when this had not been the case. It was noted that the quality of services provided was governed by the commissioners. However, it was felt that the consultation period could be used to help also gain an idea of residents' experiences of local pharmacy services.
- Councillor Hare questioned whether any data was yet available on the stop smoking service in pharmacies for patients who had started their stop smoking journey in hospital, and was informed that there was not yet as it was a new service.

RESOLVED: That the Wokingham Borough Wellbeing Board:

- 1) Approves the draft Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA) to be taken to the statutory 60-day consultation from Friday 10/06/2022 to Tuesday 09/08/2022;
- 2) Comments on the draft Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment;
- 3) Considers the conclusions of the PNA relating to sufficiency of current and future service provision within pharmacies and access to these services, and decide whether the Health and Wellbeing Board members agree with the conclusions.
- 4) notes the next steps in the development of the PNA leading to its publication on 1st October 2022.

9. WOKINGHAM BOROUGH WELLBEING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT

The Board considered the Wokingham Borough Wellbeing Board Annual Report.

During the discussion of the item the following points were made;

- Lyndon Mead indicated that the report outlined the work of the Board and the sub groups over the previous year. Whilst Covid had had an impact, progress had still been made.
- Councillor Bray commented that the Children and Young People's Partnership had received a presentation on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, which she felt was much more user friendly and readable than previous iterations. Lyndon Mead stated that any feedback on the content and functionality of the JSNA would be welcomed.
- Councillor Jones asked what impact recruitment to the Children in Care CAMHS service would have on wait lists for assessment times and also the situation for those children who were not in care. Vikki Elliot King indicated that there would be a big reduction for those children who were in care. She would seek a clearer picture from the commissioners.

RESOLVED: That the Wokingham Borough Wellbeing Board annual report be noted, and recommended to Council for approval.

10. DEFINING THE BOB ICS DEVELOPMENT ROADMAP

The Board received an update on defining the BOB ICS Development Roadmap from Amanda Lyons, Interim Director Strategic Delivery and Partnership, BOB ICS.

During the discussion of this item, the following points were made:

- Amanda Lyons outlined some of the key development activities which had taken place in April and May. The ICB Constitution, an NHS document, had been submitted to NHS England in line with pre-establishment timelines, and had been approved at the end of May.
- The ICB was working on the People and Communities strategy
- The ICP working group was being led by the ICB Chair Designate Javed Khan. This had met several times and its work was ongoing.
- The Board was informed of the Readiness to Operate Statement, which outlined the practical requirements of folding in the three CCGs into the new structure. Internal Audit and Regional Office reviews had been completed.
- The CCG Staff TUPE transition consultation had closed, and the full notifications were underway. An interim ICB Executive Team was in place.

- As part of the ICS establishment a System Delivery Plan was required to be submitted to NHS England, which set out the year 1 establishment plans whilst the ICP Strategy was in development. The Plan focused on the ICB architecture and ICS development.
- Integration was a key driver and principle in the Delivery Plan.
- Amanda Lyons went on to outline the ICS development roadmap and highlighted the specific workstreams.
- The majority of key outcomes remained on track. It had been anticipated that there would be a costed digital strategy by the end of June. This had been an NHS England requirement; however, timelines had now changed.
- Amanda Lyons sought to assure the Board that whilst the focus over the last six to nine months had been on the preparation ready for the establishment by 1 July, the future establishment of the ICP and the ICB, the governance of the entity would be used to make sure that the ICS' development continued to progress and evolve.
- The ICP Strategy was in pre-establishment preparatory phase. An interim ICP Strategy was required by 31 December 2022.
- A review was being undertaken of the five Health and Wellbeing Board strategies to inform ICP strategy development, including the NHS England focus of health inequalities (Core 20 plus 5).
- Close working relationships were being developed with ICS Directors of Public Health
- Work to understand and apply the requirements for the ICP strategy as set out in the 2022 Health and Care Act was underway. Guidance was due in July.
- An ICS level fact base including Joint Needs Assessments which could inform the ICP strategic direction would be developed.
- The Board noted the health index and actions by BOB ICS Local authority. Whilst there were some consistencies there would also be some differentials.
- Councillor Margetts indicated that the Board had previously raised concerns about the structure of the ICS, the lack of accountability and the gap between the local level and the direction of the ICS and ICP. He questioned whether the objectives would be met by the current proposed structure. Amanda Lyons agreed to feed the concerns back. She emphasised that the Chairman of the Board would be invited to meet to discuss the proposed approach to developing the ICP Strategy.
- Board members expressed concern that the voice of Wokingham and its residents was not lost within the structure.
- Councillor Bray expressed concern about the involvement of local authorities. Amanda Lyons commented that the work undertaken to date with the Directors of Public Health on the initial thinking around the ICP Strategy would inform the NHS 5 year joint strategy and had been around the wider determinants of health inequalities and prevention.
- It was requested that the Chairman meet monthly with Dr James Kent.
- Javed Khan had written to the Leaders of the five local authorities to discuss how concerns could be addressed.
- Susan Parsonage asked about assurance that the Wokingham voice would be heard within the structure. She went on to seek clarity about the purpose and function of the different groups established to engage with the local authorities. Amanda Lyons indicated that as the ICS was in its formative stage there were more engagement groups. In the System Delivery Plan there was a schematic which set out the assurance boards of the ICB and how this fitted to the ICP in governance terms

RESOLVED: That the update on defining the BOB ICS Development Roadmap be noted.

11. FORWARD PROGRAMME

The Board discussed the forward programme for the remainder of the municipal year.

During the discussion of this item, the following points were made:

- It was suggested that an update on Covid be provided at the December meeting but be removed from the agenda of other meetings.
- The Strategy into Action update and the role of the Steering Group was explained.
- An update on GP performance was proposed.
- The Board requested an update on the CAMHS service for Children in Care.
- Tracey Daszkiewicz indicated that the Suicide Prevention Strategy was being refreshed following an update in policy, and the various stages of this process would be considered at the next three Board meetings.
- The Chairman asked Board members to contact him or the Clerk should they have any further items that they wished to be discussed.

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 13 JUNE 2022 FROM 7.00 PM TO 8.45 PM

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Jim Frewin (Chairman), Andrew Mickleburgh (Vice-Chairman), David Cornish, Andy Croy, Peter Dennis, Graham Howe, Norman Jorgensen, Adrian Mather, Stuart Munro and Alison Swaddle

Other Councillors Present

Councillors: Bill Soane

Officers Present

Neil Carr, Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist
Graham Ebers, Deputy Chief Executive and Director, Resources & Assets
Emily Higson, Head of Insight, Strategy & Inclusion
Steve Moore, Director, Place & Growth
Will Roper, Customer Insight Analyst and Performance Manager
Sally Watkins, Assistant Director, Digital & Change
Callum Wernham, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

The Committee elected a Chairman for the 2022/23 Municipal Year.

RESOLVED: That Jim Frewin be elected Chairman of the Committee for the 2022/23 Municipal Year.

Note: Following a request for a recorded vote, the voting was as follows:

For: David Cornish, Andy Croy, Peter Dennis, Jim Frewin, Graham Howe, Norman Jorgensen, Adrian Mather, Andrew Mickleburgh, Stuart Munro, Bill Soane and Alison Swaddle.

Against: None.

Abstentions: None.

Jim Frewin thanked Members for their support and made some initial comments on the role of Overview and Scrutiny in holding decision makers to account, shaping policy and driving service improvements, resulting in better outcomes and value for money for residents.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

The Committee appointed a Vice-Chairman for the 2022/23 Municipal Year.

RESOLVED: That Andrew Mickleburgh be elected Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the 2022/23 Municipal Year.

Note: Following a request for a recorded vote, the voting was as follows:

For: David Cornish, Andy Croy, Peter Dennis, Jim Frewin, Graham Howe, Norman Jorgensen, Adrian Mather, Andrew Mickleburgh, Stuart Munro, Bill Soane and Alison Swaddle.

Against: None.

Abstentions: None.

3. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted from Gregor Murray.

Bill Soane attended as a substitute.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 17 March 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Andrew Mickleburgh raised the following points:

Minute 48 – Quarter 3 21/22 Performance Report – could the follow-up information requested by the Committee be circulated, in future, to all Overview and Scrutiny Members. It was confirmed that this suggestion would be implemented.

Minute 49 – Change – was the proposed Member training on the Business Change service being arranged. It was confirmed that arrangements were in hand.

Minute 53 – Council Motions – was action being taken to set out Council Motions on the WBC website. It was confirmed that work was ongoing to improve the Council's website. Details of Council Motions would be included on the updated website.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

6. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

7. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

8. QUARTER 4 2021/22 PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Committee considered a report, set out at Agenda pages 17 to 56, which gave details of performance against key performance indicators (KPIs) for the fourth quarter of 2021/22 (January to March) and a summary of overall performance in 2021/22.

Graham Ebers (Deputy Chief Executive & Director, Resources and Assets), Steve Moore (Director, Place & Growth), Sally Watkins (Assistant Director, Digital & Change), Emily Higson (Head of Insight, Strategy & Inclusion) and Will Roper (Customer Insight Analyst & Performance Manager) attended the meeting to present the report and answer Member questions.

The report stated that performance in Quarter 4 had been consistent against the previous quarter, showing consistent performance in the face of significant challenges to delivery

from rising costs, increased staff sickness relating to the Omicron variant of Covid-19 and the response to the crisis in Ukraine.

Annual performance for 2021/22 indicated that 67% of KPIs (27) had reached the annual target (Green). Seven KPIs narrowly missed the target (Amber) whilst six KPIs were reported as missing the target (Red). The following KPIs were rated as Red for the year 2021/22:

AS1 – Social work assessments allocated to commence within seven days of the requests (counted at the point of allocation).

AS7 – Proportion of people receiving long-term care who were subject to a review in the last 12 months.

CS2 – Percentage of initial Child Protection Conferences within 15 working days of the decision to hold them.

PG2 – Percentage of households for whom homelessness had been prevented.

PG3 – Percentage of households who have secured accommodation, available to them, for the next six months.

RA3 – Usage of Wokingham Borough leisure centres.

Appended to the report was an overview of progress made in each of the Council's departments together with a detailed breakdown of performance against each of the KPIs. Also appended to the report was a breakdown of the KPIs reported to the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Corporate Parenting Board.

During the ensuing discussion Members raised the following points:

The report indicated that, for Quarter 4, four of the seven Red KPIs related to Adult Social Care. It was confirmed that the service was performing to a high standard and was using "stretching" targets to drive improvement. The stretch targets were, by their nature, harder to achieve and performance should be seen in this light.

It was suggested that the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) consider the suite of KPIs relating to Health and Social Care, in discussion with the Executive Member and Director, in order to determine if the current KPIs were driving service improvement. It was also suggested that HOSC consider issues relating to the increased complexity of cases and the impact on risk and service delivery.

Jim Frewin suggested that Members consider suggestions for new and/or amended KPIs at a future meeting. In the meantime, Jim would hold discussions with officers about ways to improve the reporting of the KPIs.

In relation to specific KPIs:

PG6 – Number of affordable dwellings completed – how many completion would be carried forwards into 2022/23? It was confirmed that there had been significant slippage

due to labour and materials shortages. The target for 2021/22 of 201 affordable home completions was missed by 12 completions.

PG21 – Percentage of waste recycled from the kerbside – what work was ongoing to drive up the percentage of waste recycled? It was confirmed that a number of campaigns had been carried out and the new Waste Strategy was currently being developed.

PG12 – number of fly-tipping incidents – what progress was being made through the preventative measures referenced in the report. It was confirmed that progress was being monitored via the cross-party Member working group. More details of the issues considered and progress monitored by the working group would be circulated to the Committee. Members were reminded that, even though recycling figures were improving, the Borough still generated large amounts of waste. The waste hierarchy described the process of reduce-reuse-recycle-recover-dispose. This approach should drive the Council's operations and strategic direction.

RA1 – Completion to time and budget of the regeneration project for the Carnival Pool – was the Carnival Hub on schedule for the proposed opening in summer 2022? It was confirmed that there had been a delay in the fitting out of the new library due to delays in the delivery of furniture. However, the rest of the complex was due to open on schedule.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Graham Ebers, Steve Moore, Sally Watkins, Emily Higson and Will Roper be thanked for attending the meeting to answer Member questions;
- 2) the additional information requested by Members be circulated to all Scrutiny Members for information;
- 3) the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee be requested to give further consideration to the points raised about the suitability of current KPIs and the impact of increasing case complexity on risk and service delivery;
- 4) Members note that the emerging Waste Strategy was due to be considered at the July meeting of the Committee.

9. SCRUTINY IMPROVEMENT REVIEW

The Committee considered a report, set out on Agenda pages 57 to 68, which gave details of the upcoming Scrutiny Improvement Review.

The report stated that the Council underwent a Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge in 2021. As part of the peer challenge process the Council asked the LGA team to advise on how to make the Overview and Scrutiny function more meaningful and effective. The LGA team observed that Overview and Scrutiny at WBC was often the scene of lively debate and was seen as a political arena rather than creating "good policy" and positive challenge. The team suggested that all Members involved in Scrutiny should understand the terms of reference of each "Scrutiny Board" and recognise what "good scrutiny" looks like.

Following the LGA peer review, the Chief Executive commissioned the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) to carry out a Scrutiny Improvement Review (SIR). The SIR included the following elements:

- A review of documentation and Overview and Scrutiny reports;
- On-site interviews (scheduled for 20/21 June 2022) and observation of Overview and Scrutiny meetings;
- A study of Scrutiny's role and integration in the Council;
- Joint development of an improvement action plan with follow up work as necessary.

The report gave details of the SIR process and provided guidance on what the CfGS considered that "Good" looked like in the context of Overview and Scrutiny. This included areas such as:

- Culture – the relationships, communication and behaviours underpinning the operation of the Overview and Scrutiny process – the Council's corporate approach, organisational commitment and the status of Scrutiny;
- Member engagement – are Members motivated and engaged? How do they participate, take responsibility and self-manage their role?
- Member skills and application – are skills up-to-date and can Members participate fully or are there development gaps?
- Information – how information is prepared, shared and accessed and used to support the Scrutiny function.
- Impact – ways to ensure that Scrutiny is effective, that it makes a positive difference in the effectiveness of the Council and to local residents;
- Focus – how prioritisation, timeliness and relevance of the work programme and agendas lead to value-adding and productivity;
- Structure – formats used by Scrutiny to carry out its work and how effective these formats are.

It was confirmed that a number of Overview and Scrutiny Chairmen and Committee members would be invited to hold discussions with representatives from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny as part of their two day visit to the Council on 20/21 June 2022.

Appended to the report was the Council's Executive-Overview and Scrutiny Protocol which had been agreed in 2019. The Protocol sought to clarify the relationship between the Executive and the Overview and Scrutiny Committees in order to ensure smooth conduct of Overview and Scrutiny business and effective two-way communication.

In the ensuing discussion, Members made the following points:

Could the Executive-Overview and Scrutiny Protocol be circulated to all Overview and Scrutiny Members for information. It was confirmed that a copy of the Protocol would be circulated as requested.

Members would welcome a regular update on changes to national legislation which may impact on the Council and provide ideas for Scrutiny topics. It was confirmed that a regular item could be included on the Committee's work programme.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) the update on the upcoming Scrutiny Improvement Review be noted;

- 2) the Executive-Overview and Scrutiny Protocol be circulated to all Overview and Scrutiny Members for information.
- 3) the Committee's work programme include a regular update on changes to national legislation.

10. WORK PROGRAMME 2022-23

The Committee considered a report, set out at Agenda pages 69 to 74, which gave details of the development of the Committee's work programme for 2022/23.

The report stated that effective work programming was a Member-led process aimed at shortlisting and prioritising issues of community concern together with issues arising out of the Community Vision and Corporate Delivery Plan and major policy or service changes. It aimed to:

- reflect local needs and concerns;
- prioritise topics for scrutiny which have the most impact or benefit;
- involve local residents and stakeholders;
- be flexible enough to respond to new or urgent issues.

Each year the Committee approved initial work programmes for itself and the Council's three Overview and Scrutiny Committees. Recent discussions had indicated the need for work programming to be more robust and for improved monitoring during the year. As this was the Committee's first meeting in the 2022/23 Municipal Year, the long list of work programme items was attached for consideration and prioritisation.

The report also provided details of the proposed Scrutiny Member training programme for 2022/23. Proposed issues for inclusion in the training programme included:

- Chairing and Leading Scrutiny (to include wider chairing skills);
- Budget Scrutiny;
- Scrutiny of Children's Services;
- Scrutiny of Health and Adult Social Care.

In the ensuing discussion, Members made the following points:

The initial 2022/23 induction/refresher Overview and Scrutiny training session had been held on 7 June 2022 and was positively received by Members.

It was suggested that additional Scrutiny training sessions be delivered on Equalities and Inclusion and Climate Emergency. It was confirmed that Scrutiny training sessions were open to all Members.

Jim Frewin suggested that each Member review the long list of potential Scrutiny items (Annex A) and submit a shortlist of three priorities to Democratic Services. These suggestions could then be considered at the July meeting with a view to developing a more streamlined work programme.

It was suggested that the Leader and Chief Executive be invited to attend the July meeting of the Committee to discuss challenges and priorities for the year ahead.

Members noted the importance of close coordination between the Management Committee and the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny in order to avoid

duplication of effort. It was noted that Community and Corporate had requested that it scrutinise the Local Plan Update, the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and the emerging Bus Strategy/Bus Improvement Enhanced Partnership.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) The proposals set out in the report for developing the Overview and Scrutiny work programmes be endorsed;
- 2) Members notify Democratic Services of their top three work programme priorities – for discussion at the July meeting of the Committee;
- 3) the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive be invited to attend the July meeting of the Committee, rather than the September Committee (currently in the forward programme);
- 4) the proposed Member Scrutiny training programme be expanded to include sessions on Equalities and Inclusion and Climate Emergency;
- 5) the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee scrutinise the Local Plan Update, the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and the emerging Bus Strategy/Bus Improvement Enhanced Partnership.
- 6) the Committee's work programme include an item, for the September 2022 meeting, on the impact on the Borough of refugees/asylum seekers (including the use of the Moat House hotel).

11. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMMES

The Committee considered its work programme for upcoming meetings and that of the other Overview and Scrutiny Committees, as set out on Agenda pages 75 to 86.

RESOLVED: That the work programmes be noted.

12. EXECUTIVE FORWARD PROGRAMME

The Committee considered a copy of the Executive Forward Programme as set out on Agenda pages 87 to 92.

RESOLVED: That The Executive Forward Programme be noted.

13. ACTION TRACKER REPORT

The Committee considered the Action Tracker report for the meeting held on 17 March 2022.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) the Action Tracker report be noted;
- 2) the Committee's Action Tracker report include a summary of earlier actions which had not yet been resolved;
- 3) each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees develop a similar Action Tracker report.

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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
PERSONNEL BOARD
HELD ON 15 JUNE 2022 FROM 9.00 AM TO 5.10 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Rachel Bishop-Firth (Chairman), Stephen Conway, Pauline Helliar-Symons, Pauline Jorgensen, Wayne Smith (substituting Stuart Munro), Paul Fishwick (substituting Clive Jones) and Ian Shenton (substituting Prue Bray)

Officers Present

Steve Moore, Director Place and Growth
Elizabeth Howson, HR Business Partner

7. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors Prue Bray, Clive Jones and Stuart Munro.

8. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

9. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended) as appropriate.

10. FINAL STAGE INTERVIEW FOR THE ROLES OF ASSISTANT DIRECTORS FOR: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & GROWTH, HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT, AND ENVIRONMENT & SAFETY

The Board interviewed candidates for the posts of Assistant Director Economic and Growth, Assistant Director Highways and Transport and Assistant Director Environment and Safety.

11. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

At this point in the meeting, 1pm, the meeting was adjourned.

12. CONTINUATION OF THE MEETING

At 2pm the meeting resumed.

RESOLVED: That Rhian Hayes be appointed Assistant Director, Economic Development & Growth, Francesca Hobson be appointed Assistant Director Environment & Safety, and Christopher Easton be appointed Assistant Director Highways and Transport, subject to no objections from the majority of the Executive.

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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON 15 JUNE 2022 FROM 7.00 PM TO 9.50 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Andrew Mickleburgh, Morag Malvern, Beth Rowland, Anne Chadwick, Graham Howe and Pauline Helliard-Symons

Other Councillors Present

Councillors: Alistair Neal as a substitute

Officers Present

Luciane Bowker, Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist

Gillian Cole, Service Manager Schools

Adam Davis, Assistant Director for Children's Social Care and Early Help

Sal Thirlway, Assistant Director for Learning Achievement and Partnerships

Helen Watson, Children's Services Director

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Councillor Andrew Mickleburgh was elected Chairman for the 2022/23 municipal year.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Councillor Shirley Boyt was appointed Vice-Chairman for the 2022/23 municipal year.

3. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted from Councillor Shirley Boyt, she was substituted by Councillor Alistair Neal.

4. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

A declaration of interest was submitted from Councillor Beth Rowland on the basis that she was a school governor for two local schools.

5. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 21 March 2022 were confirmed as a correct record, subject to the amendment below, and signed by the Chairman.

Amendment: Councillor Helliard-Symonds had been present online as a Committee Member (not as a guest).

Matters arising

Councillor Chadwick asked for an update on the arrangements for home to school transport for September 2022. Sal Thirlway, Assistant Director for Learning and Partnerships offered to provide a written answer after the meeting, to be included with the minutes.

The Chairman stated that there had been two vacancies for diocese representatives and two vacancies for parent governors on the Committee for a long time. He believed that it would be beneficial for the Committee to have the engagement of such representatives. He asked if there was a requirement for those representatives to be on the membership of the Committee and he also asked Officers to make an effort to recruit volunteers to fill those vacancies.

Luciane Bowker, Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist explained that the vacancies referred to were listed in the terms of reference for the Committee. Officers had not been very successful in the past in recruiting volunteers to fill in those roles. However, it was agreed that a renewed effort would be made to try and find volunteers to join the Committee.

The Chairman asked if there was an update on the possibility of Members meeting with the residents of the new Care Leavers accommodation on London Road to gain their feedback.

Adam Davis, Assistant Director for Children's Social Care and Early Help explained that the Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) was also interested in gaining feedback from the resident of the new accommodation for Care Leavers. CPB was still waiting for a response from residents with regards to a visit.

The Chairman asked if Members of CSO&S who were not members of CPB would also be able to speak to the residents. Adam Davis explained that this was dependent on consultation with the residents.

The Chairman asked for information about the Youth Council: do they produce minutes? If so, could this Committee receive a copy of the minutes? Could this Committee engage with the Youth Council?

Helen Watson, Interim Director for Children's Services confirmed that the Youth Council had been meeting regularly and there were notes taken of those meetings. She agreed that it was a good idea for this Committee to engage with the Youth Council, and that the Youth Council could be invited to attend a meeting of CSO&S.

6. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

7. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

8. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Some of the comments made during the discussion of the item are listed below.

Dashboard item 1 – Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)

- Councillor Chadwick asked why the number of EHCPs had gone up so significantly in Q4;
- Sal Thirlway stated that there had been a greater need for assessment and placements, with an increase in the number of Special Educational Needs (SEN) children. This increase in demand impacted on the timeliness of completion of assessments;
- Councillor Rowland was concerned that the service was not good enough for schools and asked what the plan was to tackle this situation;
- Sal Thirlway stated that the service and level of activity had improved, but there was still work to do to improve the service. The capacity and nature of SEN services was continually monitored to support EHCPs requests. A Wokingham Partnership was being established in order to better understand the needs for support at schools;

- Councillor Rowland asked that this item be brought back to the next meeting to monitor the improvement of EHCPs;
- Councillor Helliard-Symonds asked for the whole total averages of the year (not just 20/21) to be included in all of the dashboards;

Dashboard item 2 – Early Help

- Councillor Rowland was concerned about the direction of travel on this indicator, she believed that Early Help for children was very important;
- Adam Davis explained that a downwards trend was not necessarily negative for this indicator. The downward time between referral and assessment was a positive result;
- Adam Davis added that there had been a significant increase in the front door referrals of 57% and the service had retained the timescales, so this was a doubly positive result.

Dashboard item 3 – Children’s Social Care Front Door

- The Chairman stated that, in relation to the percentage of assessments completed within 45 days, Wokingham continued to be below the national average and statistical neighbours averages. He asked what was being done to address this?
- Adam Davis stated that work was being undertaken to clear out the backlog. He explained that sometimes delays were caused because other activities were underway, however this was an area of focus;
- In response to a question Adam Davis stated that there were 25 assessments out of the 45 day timeframe, but this number fluctuated up and down. Delays could occur because of delays in court proceedings for example, or in the case of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children (UASC) delays were caused as the assessment could take longer. The service was looking to improve this performance where possible;
- In response to a question Adam Davis explained that there was a threshold document which assessed if a contact should be progressed or not. However, this judgement was complex and subjective.

Dashboard item 4 – Child Protection

- In response to a question, Adam Davis explained that child protection visits were undertaken every ten working days continuously.

Dashboard item 5 – Children In Care (CIC)

- The Chairman asked if there were any particular concerns in relation to the increase in the number of UASC;
- Adam Davis explained that any increase in any cohort of CIC would cause a challenge, not just UASC. There were additional challenges in relation to UASC in terms of culture, faith and language, where Wokingham alone may not have the resources to fully meet their needs;
- In response to a question Adam Davis made reference to the Ofsted focused visit letter, in which they talked about how to meet the emotional wellbeing of UASC. Part of the solution to this challenge was the new Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) for CIC. Adam Davis added that it could be particularly difficult to support UASC in the first three to four months of their arrival;
- Helen Watson pointed out that Ofsted had commented on the “Herculaneum” effort which had been undertaken by all Children’s Services staff to deal with the increase in numbers of CIC. She added that the virtual school was also focusing on the education of UASC;

- The Chairman, on the Committee's behalf, wished to commend and thank Children's Services staff for all their ongoing work;
- Councillor Rowland asked if it was possible to include a breakdown on the number of CIC to show the number of UASC;
- Adam Davis stated that some metrics used by the service did split the numbers. He confirmed that at the this point in time, out of 136 CIC 28 were UASC;
- In response to a question, Adam Davis explained that children from Hong Kong or Ukraine did not qualify as UASC;
- Councillor Howe reminded the Committee that this was a public meeting, and that all had to be mindful of that fact in relation to sharing data in the meetings;
- In response to a question Adam Davis stated that there was an error in the date in the table for this dashboard, it should have been rolled over to 2022. He explained that all visits had moved to face-to-face. There were four categories within children's social care:
 1. Child In Need– a child with a plan of support
 2. Child Protection – a child with a plan of support and protection
 3. Child In Care – a looked after child with a care plan
 4. Care Leavers – a young person with a pathway plan
- The total number of visits listed in the report included the first three categories. He confirmed that a high level of face-to-face visits had been sustained throughout the pandemic;
- Adam Davis explained that the table showed the level of activity, every visit related to one social worker meeting a child and producing a report;
- In response to a question Adam Davis explained that an upward arrow did not necessarily mean an improvement, it meant an increase in the numbers;
- Councillor Helliars-Symonds expressed concern that the number of children with more than one social worker in 12 months had gone up;
- Adam Davis agreed that this was an area of concern. However, this could be related to a particular month when a social worker became a team manager. He added that this issue related to the national challenges in the recruitment of social workers.

It was noted that there was some confusion with interpreting the presentation in the report. Officers agreed to review the format of the report, to make sure that the presentation was clear for Members.

Dashboard item 6 – Care Leavers

- Councillor Chadwick asked what was the future of Care Leavers who were Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET), she wondered if they would go on to receive benefits long term;
- Sal Thirlway explained that although there was an increase in the percentage, this equated to two young people. The figures were in relation to care leavers who were in touch with the local authority, this represented 99% of Care Leavers. The higher the number of Care Leavers in touch, the higher the NEET figure was likely to be. By having a better understanding of the numbers, the local authority would be better placed to help and support them;
- Adam Davis added that with changes in legislation, the offer to Care Leavers had been extended to 25 year olds, therefore increasing the cohort of Care Leavers;
- Sal Thirlway pointed out the NEET figures were improved compared to the same period last year.

Dashboard item 7 – Children Missing from Home/Care

- The Chairman asked what the plan of improvement in relation to the return home interviews was? (this had been mentioned in the Ofsted report). He also asked if the improvement plan could be shared with the Committee:
- Adam Davis informed that the service had challenged that figure, explaining that some children had only been 15 minutes late returning home, the figure was in relation to the police being informed of a child going missing and their status. However, the service was reviewing this issue and it was part of a plan of improvement. It was important to ensure that the reporting was right, he added that when Officers looked into the figures, there was no concern of risk to those children;
- Adam Davis stated that this was being monitored by Corporate Parenting Board. He agreed to copy Members of the CSO&S into the documentation in relation to this improvement plan;
- Councillor Chadwick asked about the statistics in relation to Elective Home Educated Children (EHEC);
- Sal Thirlway confirmed that EHEC were not included in the figures for this dashboard. EHEC were considered to be receiving an education and were not required to be on a school roll;
- Sal Thirlway explained that currently there was no legal requirement to hold the information about the number of EHEC, it was up to parents and schools to inform the local authority about EHEC. The local authority had a level of knowledge on the number of EHEC, the Education Welfare Service worked with families of EHEC. The Department for Education (DfE) was looking to put in place more robust legislation in relation to the powers of the local authority to monitor EHEC.

Dashboard item 8 – Children’s Services Workforce

- Councillor Howe suggested that Officers comment on the rise of staff turn over, in particular of social workers;
- Adam Davis explained that around two years ago, a recruitment campaign had been implemented, the figure at that time was of 33% locums, and the service set itself a target of 10% - including maternity and sick leave gaps. The service got very close to the target and achieved 15%, and this remained for a period of time. The figure now was closer to 28%, this was due to a number of factors, such as covid and the ‘great resignation’ (people re-evaluating their lives and choosing to do different things).

A number of measures were in place to bring down the number of locums, such as offering training opportunities for newly qualified social workers. Wokingham was also part of Memorandum Of Cooperation (MOC) this was a Member association of 19 local authorities across the South East which prevented permanent social workers from living a permanent role and becoming a locum in one of those authorities.

There were a number of work streams underway, including a very good training offer, to tackle the recruitment challenges, this was a national challenge.

- Councillor Rowland acknowledged the efforts being made and stated that it was important to keep this under review, and to treat staff very well in order to retain staff and maintain the level of service;
- Adam Davis agreed that part of the solution was offering manageable case loads;
- Councillor Neal was concerned about the MOC, and wondered if this constituted an abuse of power, by stopping people from becoming self-employed;
- Adam Davis explained that this was the approach used in the Southeast and many other parts of England.

The Chairman stated that the demographics of CIC profile was changing. He would like to know the implication of these changes, both in terms of challenges and opportunities.

Adam Davis stated that some of the changes were the increase in the number of UASC (30% of CIC were UASC) and the variation in the age range of CIC, with more CIC now being 16 to 17 years old. This variation in age had an implication in the need for Care Leaver's accommodation, there was work being undertaken with Housing to support this need. There was also a focus on transition to adulthood.

Adam Davis explained that in terms of opportunities, the service offered a number of engagement opportunities with CIC. These events were regularly reported to CPB.

The Chairman stated that another issue that was often mentioned, was the increase in the level of complex needs. He asked about the implications of this increase on the services.

In response to the question about complexity, Adam Davis explained that this was about the layers of complexity. The covid situation and the rise in cost of living also had an impact on the services.

Helen Watson added that the level of complexity in relation to children and young people's mental health was increasing. There was an opportunity to make a bid to the DfE for capital funding for some provision to meet the needs of very complex children and young people. This opportunity was being explored with the CCG.

The Chairman proposed that the data in relation to UASC be continuously monitored, given that this cohort was increasing and that this trend was likely to continue in the foreseeable future. He also proposed to review data in relation to emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people.

Councillor Rowland agreed that it was important to monitor the emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people. She added that children faced a lot of challenges currently, in the context of the digital age that we are living.

Councillor Howe stated that there was a lot of activity that occurred in the services in relation to UASC, he supported the proposal to monitor this data. He added that Children's Services was a very complex service. He suggested that the training session for Members include information about the structure of the service.

Councillor Helliard-Symonds agreed that training sessions were very useful to understand how the service was structured and its complexities.

Helen Watson suggested that separate information about UASC be provided in a part 2 session, given that those children were part of a small cohort that could be easily identified.

Adam Davis confirmed that a training session was scheduled for later in the month. Helen Watson added that if needed, more training sessions could be provided during the year.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) The Committee would continue to monitor the activity of EHCPs (Dashboard item 1) at its next meeting;

- 2) Data on UASC would be provided in a part 2 session;
- 3) The number of Elective Home Educated Children in the borough would be circulated with the minutes; and
- 4) Training sessions would be provided to Members in accordance with the need.

9. EDUCATION UPDATE

The Education Update report was presented by Sal Thirlway. He explained that the report outlined the work being undertaken to continue to provide for the children's educational needs. It covered attendance, the ongoing development of the Borough Education Partnership, an update on the white and green educational papers and implications for Children's Services.

During the discussion of the item the following comments were made:

- Councillor Chadwick asked if children with a sick note or with covid who were not at school were counted in the number of those absent;
- Sal Thirlway explained that the government had changed its coding system to allow for covid related attendance recording. However, this was no longer in existence, the 93% attendance mentioned in the report was for all pupils on schools rolls;
- Councillor Chadwick asked for clarification in the 1.2 section of the report as to whether the guidance published by the government was statutory or non-statutory;
- Sal Thirlway explained that this was non-statutory guidance that the local authority had to follow, it was a quirk of the law;
- Councillor Rowland explained that some overseas families with children in schools had not been able to see their relatives for a couple of years due to covid. They were choosing to take their children out of school and pay the fine as this was cheaper than the cost of travelling during the school holidays. She asked how many fines had been issued in Wokingham schools because of this issue;
- Sal Thirlway explained that the local authority held the information on the number of fixed term penalties related to school attendance. There was support to schools in relation to improving school attendance. However, the level of fixed term penalty notices was set by the government, and some families felt that it was more cost effective to take their children out of school for their holidays;
- Councillor Helliars-Symonds was of the opinion that this law did not tackle the issue of children with intermittent absences, which was originally its intention;
- The Chairman asked what the implication for the services was of the new statutory obligations;
- Sal Thirlway explained that resource implications on the school attendance team were likely. Options around meeting the capacity challenge were being explored;
- Councillor Helliars-Symonds commended on the Wokingham Education Partnership, she believed that it was a great idea. She recommended that the group looking at the sufficiency of school places in the borough considered also the issue of travelling to school;
- Councillor Howe explained that when schools became academies, there was a disassociation of the local authority from schools. However, the schools and the local authority were still bound by their responsibilities in relation to SEND and school admissions. The responsibility for the education of children in the borough still remained with the local authority, but there was not a mechanism to share resources and to work strategically together. The Borough Education Partnership (BEP) was

created in an effort to bring together schools and the local authority to jointly formulate strategies;

- Councillor Malvern asked if there was a provision for governors' participation in the BEP;
- Councillor Howe explained that the primary and secondary schools federation, the senior officers and the Executive Member for Children's Services were part of BEP, this was aimed at headteachers and not governors, in an effort to keep the focus of the meetings;
- Sal Thirlway stated that governors would be regularly informed of the discussions at the BEP in other strategic meetings.

The Chairman wished to formally express the Committee's gratitude to the work being undertaken by the BEP, and that this be passed on to the partnership. He also thanked Councillor Howe for the background information and to Officers for their work in setting it up.

The Chairman asked for more information in relation to the Fair Access Protocol (FAP). Sal Thirlway explained that the FAP existed to support the placement of children who had either left their previous educational setting or who had moved into the area mid-year and needed to be placed in a school. Schools signed up to the FAP and were supportive of the policy. BEP had been involved in the creation and development of the FAP. FAP had already met twice since the implementation of the new FAP policy and placed around 40 pupils.

The Chairman asked for timescales in relation to the re-structuring and re-organisation of the leadership team. Sal Thirlway stated that the aim was to achieve a more effective leadership structure. He explained that currently the large scope of 'Learning Achievement and Partnerships' limited his capacity to engage in strategic thinking and discussions. The aim was to rationalise the leadership function without loss of service delivery. This was an operational change which did not require Executive approval.

Sal Thirlway explained that there were two phases of work in this re-organisation, and he welcomed the Committee's input.

Helen Watson confirmed that the aim was to have a structure that was fit for purpose, in line with the new requirements of the white and green papers. BEP was aware that this work was underway.

Councillor Chadwick was interested to know what were the IT issues mentioned in the report. Sal Thirlway explained that, for example, in the case of recording the number of EHCPs, an investment was needed for a recording system. Also, school admissions needed a better IT system for data collection.

The Chairman asked how reliant on WBC's IT system Children's Services were, and he also asked if the proposed changes would require changes in other areas of the Council.

Sal Thirlway stated that the white and green papers would impact other areas of the Council, IT infrastructure being one of them.

Members asked to be kept informed of further iterations in the development of the re-organisation. Officers agreed with this proposal.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) The report be noted; and
- 2) The Committee would be kept informed on the development of the re-organisation.

10. FORWARD PROGRAMME

The Chairman requested that the Executive Member for Children's Services be invited to attend future meetings, in order to share their thoughts on the service and answer questions.

Luciane Bowker informed that Councillor Bray, Executive Member for Children's Services had already offered to attend meetings.

Councillor Mickleburgh asked that stakeholders who were involved in co-producing the SEND Strategy, such as SEND Voices be invited to attend the next meeting in September when the SEND Strategy was due to be discussed. Officers agreed with this proposal.

The Chairman asked if the CSO&S Committee could receive the Children's Services Draft Strategy at its next meeting in September. Helen Watson agreed to present this update.

The Chairman suggested adding the following item to the November meeting: *Concerns about the cost of living crisis affecting children in the borough and the impact on Children's Services.* He suggested that the Executive Member for Equalities, Inclusion and Fighting Poverty be invited to discuss this report. In response to a question Luciane Bowker suggested that Members email her with the specific requirements for this report.

Helen Watson informed that the Council was working on an Anti-Poverty Strategy, part of which involved tackling poverty in schools. This was due to be discussed with the BEP.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) The Executive Member for Children's Services would be invited to attend future meetings of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- 2) The stakeholders involved in developing the SEND Strategy be invited to the next meeting; and
- 3) A report about the cost of living crisis and its implications for children in the borough and Children's Services be added to the November meeting.

11. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of the Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as appropriate.

12. SCHOOLS CAUSING CONCERN

This item was discussed in a part two session.

It was agreed that future reports would include a list of all schools in the borough and their current Ofsted status. Also, the local ward Members of the schools causing concern would continue to be invited to attend this part of the meeting.

It was suggested that for schools inspected by Ofsted since the last meeting, the 2-3 page overviews at the start of each Ofsted report be included with the Agenda pack.

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
LICENSING AND APPEALS COMMITTEE
HELD ON 23 JUNE 2022 FROM 7.00 PM TO 8.44 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Peter Dennis, Beth Rowland (Chairman), Alistair Neal, Morag Malvern, Rachel Burgess, Sarah Kerr (Vice-Chairman), Bill Soane, Chris Bowring, Michael Firmager, Jackie Rance, Abdul Loyes and Shahid Younis

Officers Present

Luciane Bowker, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist
Karen Court, Senior Licensing Officer
Keiran Hinchliffe, Service Manager for Licensing and Enforcement
Rachel Lucas, Legal Advisor
Ed Shaylor, Head of Enforcement and Safety

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Councillor Beth Rowland was elected Chairman for the 2022/23 municipal year.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Councillor Sarah Kerr was appointed Vice-Chairman for the 2022/23 municipal year.

3. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted from Councillor Mike Smith.

4. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 2 March 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

7. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

8. TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE DRAFT POLICY REVIEW

The report was presented by Ed Shaylor, Head of Enforcement and Safety and Keiran Hinchliffe, Service Manger for Licensing and Processing.

Ed Shaylor pointed out that this was the first meeting of the Committee since the licensing functions had returned to Wokingham from the Public Protection Partnership (PPP). He added that the transition had occurred smoothly from an operational point of view.

The report contained a draft of the Taxi and Private Hire Policy, it referred to the new government standards for taxi licensing in 2020. Work had been commissioned from a firm of solicitors called James Button to draft the policy, at the time of commissioning this had been for all the three authorities in the PPP. It was hoped that after the policy had been considered by Members and gone through the consultation process, that the policy

would be the same for all the three authorities; as the taxi service was used and provided across borders.

Having consulted with the Legal department, it was proposed to amend the second recommendation to read:

2) That the Director of Place and Growth in consultation with the Lead Member of the Executive be authorised to release the final revised policy for public consultation.

This proposed change was in line with the Council's Constitution and would facilitate the timescales, in line with the other local authorities.

Councillor Bowring asked for clarification as to which other local authorities we were looking to align Wokingham's policy with. Ed Shaylor confirmed that they were Bracknell Forest and West Berkshire, this was because those two boroughs had jointly commissioned the draft policy and were already working along the same lines. Due to timescales, it would be difficult to work with Reading or Windsor and Maidenhead.

Councillor Soane asked if the Executive Members for the three authorities would be regularly meeting to discuss this. Ed Shaylor stated that this was not currently arranged but agreed that this was a good suggestion.

Keiran Hinchcliffe explained this was a first draft of the policy. The intention was to gather feedback prior to it going out to consultation with the trade and members of the public. He highlighted the following proposed changes to the policy:

- The Department for Transport (DfT) recommended that licensing authorities make publicly available a cohesive policy document that brought together all their procedures on taxi and private hire vehicle licensing. This should include but not be limited to policies on convictions, a 'fit and proper' person test, licence conditions and vehicle standards;
- In July 2020, the DfT issued Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards. Wokingham already adhered to some of those standards in its existing policy. This was an attempt to nationalise vehicle, driver and operator standards;
- The trade was being updated on the likely new standards and procedures. They were being encouraged to sign up to the DBS subscription service. This subscription would allow the local authority to run a report to see if there were any changes to those DBS certificates, effectively making the system more robust;
- In relation to overseas convictions, certificates of good character should be obtained where an applicant had previously lived outside the UK for more than three months;
- In relation to conviction policies, all authorities should have a clear policy that took a particularly cautious view of any offenses against individuals with special needs, children and other vulnerable groups, particularly those involving violence, those of sexual nature and those linked to organised crime;
- All authorities should have a robust complaint recording system and take action if necessary;
- There should be mandatory safeguarding awareness training to all drivers. Training was already offered in Wokingham, the service was looking to bring the training in-house and make it more bespoke;
- All drivers should demonstrate proficiency in English language, be able to provide correct change for a fare paid in cash and produce a legibly written receipt upon request;

- In relation to enforcement, suspension and revocation of driver licences. The guidance clarified situations in which revocations and suspensions may be used. Drivers should be made aware of relevant policies;
- In relation to consultation, it was good practice to consult when proposing significant changes in local licensing rules. Consultation should include passengers and trade groups.

Ed Shaylor informed that the report contained a summary of the revised policy in appendix 2. He apologised that the formatting in the draft policy document itself was not as it should be, this was still being worked on at the time the agenda was published.

During the discussion of the item the following comments were made:

- Councillor Kerr stated that the summary was very helpful. She asked the following questions:
 - How did the local authority propose to help licensees to understand their duties in relation the Equality Act?
 - In relation to the proposal that licensees need to undertake a knowledge test every six years – is there a cost associated with undertaking this test? Why ask that this test is undertaken every six years, given that the knowledge of the area would improve after someone had been working for six years?
 - Page 8 of the policy seemed to be missing the list of providers;
 - Page 18 of the policy – why was advertising being restricted in this way?
 - Why were appeals going directly to court? Why was the internal appeals process not being used?
 - In relation to the consultation – there had been issues with the timing of consultations in the past, she would like to ascertain how the consultation would be undertaken this time;
 - In relation to the wording about Climate Emergency on page 18 of the agenda, could this be explained?
- Kieran Hinchcliffe stated that due consideration would be given to carbon neutral objectives at the time of the consultation;
- Ed Shaylor explained that there was an assumption that having more taxis could reduce the need for personal vehicle transport;
- Councillor Kerr stated that that was a big assumption which needed to be looked at in the context of the area;
- Officers confirmed that the consultation would be undertaken in time for it to be considered prior to the policy being adopted;
- In relation to the question about appeals, Officers agreed to review this in the draft policy;
- Karen Court, Senior Licensing Officer informed that the current proposal extended the right to advertising in vehicles, compared to the current policy;
- Councillor Kerr stated that advertising could be another form of income for drivers, and given the current cost of living crisis, this would be helpful;
- Ed Shaylor stated that consideration should be given to the corporate image of the Council in relation to vehicle advertising;
- Ed Shaylor informed that the list of providers was still to be included in the draft policy;
- Ed Shaylor agreed about the point made in relation to the knowledge test and would change it;
- In relation to the question about the Equality Act duties, Officers explained that hackney carriages were required to be able to accommodate passengers with

disabilities. Also, there were standards in relation to violence to woman and other vulnerable groups of people. Page 32 of the agenda contained a list of training which promoted the equality duties, and which had to be refreshed every three years;

- The Chairman asked if taxis would be able to take mobility scooters;
- Keiran Hinchcliffe stated that there were vehicles that could take wheelchairs and there were larger vehicles that could take non-standard sized wheelchairs. However, there were not many models that could accommodate non-standard sized wheelchairs, this was a complex issue;
- Councillor Burgess emphasised that the consultation was very important and wished to know more about how this was going to be undertaken;
- In relation to inspections, Councillor Burgess stated that the wording in the draft policy was a lot clearer than in the current policy. She wanted to know more about how inspections would be carried out;
- Councillor Burgess asked for more information about the proposed vehicle dimensions;
- Keiran Hinchcliffe stated that it was proposed that the consultation would be undertaken in line with the timing of the other local authorities consultations, he offered to bring back the proposed dates;

Subsequently, Officers have learned that the revised policy has gone as a draft to Bracknell Forest Licensing Committee and has been agreed with a few amendments; it would go to West Berkshire Licensing Committee on 4 July. It was then planned to put the draft out for consultation from 6 July to 28 September.

- Karen Court explained that the RAC inspections were for vehicles of a certain age, so that they could carry on. New vehicles had their documentation checked to make sure they met the requirements for wheelchair accessibility. The proposed dimensions contained in the draft policy had been suggested by James Button and were based on the Transport for London dimensions, they were more generous to the driver than the ones in the current policy;
- Ed Shaylor explained that transition arrangements would have to be in place so that current vehicles did not become non-compliant on the day of implementation of the new policy;
- In response to a question Karen Court informed that for older vehicles, when vehicles were first licensed, they were required to have a MOT test, and then at six months. As vehicles aged the requirement was for a test every 4 months under the new policy, and drivers had to cover the cost to do the test;
- Councillor Firmager commented that it was positive to have a more robust fit and proper test in the policy. He noted that were it said EC passport on page 29 of the agenda, this should be EU passport;
- Councillor Firmager asked for more information in relation to the knowledge test, including what the pass mark was;
- Karen Court informed that there was a list of roads and locations within the borough, and the driver would be asked how they would take a passenger from the pick up point to a certain road or location. There were 10 questions and the pass mark was 9;
- Councillor Firmager agreed that it did not make sense to ask drivers to re-take the test after six years, given that their knowledge of the area was likely to increase;
- Councillor Younis asked how wide the consultation was going to be? Given the fact that journeys were taken across the borough borders;
- Councillor Younis agreed that the taxi trade had faced difficulties in the last couple of years, and that allowing vehicle advertising for additional income would be a helpful to drivers;

- Councillor Younis asked for more information in relation to the English and numeracy test;
- Councillor Younis stated that DBS tests looked at past records, but they were not a predictor of future behaviour. He asked if there was another test to check that a person was fit and proper?
- Keiran Hinchcliffe explained that the change that was proposed in relation to the DBS check was that drivers were going to be encouraged to sign up to the update service. That would enable the local authority to find out quicker if a conviction happened to a licensed person. The fit and proper test also included looking at medical records and testing the English and numeracy of drivers;
- Karen Court recommended to set parameters for vehicle advertising, in order to ensure that they were appropriate;
- Councillor Kerr stated that the wording about advertising was confusing, some work should be done to make it clearer. She was of the opinion that the presumption should be that advertising was allowed, given some parameters;
- Ed Shaylor agreed that it was possible to allow for advertising, provided that it met national guidance and local guidelines;
- Councillor Younis added that discussions about advertising should also be undertaken with the other neighbouring local authorities for a consensus approach;
- Ed Shaylor confirmed that the other local authorities would be consulted, he added that a lot of information spread through social media;
- Councillor Younis was concerned that there was an assumption that social media could reach everyone, and that was not necessarily the case;
- Councillor Kerr was concerned that relying on social media only for consultation was not compliant with the local authority's equality duties;
- Councillor Soane suggested that the taxi trade may have a spokesperson who could help with the consultation;
- Councillor Loyes expressed concern that the draft policy had been drafted exactly the same for all three authorities, as the needs and demographics of each borough were different;
- Councillor Loyes asked who provided the training for drivers;
- Kerian Hinchcliffe explained that there were a number of providers who were used for training, for example the Blue Lamp Service. Thames Valley Police did not provide training. There was an ambition to bring training in-house;
- Councillor Loyes commented that there were immigrants in the borough who may be capable of driving, but would not be able to enter this industry as they could not speak English;
- Councillor Bowring noticed that the onus on applying for a licence renewal fell onto the driver (page 19 of the agenda). He pointed out that this was dependent on the time it took the local authority to process an application. He wondered if there was a reasonable timeline in relation to applying for a renewal and the licence expiring, he also asked if a driver was allowed to carry on driving whilst awaiting for an appeal;
- Councillor Burges pointed out that there was inconsistency within the policy about timelines (in page 35 of the agenda it said 30 days but in other places it said sufficient time);
- Keiran Hinchcliffe explained that if something very serious happened, there was the ability to revoke a licence immediately. He agreed to look and review the timescales with the legal department;
- Rachel Lucas, Legal Advisor stated that once an appeal arrived at the Magistrate's Court, it needed to be listed as a full trial. The courts were very pressed at this time, and did not consider taxi appeals to be a priority. Therefore, it could take a long time

for a taxi appeal to be heard and for that reason she believed that it was not possible to prescribe a reasonable time to re-apply allowing for an appeal to take place. She confirmed that ordinarily, pending an appeal, a driver would be allowed to carry on driving. Only under certain rare circumstances would drivers be asked to stop driving pending an appeal;

- Rachel Lucas pointed out that the draft policy seemed to take away the current provision for an appeal to go to a Sub-Committee before it went to the Magistrate Court, she added that there was no legal reason to take away the provision Sub-Committee hearings;
- It was suggested by the Chairman that the provision of Sub-Committee hearings be added to the draft policy, there was general agreement to this proposal;
- Councillor Bowring pointed out the point 13 (page 21) was similar to point 14, and these could be summarised;
- Councillor Bowring stated that there was no link between the Council and GPs. If a driver was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes, for example, how would the Council be notified?
- The Chairman informed that anyone who was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes had their driving licence revoked until their GP confirmed that they were fit to drive and reviewed by a doctor, and if the licence was taken away, the person had a duty to inform the DVLA;
- Officers informed that it was up to the GP's report to inform the local authority about the person's ability to drive;
- Karen Court explained that applicants were asked to obtain their medical clearance from their own GPs who had access to their medical history;
- Councillor Kerr asked how the local authority would be informed of a medical condition which prevented a driver from driving, outside of the time of application when a medical report was submitted;
- Keiran Hinchcliffe believed that it was one of the conditions of the licence, that if there were any medical changes, these had to be reported to the local authority. He added that the Committee could consider how often medicals should be carried out;
- The Chairman asked that this issue be raised with the solicitors who were drafting the policy;
- Councillor Dennis asked if there was any guidance within the policy about the storage of private operators vehicles, as he believed that there was an issue with vehicles being stored in inappropriate places;
- Councillor Dennis asked if there was anything in the draft policy that did not meet the DfT's recommendations or that went beyond the recommendations? He also asked what the cost was of drafting this policy;
- Ed Shaylor stated that this report had been commissioned a long time ago, he would find out how much it had cost and report back;
- Councillor Dennis asked if there should be any mention of Uber in the draft policy;
- Keiran Hinchcliffe explained that Uber was not an operator in Wokingham, however he offered to consult with them;
- Keiran Hinchcliffe confirmed that the draft policy met all the requirements of the 2020 government guidelines, and he believed that there were areas where it went further;
- Councillor Loyes asked Officers to look into ways to help Wokingham drivers in relation to their loss of business to drivers from Uber and other boroughs;
- Keiran Hinchcliffe explained that the Licensing function provided licences to drivers and operators, the issue of where the licences originated from and where their operational model was a strategic decision not within the licensing officers control.

Uber could operate legally in Wokingham, the only limitation was that they were not allowed to ply for hire;

- Councillor Loyes stated that Reading Borough Council had a system that stopped calls from Uber within their borough and wondered if Wokingham was able to do something similar;
- Kieran Hinchcliffe was not certain that such a system existed but agreed to check with Reading Borough Council;
- Keiran Hinchcliffe explained that the parking of vehicles by operators was regulated by planning;
- Councillor Dennis believed that there was a gap in the legislation in relation to parking in private roads. It was agreed that this would be discussed with Officers outside of the meeting and brought back to the Committee.

Members asked that the amended draft of the policy be circulated via email for comments before its submission to consultation. Upon being put the vote Members were in favour of the recommendations.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) The proposed changes as discussed during the meeting be incorporated in the draft policy;
- 2) Members will be sent a copy of the revised draft policy via email, prior to its submission to the relevant Executive Member and prior to it being submitted for consultation;
- 3) The final draft policy will be approved for consultation by the Executive Member for Environment, Sport and Leisure; and
- 4) The Director for Place and Growth should work in partnership with neighbouring Licensing Authorities to achieve a similar timeline to any public consultation and policy review in neighbouring boroughs, to achieve consistency of practice between areas.

9. TAXI LICENSING FEES AND CHARGES 2020/21

Ed Shaylor explained that this report was the result of a request by the Committee at its previous meeting, to review and reduce the fees for taxi and school transport operators for the current financial year (2022/23) and arrange refunds for the year 2021/22.

The report contained information about the proposal, which reduced the fee to £248 instead of £290. The background was that two years ago drivers were given a £40 reduction in fees in recognition of the difficulties brought by the coronavirus pandemic. In 2021/22 the reduction disappeared and the fee went back up to £290 plus a £2 inflation increase.

This Committee made a recommendation that the fees this year should be the reduced fee of £248 and this had been incorporated in the fees for 2022/23.

The report outlined the option of applying for a supplementary estimate to refund the drivers to give the reduced fee to those who paid the higher fee in 2021/22, as this had not been budgeted for. This equated to a refund of £42 to 211 drivers (around £8,500). This recommendation was subject to an Executive decision.

The report also outlined the practical difficulties in implementing this proposal.

The Committee was asked to consider if it wished to be consulted on fees and charges each year in respect to the following financial year before it went to Executive and Council.

Councillor Younis strongly believed that the proposal should be submitted to Executive for approval and he added that £8,500 was not a significant amount in the context of the Council. He added that this was a matter of principle.

Councillor Burgess agreed with Councillor Younis. She added that a proposal had been made by this Committee and it had not gone through the proper governance decision making process, which was not acceptable.

Councillor Burgess suggested that, in order to facilitate the administration of this proposal, the drivers that are still active be credited the £40 into their accounts, that would reduce the number of drivers that would have to be manually refunded.

Councillor Kerr agreed that drivers should receive the refund. She wished to emphasise that this situation, where the Committee's recommendations had not been taken to the correct decision-making process was not satisfactory. She added that if Legal advisors had been present at meetings, this situation could potentially have been avoided. She asked that Legal advisors be present at all meetings of this Committee going forward.

Councillor Kerr explained that this issue had only been picked up when the Committee had looked at the minutes of the previous meeting. She suggested that an action tracker of recommendations be produced to ensure that the Committee's recommendations are acted upon.

Councillor Bowring agreed that it was right to give the refund to drivers. He asked if it was possible to recoup the £8,500 from the 2023/24 budget.

Councillor Dennis suggested that if and when the Executive decided not to implement this Committee's recommendations, that an explanation be given for the reasons.

In response to a question, Ed Shaylor explained that this subsidy was for this financial year, and this year's budget did not include this refund. Therefore, a supplementary estimate had to be agreed by the Executive. A further complication was that licensable activities were supposed to be undertaken on a cost recovery basis, one activity could not subsidise another (it was not legal to recoup in the next financial year).

Ed Shaylor reassured Members that Officers would try to expediate this operation and give the refund back to drivers as soon as possible.

The Chairman asked to be kept informed about the process.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) The Committee notes that the reduced fees for taxi licences have been applied in 2022/23 as resolved by this Committee;
- 2) This Committee recommends Executive to apply the reduction relating to licence fees charged in 2021/22 and arrange refunds to applicants who paid the higher fees;

- 3) There will be a standing item of approval of fees and charges each year in respect to the following financial year before it goes to Executive and Council;
- 4) There will be Legal representation at all meetings of the Licensing and Appeals Committee; and
- 5) There will be tracker of recommendations as a standing item in the agenda.

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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
SPECIAL COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
HELD ON 30 JUNE 2022 FROM 7.50 PM TO 7.58 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Caroline Smith (Chairman), Beth Rowland (Vice-Chairman), Clive Jones, Pauline Jorgensen, Charles Margetts, Stuart Munro and Prue Bray (substituting Stephen Conway)

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Caroline Smith be elected Chairman of Special Council Executive for 2022/23.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Beth Rowland be appointed Vice Chairman of Special Council Executive for 2022/23.

3. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted from Stephen Conway.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 30 July 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

6. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

7. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

8. BARKHAM SOLAR FARM - PROCUREMENT BUSINESS CASE

The Committee received a report from the Executive regarding the Barkham Solar Farm Procurement Business Case.

It was proposed by Clive Jones and seconded by Pauline Jorgensen that the recommendations within the report be agreed.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the procurement strategy, recommended by the Executive and set out in the Procurement Business case, for the contractor required for the construction of the Barkham solar farm, be approved;
- 2) authority be delegated to the Director of Resources and Assets, in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance and the Executive Member for Climate Emergency and Resident Services, to implement the procurement strategy.

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