



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR THE PERIOD

5th December 2022 to 20th December 2022

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

**Susan Parsonage
Chief Executive
Published on 12 January 2023**



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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Decision made in the presence of:

Callum Wernham, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist
Samantha Eden – Customer Delivery Officer, Enforcement and Safety

Officers in attendance virtually:

Ed Shaylor, Head of Enforcement and Safety

INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION RECORD SHEET IMD 2022/17
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Title of the report	Rebate of Fees for Taxis and Private Hire Vehicle Licences 2021/22
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DECISION MADE BY Executive Member for Environment, Sport and Leisure - Ian Shenton
ACTION BY Director, Place and Growth - Steve Moore
DECISION MADE ON 05 December 2022

Recommendation contained in the report

That the Executive Member for Environment, Sport, and Leisure agrees that no rebate for financial year 2021/22 will be paid, for the reasons as set out in this report.

Decision

That the Executive Member for Environment, Sport, and Leisure agreed that no rebate for financial year 2021/22 will be paid, for the reasons as set out in the report.

Reasons for Decision if different to recommendation

N/A

Alternative options considered and rejected at time of the decision

A number of options were considered by officers prior to the recommendation being proposed. No options available were considered to be financially viable, as the refund would be for a previous financial year using revenue from the current financial year.

Given the pressures on the Council's finances and the urgency to find savings, no alternative options were recommended as part of this IEMD.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES	
Director – Resources and Assets	No comment
Monitoring Officer	No comment
Leader of the Council	No comment

Reasons why the report was deemed to have contained confidential or Exempt information (if applicable)

N/A

Any Conflict of interest declared by any Executive Member who is consulted by a Member which relates to the decision

Cllr Ian Shenton declared a personal interest in that as a member of the Licensing Committee during 2021/22 he had attended meetings where the original recommendation was discussed and voted upon. As a member of the Licensing Committee at that time, Ian had voted in favour of the original recommendation, and had no further involvement in that matter. As this issue had yet to be considered by the Executive, the Licensing Committee had reiterated their recommendation and Ian had taken advice from Licensing officers. Ian stated that he was now making this decision with an open mind, in his capacity as an Executive Member.

Any dispensation granted by the Head of Paid Service in respect of any declared conflict of interest

None/None required

PUBLISHED ON: 5 December 2022

EFFECTIVE ON: 13 December 2022

CALL-IN PERIOD EXPIRES: 12 December 2022

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
SCHOOLS FORUM
HELD ON 7 DECEMBER 2022 FROM 10.00 AM TO 11.34 AM**

Schools Representatives

Carol Simpson	School Business Manager - Colleton Primary
Corrina Gillard	Primary Head - Emmbrook Infant
Brian Prebble	Primary Head - Rivermead Primary - Vice Chairman
Liz Woodards	School Business Manager - Hawkedon Primary
Ali Brown	Primary Head - Nine Mile Ride Primary
Julia Mead	School Business Manager - St Sebastian's CE Primary
Derren Gray	Academy Head - The Piggott School
Andy Hinchcliff	Academy Head - St Crispin's School
Paul Miller	Trustee - The Circle Trust - Chairman
Shirley Austin	Academy Head - The Forest School
Debra Briault	Secondary Academy School Representative
Sara Attra	Special School Head - Addington School
Phil Sherwood	Primary Head - Sonning C of E Primary
Chris Connian	School Business Manager – Bulmershe School

Non School Representatives

Morag Malvern	Wokingham Borough Council
Sal Thirlway	Assistant Director for Learning and Partnerships

Also Present

Luciane Bowker, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist
Lynne Samuel, Finance Business Partner - Children's Services
Carole Vernon, Acting Principal Education Welfare Officer
Katherine Vernon, Schools Finance Manager
Jonathan Wilding, Programme Manager SEND

13 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted from Paul Gibson and Amanda Woodfin. Amanda Woodfin was substituted by Chris Connian.

14 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 12 October 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and would be signed by the Chair at a later date, subject to the amendment below.

Amendment: That Chris Connian be added to the list of attendees.

Matters arising

Consultation with schools – Katherine Vernon, Schools Finance Manager informed that a consultation with schools took place in November. Meetings with the Schools Block Task and Finish Group had taken place to agree the wording of the consultation.

There had been a glitch with the consultation, which schools were made aware of, 14 schools had already responded by the time the glitch was identified and seven responded again after the correction was made.

There had been a greater rate of response this year at 58%, compared to last year with a 43% rate of response.

The Chairman urged Officers to be prepared for the consultation and ready with the results in time for the July meeting next year, so to avoid the situation that happened this year.

The Chairman asked that an effort be made to improve schools participation in the consultation next year.

Early Years Clawback – the Early Years Task and Finish Group was still to meet and discuss the potential establishment of a Hardship Fund. Lynne Samuel, Finance Business Partner – Children’s Services confirmed that the allocation for Early Years for the next year was not yet known, but this would be considered as part of the Budget setting process.

The Chairman expressed frustration that the Early Years Task and Finish Group had not met yet, and urged Officers to organise a meeting as soon as possible, ahead of the January meeting when the Budget was going to be approved. He added that although the allocation was unknown, the Hardship Fund could be discussed. Lynne Samuel agreed to prioritise this work.

Ian Morgan informed that providers were indeed asking for information about the Hardship Fund. He asked that the information about the Early Years allocation be passed on as soon as this was available. Officers agreed that they would contact Early Years colleagues with information as soon as they could.

Oaktree School – Sal Thirlway, Assistant Director for Learning and Partnerships informed that the school would not open for all year groups in September 2023. The school would initially open for KS1 (Early Years) and KS3, then incrementally year on year until full.

15 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

16 HNB / DSG MANAGEMENT PLAN & SAFETY VALVE UPDATE

Sal Thirlway explained that the Designated Schools Grant (DSG) Management Plan and the Safety Valve were essentially the same plan. However, the continuation of the Safety Valve was dependent on the Council being able to reach an agreement with the Department for Education (DfE).

Jonathan Wilding, Programme Manager SEND presented the report and highlighted the following points:

- Wokingham was one of a number of local authorities with a significant deficit in the High Needs Block (HNB);
- The first meeting of the Safety Valve took place in October, when an initial management plan was presented to the DfE;
- There had been differing opinions between Wokingham and the DfE with regards to the growth in demand projections. The DfE believed that Wokingham’s projections were overly pessimistic. Consequently, the projections were readjusted, but even with the more optimistic projection (lower rate of growth in demand), a still significant growth was anticipated;
- Mitigation focussed on:
 - Demand reduction – support for SENCOs, early intervention

- Demand management
- Cost management
- SEND sufficiency
- Cessation of plans and planning for adulthood
- There were currently 17 different work streams being developed;
- There had been a meeting with the DfE in early December, where progress had been made and a proposal was presented. However, there was still some work to be undertaken to address an in-year deficit of between £2.6 million - £3.8 million by the end of the five year period (2027-28);
- Discussions were underway with WBC Health team to support the mitigation arrangements, especially in relation to early intervention;
- A Vulnerable Learners Panel was being piloted – this was to address short term financial support needs at an early stage (potentially reducing the need for escalation to an application for an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP));
- Review of banding framework – currently there was no clear and consistent methodology in the levels of plans. The plan was to work with schools to agree the levels of plans to avoid the need for top-ups.

Jonathan Wilding informed that the Council was asking the DfE to agree to a five or six year plan, as it was unachievable to reach a balanced Budget in three years as they had proposed.

The Chairman asked what were the direct implications for the 2023/24 Budget and what was the trajectory of the Budget before 2027/28. Jonathan Wilding explained that most of the more immediate impact was in relation to early intervention, improved and enhanced outreach offer. Creating more capacity within the borough would take more time to achieve. The opening of Oaktree School would start to have an impact from September 2023.

In response to a question, Jonathan Wilding explained that a lot of the short term work was in relation to suppressing demand, any significant decrease in the deficit would be seen at a later stage in the plan. Creating more provision in the borough would require investment – invest to save. He emphasized that it was important not to cut back on essential services as this could backfire.

RESOLVED That the report be noted.

17 2022/23 REVENUE MONITORING REPORT

Katherine Vernon presented the 2022/23 Revenue Monitoring report. She informed that there had been an increase in the in-year deficit of £714k since the last meeting of the Forum. There had been a reduction of £210k in the Schools Block and an increase of £925k in the HNB. The overall predicted cumulative deficit was now £16.5 million.

Most of the reduction in the Schools Block was related to the Growth Fund, classes that there were anticipated to open had not opened in this financial year. The classes were expected to open in the next financial year.

The following points were highlighted during the presentation:

- An increase in the mainstream schools top ups for SEND was expected;
- An increase in the funding for the Impaired Hearing Unit at Emmbrook had been agreed, following a cost review with the school;

- There had been an increase in the number of pupils being placed in specialist out of borough settings;
- There had been a reduction in the number of post-16 places;
- There was further risk in relation to a large number of pupils currently placed in mainstream schools who were waiting for specialist provisions;
- It was possible that there would be an increase of between £200k and £400k in the HNB before the end of the financial year.

The Chairman noted that this represented an in-year activity deficit of around £2 million which had not been possible to be predicted one year ago.

Katherine Vernon added that there was no variance in either the Early Years Block or the Central Block.

Lynne Samuel thanked the Chairman for allowing, on this occasion, for the reports to be circulated after the publication of the agenda. She shared Appendix C, which contained details of the activity, this would be circulated with the minutes.

Lynne Samuel informed that Wokingham had responsibility for funding 1,650 EHCPs, of those, 1,400 attracted top-ups. The breakdown with various graphs was shown in the appendix (attached).

Work was being undertaken with the Business Change Team to use the Power BI tool. This tool would enable better use of the data, and a more dynamic presentation of cost and activity data to Forum. In particular, taking into account the different levels of banding and not just the number of pupils.

The Chairman asked that a Christmas tree chart be included in the next report for the cost elements.

RESOLVED That the report be noted.

18 2023/24 HIGH NEEDS BLOCK BUDGET UPDATE

The 2023/24 HNB Budget update report was presented by Lynne Samuel. She explained that discussions had taken place early in the Budget setting process, in particular with settings that were fully funded by the HNB.

The Safety Valve programme had informed the Council that an additional £1 million would be allocated for the HNB for the next year, as a result of the Autumn Statement, over and above the provisional allocation announced in the summer.

The key Budget setting considerations were as listed in the report. Inflation was one of the very important considerations - creating pressures for settings.

As previously mentioned, a review of the funding for Emmbrook's Hearing Impairment Unit was being undertaken, recognising the additional costs of the unit.

In relation to Addington, it was recognised that the school had not been receiving inflation uplifts. The school was requesting an uplift of 8% to make it financially sustainable.

The Foundry review was continuing, with a particular focus on working out a model of funding primary aged pupils with the changes in the de-delegated Budget.

Further discussions would take place with the HNB Task and Finish Group with more details to be shared from the work of the Safety Valve.

The local authority had submitted a request for disapplication of 0.5% from the Schools Block to transfer to the HNB. The result of this was not yet known, however the plan which was submitted to the Safety Valve assumed that the disapplication was confirmed.

In response to a question Lynne Samuel stated that, based on the current best estimate, the projected deficit for next year would likely not fall below £6 million.

Sara Attra informed that the increase in the cost of support staff pay came as a surprise, and cost Addington an additional £377k for the year. This was on top of the teachers' salary increase which cost the school £176k. This represented additional costs of over half a million pounds which were unexpected.

Sara Attra expressed concern that the HNB Task and Finish Group had not yet met and the Budget setting date was fast approaching. Lynne Samuel ensured that she would be sending a timeline of dates for meetings very shortly.

The Chairman pointed out that the use of the word 'share' did not convey the desire to co-produce and work together. He emphasised that the Task and Finish Group was established to co-operate and use the expertise of the school leaders taking part in it. Lynne Samuel apologised and stated that was not the intention of the language used, and agreed that the intention was very much to work together with school leaders.

RESOLVED That the report be noted.

19 2023/24 DRAFT SCHOOLS BLOCK BUDGET

The 2023/24 Draft Schools Block Budget report was presented by Katherine Vernon. She informed that significant work had been undertaken with the Task and Finish Group to find affordable models. The models had been presented for consultation in November.

Four academies had not shared their data with the local authority, as a result there had been a delay in receiving the final October census data. This data was necessary in order to work out the final allocation. This data had now been received, through the DfE, and the work could be finalised. The Task and Finish Group would meet to discuss the final allocation and the results of the consultation.

Based on the previous data, the assumption had been that Wokingham would be in receipt of £1.5 million of Growth Funding for 2023/24, with £320k held in reserves.

The results of the consultation were as stated in the report. It was recognised that more work was needed in explaining to schools what certain concepts meant, as questions had been submitted asking for further clarifications.

Katherine Vernon explained that there would be fewer choices next year as the local authority moved further towards the National Funding Formula.

In response to a question Katherine Vernon stated that there were four academy schools with whom there was no sharing agreement with the local authority. The Chairman offered to help with this issue outside of the meeting.

Lynne Samuel pointed out that all schools had submitted informal information in September when asked, it was important to note that it was the official October census information that had been lacking from some academies. She thanked all schools for sending the early information in September.

In response to a question Officers informed that as part of the disapplication process, the DfE was informed of Schools Forum's views and the consultation with schools.

RESOLVED That the report be noted.

20 2023/24 PROPOSED DE-DELEGATION BUDGET

Katherine Vernon presented the 2023/24 Proposed De-delegation Budget report. She informed that following a review in line with that agreed through the Task and Finish Group last year, the recommendation was to retain the Maternity Cover and the Contingencies fund of the De-delegation Budget.

The same methodology used last year was used for next year. Basing the calculation on a 4-year rolling average for maintained schools, the per pupil rate came out at £26.50 per pupil. It was recommended to hold the rate for 2023/24 at £27.06 which allowed for an element of inflation.

Therefore, the proposed De-delegated Budget for 2023/24, based on £27.06 per pupil, was £218k for Maternity Cover. No further de-delegation was requested for Contingencies, however £55k would remain held in reserves.

In response to a question Katherine Vernon clarified that it was the same cost for primary and secondary pupils.

Maintained primary and secondary schools only were asked to vote on this item, and there was unanimous approval.

RESOLVED That the 2023/24 Proposed De-delegation Budget be approved.

21 DRAFT 2023/24 CENTRAL SCHOOL SERVICES BLOCK BUDGET

Lynne Samuel presented the Draft 2023/24 Central School Services Block Budget report. She stated that she would adjust the report when the final amount was confirmed.

The final amount for licences, which was retained centrally by the ESFA was not yet known, an assumption of an uplift of 3% from the current amount had been made for the calculations. Based on this assumption there would be an additional £15k available from the Central Schools Block towards the cost of statutory duties undertaken.

The allocation received from the DfE was not sufficient to cover all the costs, and the Council used its general funds to cover the difference.

Schools Forum was being asked to note the draft proposed Central Schools Budget which, with the current assumptions, was £1,014,700. This would be distributed in the same way as last year with the balance of £15k applied to Statutory and Regulatory Duties. Should the final allocation and licence figure differ, then the corresponding adjustments would be made from the figure allocated to Statutory and Regulatory Duties.

Upon being put to the vote, members voted unanimously in favour of the recommendations.

RESOLVED That Schools Forum:

- 1) Notes the provisional 2023/24 budget allocation for the Central School Services Block (CSSB) of £1,014,700;
- 2) Notes the planning assumption made of a 3% uplift on government arranged licences to £149,600;
- 3) Approves the proposed budget allocation from the remainder of the CSSB as follows:
 - a. Statutory and Regulatory Duties £463,100
 - b. Education Welfare £117,000
 - c. Asset Management £49,000
 - d. Other Ongoing Duties £236,000
- 4) Approves that any further adjustment required following notification of the final CSSB allocation and licences for 2023/24 will be amended from (a) above.

22 SCHEME FOR FINANCING SCHOOLS

Katherine Vernon presented the Scheme for Financing School report. She explained that the changes were in line with national guidance and not as a result of local discretion, maintained schools only were required to vote to note the content of the report.

The three key sections of the Wokingham Scheme which had been updated were as follows:

- 1) The requirement for LA maintained schools to submit a 3-year budget forecast to the Local Authority by 31st May each year;
- 2) The requirement for LA maintained schools to submit a recovery plan to the Local Authority when their deficit rose above 5% at 31st March of any year;
- 3) Instead of taking out insurance, LA maintained schools may join the Secretary of State's Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA) for risks that are covered by the RPA.

Upon being put to the vote, maintained schools unanimously voted to approve the revised guidelines.

Subsequently it was recognised that the Special Schools, as maintained schools in the borough, were entitled to votes on maintained schools matters. Luciane Bowker, Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist would amend the presentation of the membership list to reflect this and avoid any future confusion.

RESOLVED That Schools Forum approved the amendments in the guidelines as described in the report.

23 EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE

Sal Thirlway apologised for the delay in the delivery of the Education Welfare Service report.

Carole Vernon, Acting Principal Education Welfare Officer presented the report and highlighted the following points:

- The Education Welfare Service (EWS) was no longer a traded service, the EWS now worked with all schools in the borough, including independent schools;
- The EWS was currently holding two vacancies, and this presented challenges, the work had to be re-distributed and staff were holding large workloads;
- Each school had one allocated Education Welfare Officer (EWO), whom they could contact any time;
- This year there was a focus on persistent absenteeism, suspensions and pupils at risk of permanent exclusions, children missing in education and children on part-time timetables;
- The EWS took part in multi-agency work;
- Quick link guides to all the areas of EWS expertise were sent to schools over the summer. There were also webinars and network meetings;
- A new referral process had been put in place;
- The EWS did not have access to schools attendance data and there was no system in place to track attendance, this presented a challenge;
- There had been an increase in the number of Elective Home Education and children missing from education;
- It was difficult to find alternative provision and funding for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion;
- Work was ongoing to address the challenges, in particular the staff shortage.

The Chairman asked for clarification on the mention of 'studios' in the report. Carole Vernon explained that there were around 17 film studios in the area, with new ones opening too. This industry attracted young actors to work who required licences to be issued.

Members asked if the EWS charged for licences and whether this could fund the service. Carole Vernon informed that the EWS was exploring this idea, however this would be a nominal fee and wouldn't cover the service. This was because the majority of licences were for volunteers.

RESOLVED That the report be noted.

24 FORWARD PLAN

The Chairman asked that for the 11 January 2023 meeting:

- The word 'final' be changed to 'draft' for the HNB Budget and Early Years Budget;
- The Central School Services Block Budget was for information.

RESOLVED That the Forward Plan be noted and amended as agreed during the meeting.

Councillor Malvern informed that Wokingham had signed up to a lobbying group called F40, which was comprised of the lowest funded local authorities in the country. She agreed to bring an update on this at the next meeting.

The Chairman asked that a page be included in future agendas with the membership list of the various Task and Finish Groups.

Matters arising

- To include a Christmas tree chart for cost in the Revenue Monitoring report
- To move Special Schools in the membership list to make it clear that they are maintained schools
- To receive an update from Councillor Malvern on the work of the F40 lobbying group
- To include Task and Finish Groups membership lists in future agendas.

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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
WOKINGHAM BOROUGH WELLBEING BOARD
HELD ON 8 DECEMBER 2022 FROM 5.00 PM TO 6.20 PM**

Present

David Hare	Wokingham Borough Council
Debbie Milligan	NHS
Prue Bray	Wokingham Borough Council
Philip Bell	Voluntary Sector
Tracy Daszkiewicz	Director Public Health - Berkshire West
Nick Fellows	Voluntary Sector
Sarah Webster	BOB ICB
Alice Kunjappy-Clifton (substituting Sarah Deason)	Healthwatch Wokingham Borough
Viki Elliot-King (substituting Helen Watson)	Assistant Director Strategic and Operational Delivery

Also Present:

Madeleine Shopland	Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist
Karen Buckley	Consultant Public Health
Andrew Price	BOB ICB
Ingrid Slade	Assistant Director Population Health, Integration and Partnerships
Rob Bowen	BOB ICB
	Public Health
Dan Devitt	

31. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Sarah Deason, Graham Ebers, Councillor Clive Jones, Councillor Charles Margetts, Steve Moore, Susan Parsonage, and Helen Watson.

32. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 13 October 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

33. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

34. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

35. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

36. UPDATE FROM TRACY DASZKIEWICZ

Tracy Daszkiewicz provided an update on Strep A.

- There had been a lot in the media recently regarding Strep A and scarlet fever. A number of children had become very ill and some had sadly died.
- Strep A could cause mild illness but could also escalate. Incidents were primarily being seen in children under the age of 10.
- Scarlet fever was a condition caused by Strep A and was more common in Spring. The fact that there were a larger number of cases during winter, was unusual.
- In very rare cases Strep A could advance into Invasive Strep A infection, a sepsis type infection.
- Scarlet fever gave those infected, a temperature, an almost strawberry red, tongue, and an abrasive red rash on the cheeks. It usually cleared up after a few days and antibiotics could be given where needed.
- If children became more unwell and symptoms were escalating e.g., increased temperature, unable to eat or drink or dry nappies in very young children, medical attention should be sought as a precaution. Parents could phone NHS 111 or find information on the Council's website about symptoms and where to get help. However, most cases were very mild.
- Alice Kunjappy-Clifton asked what advice would be given to the vulnerable elderly community. Tracy Daszkiewicz indicated that it was the same advice for all age cohorts. Whilst it could infect anyone, it primarily infected those under 10, who were also less able to communicate their symptoms.

37. SUICIDE PREVENTION STRATEGY UPDATE

Tracy Daszkiewicz provided an update on the Suicide Prevention Strategy.

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

- An update had been provided earlier in the year, following a review of the Suicide Prevention Strategy published in October 2021. The reason for the review was a number of changes in policy and updated datasets which had been delayed due to Covid.
- The Suicide Prevention Partnership had been re-established and had good multi agency representation.
- The Strategy would be launched for consultation at the Suicide Prevention Summit on 12 December 2022.
- The changing landscape around suicide prevention, understanding the risks of harm and the impact on different areas of the population, such as the impact of social media on young people, were important.
- Around 6,000 suicides were recorded a year, nationally. However, this was likely to be a large under reporting.
- Despair leading to suicide could happen in very small timescales, as short as 15 minutes. If diversions could be in place for people facing moments of despair more people could potentially be protected from suicide.

RESOLVED: That the Suicide Prevention Strategy update be noted.

38. VACCINATION UPDATE - COVID AND FLU

Andrew Price, Locality Manager for Wokingham, BOB ICB, provided an update on Covid and flu vaccinations.

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

- The focus of the Covid booster had been those in the at risk groups, either by age or by clinical condition. Delivery sites had included the Broad St Mall Mass Vaccination Centre (now closed), community pharmacies, PCNs, the Health on the Move Van, and the Outreach site at Shute End.
- 72% of the 50 plus population in Wokingham had taken up the Autumn Covid booster (as of 30 November). The figure for the ICB and England was 70% and 62% respectively.
- Andrew Price highlighted the location of the fixed Covid vaccination delivery sites in the Borough. The Board was reminded that community pharmacies and PCNs were able to decide whether they wanted to participate in the programme. All six of the PCNs in the Borough had taken part.
- With regards to the flu vaccination programme, the eligible cohorts differed slightly to those of the Covid vaccination programme.
- Providers had been encouraged to co-administer the Covid and flu vaccines where possible. Local data indicated that around 26% of people were having their two vaccines at the same time.
- As of 30 October 2022, 66% of the Wokingham 65+ population had received a flu vaccination and 67% of the corresponding age group within the ICB and 65% in England.
- The governance and monitoring around vaccinations was highlighted. The Berkshire West Vaccination Action Group chaired by Susan Parsonage was the key oversight mechanism within Berkshire West.
- A lot of work had been undertaken regarding communications since September. However, the communication around Covid had been competing with a number of largescale interest items, such as the cost of living crisis.
- The Board was updated on vaccination rates by various cohorts.
- Wokingham had performed very well for delivering the booster vaccination to over 65s in care homes. Performance was also very good for the 75+ population and the immunosuppressed.
- There was not easily available data at a specific locality level for housebound residents, but it was believed that approximately 79.1% of the housebound population in Berkshire West had been vaccinated.
- There was a much lower take up in women who were currently pregnant. Discussions had been had with the Maternity lead at the Royal Berkshire Hospital, who would be attending the next Berkshire West Vaccination Action Group meeting to talk further about some of the initiatives that were being undertaken to improve vaccination levels. The Board was informed that a video was being shot of a pregnant midwife at the hospital, explaining why having both the Covid and the flu vaccinations was beneficial. In addition, there would be further training for midwives on how they offered the vaccine, and a midwife would go out on the Health on the Move van on some occasions, which would help to target areas of deprivation or where take up was low.
- Performance was lower than previously for the vaccination of health and social care workers. This was possibly partly the result of vaccination resourcing levels being less than previously. There was also some evidence of vaccine fatigue.
- The Board noted take up levels in the 65+ ethnicities. Cohort sizes were small for non-White groups in the 65+ age groups. Small numbers could mean identification of communities for targeted work was challenging.
- With previous vaccinations the delivery level for the Indian population had largely matched that of the White British population.

- The Board noted the delivery level of the primary Covid vaccination course in 5-11 year olds. Whilst Wokingham was performing the best in Berkshire West, take up was still low.
- Vaccines were still available. As of 8 December, there was 4,000 available appointments until the end of December within the community pharmacies in the Borough.
- Alice Kunjappy-Clifton asked what more could be done to improve the take up of vaccinations in the Indian community. Ethnic minorities were disproportionately impacted by Covid. Andrew Price commented that he was not aware of any specific targeted initiatives for the Indian population. Previously take-up amongst the Indian ethnic group had been high, similar to that of White British. Other communities with low take-up such as the Pakistani community, had been targeted. Resources for engagement were much less than before. Alice Kunjappy-Clifton asked that the issue be raised with the Berkshire West Vaccination Action Group. Andrew Price added that work was being undertaken with a Muslim vaccine specialist whose work included looking at the ingredients of the vaccinations to determine if they were acceptable.
- Ingrid Slade praised the work of Sarah O'Connor and her team. She went on to ask what the offer would be for 5-11 year olds and 12-17 year olds from January, given that the Broad Street Mall vaccination centre had closed and the centre at Shute End was only commissioned until the end of December. PCNs did not deliver to these age groups. Andrew Price commented that a level of provision was being planned for across BOB, but at a much reduced level, and he would provide further detail outside of the meeting.
- In response to a question from Councillor Bray, Andrew Price agreed to provide information on vaccination levels in 12-17 year olds.
- Nick Fellowes questioned whether the low take up in health and social care in care homes was contributing to increased illness amongst workers and creating staff shortages. Ingrid Slade commented that it was hard to judge the impact on workforce and illness as Covid testing was not being carried out in the same way as before. There were capacity issues across health and social care, which were exacerbated by staff illness. She went on to state that the social care staff had had a poorer vaccine offer than the health staff. Vaccines were not offered to social care staff at their place of work. Andrew Price commented that Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust had had a bus which had visited sites. Communication and engagement as well as accessibility were also potential factors.
- Sarah Webster stated that there had been a significant focus on Covid vaccinations over the past 2 years and in the new year it was intended to have a reflective learning around the governance structure, as there was a move to making Covid vaccinations as part of 'business as usual.'

RESOLVED: That the Covid and flu vaccination update be noted.

39. DEVELOPING THE INTEGRATED CARE STRATEGY

Sarah Webster, Executive Director Berkshire West, BOB ICB, and Rob Bowen, Deputy Director Strategy, BOB ICB, provided an update on developing the Integrated Care Partnership Strategy.

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

- Rob Bowen emphasised that the Strategy had been developed on behalf of the Integrated Care Partnership. He thanked those, including Ingrid Slade and Tracy Daszkiewicz, who had been involved in the integral conversations in developing the Strategy.
- The Integrated Care Partnership were accountable for developing the Strategy. The Strategy would set a clear direction for the system and promote joint working to meet local population health, care and social need.
- It was intended that the Strategy would –
 - help to improve the public's health and well-being needs;
 - reduce health inequalities in access, experience, and outcomes across the system;
 - bring learning from across places and the system to drive improvement and innovation;
 - address the problems that would benefit from a system response and multiple partners.
- How this would be achieved included –
 - The Strategy would complement but not supersede existing priorities within the Health and Wellbeing Strategies;
 - Joint working with a wide range of ICS partners;
 - Co-develop evidence-based, system-wide priorities – engaging a broad range of people, communities, and organisations.
- Six thematic working groups which had provided a framework for more detailed conversations, were highlighted. Three of them followed a life event and the other three were cross cutting through that. Representations from different areas and organisations had been involved to ensure a wide range of perspectives.
- A draft set of 18 priorities had been identified, which linked into a vision and the following 5 principles –
 - Preventing ill health;
 - Tackling health inequalities;
 - Providing person centred care;
 - Supporting local delivery;
 - Improving join up between our services.
- Rob Bowen went on to outline the approach to engagement that would be taken. The draft Strategy would hopefully be published on Monday 12th.
- The Board noted the timescale of engagement. Rob Bowen commented that the previously identified period of engagement would not have provided sufficient time to carry out meaningful engagement.
- There would be two parallel streams to this engagement – engaging well with the Borough residents; and considering the different partner organisations that should receive the document when it was published.
- With regards to public engagement, information would be available online and there would be an engagement platform which enable people to access the Strategy and supporting documents, and also to complete a survey to give their views on the proposed priorities. It would also provide links to the Health and Wellbeing Strategies.
- Work would be undertaken with Healthwatch on public engagement and work had been undertaken with the Voluntary Sector forum. Existing patient engagement forums such as Patient Participation Groups would also be contacted.
- Where possible links had been made with the local authority Communications Teams in order to assist in the distribution of information.

- Virtual meetings to outline the vision, principles, strategic themes, and priorities and seek feedback, would be held in January. Consideration was also being given to face to face meetings.
- The engagement period would run to the end of January. Following that an engagement report would be produced, and the Strategy updated. The Strategy would hopefully be published at the end of February pending ICP approval.
- Councillor Hare questioned whether there would be information on the local authority websites and was informed that it was hoped that there would be. Ingrid Slade agreed to follow this up with the Wokingham Communications team.
- Alice Kunjappy-Clifton questioned whether the information would be easy read and in different languages. She also suggested the use of a QR Code. Rob Bowen responded that an Easy Read version was being developed, which would hopefully go live the following week. He believed that the engagement platform would have the ability to flip between different languages on the online version. Requests for translations would also be considered.
- Philip Bell asked whether the BOB Voluntary Sector Forum had worked on engagement, and was informed that it had. Philip felt it was a good platform for distributing the wider message around the Strategy.
- Nick Fellowes indicated that the Wokingham Volunteer Centre and the local Voluntary Sector could also help to disseminate the engagement message across the Borough.
- Ingrid Slade asked whether there would be engagement with workforces. A lot of acute sector, health, social care, and local authority workers were also residents. Rob Bowen commented that currently there not anything specific for the workforce groups and further consideration would be given to this area.
- Councillor Bray questioned when the Strategy would start and how long it would be in place before it was refreshed. She also asked if there would be action plans supporting the Strategy, and if so, if these would also be joint pieces of work. Rob Bowen emphasised that there was not a specified end date. The guidance suggested that the Strategy should be strategic and provide a direction of travel, but it was for local areas to decide what this should look like. It was recognised that different systems were at different points of development and establishing partnership working across the system. It was likely to be for five years, but it was possible that would be refreshed prior to this as the system matured. He went on to outline the likely arrangements around underpinning action plans. Sarah Webster added that it was a national requirement that the Strategy come into effect from 1 April 2023. Berkshire West had some existing shared governance in place which would help to identify the key priorities for Berkshire West.
- Councillor Bray sought assurance regarding integrated working. Sarah Webster reaffirmed the commitment to joint working.
- Nick Fellowes expressed concern regarding Berkshire West being referred to as a 'Place' and cautioned against a generic approach being taken to the Berkshire West area which was made up of three distinct areas. Sarah Webster emphasised that 'Place' was a national term.
- Councillor Hare questioned where the Strategy would be signed off. Rob Bowen indicated that there was a requirement that it was signed off by the ICP. It was clarified that Councillor Hare was the Council's representative on the ICP.

RESOLVED: That the update on developing the Integrated Care Partnership Strategy be noted.

40. FORWARD PROGRAMME

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

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

- Alice Kunjappy-Clifton requested that a presentation on the approach being taken by Healthwatch Wokingham Borough be added to the February agenda.
- It was suggested that an update on NHS dentistry be provided at the April meeting. Alice Kunjappy-Clifton confirmed that Healthwatch were seeking enquiries regarding dental services.
- The Board requested an update on how the Borough had performed in relation to winter preparedness, at its April meeting.
- Councillor Bray commented that she had been informed that the pharmacy in Sainsbury's at Winnersh was closing. Those living in Winnersh could now no longer walk to a pharmacy. Ingrid Slade agreed to establish whether the Council had been notified of this and the possible implications.

RESOLVED: That the forward programme be noted.

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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
PLANNING COMMITTEE
HELD ON 14 DECEMBER 2022 FROM 7.00 PM TO 10.57 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey (Chair), Andrew Mickleburgh (Vice-Chair), Chris Bowring, Stephen Conway, David Cornish, Rebecca Margetts, Alistair Neal and Wayne Smith

Committee Members In-Attendance Virtually

Councillors: John Kaiser

Councillors Present and Speaking

Councillors: Prue Bray, Michael Firmager and Adrian Mather

Officers Present

Kamran Akhter, Principal Highways Development Management Officer
David Bridle - Environmental Health Officer
Emma Jane Brewerton, Senior Solicitor - Legal Services
Ian Church, Team Manager - Growth and Delivery
Brian Conlon, Operational Lead - Development Management
Connor Corrigan, Service Manager - Planning and Delivery
Callum Wernham, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist

Case Officers Present

Tariq Bailey-Biggs
Andrew Chugg
Sophie Morris
Simon Taylor

53. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

John Kaiser attended the meeting virtually, meaning that he could participate in discussions but not cast any votes.

54. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 9 November 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Committee thanked Mary Severin for her years of service and legal advice to the Committee, and wished her well for the future.

55. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Stephen Conway declared a personal interest in agenda item 59, on the grounds that he had objected to the inclusion of this site in the draft Local Plan Update. The site had subsequently been included in the update, and Stephen commented that he was approaching this application as a fresh exercise with an open mind, and would consider all evidence prior to reaching a decision.

56. APPLICATIONS TO BE DEFERRED AND WITHDRAWN ITEMS

No applications were recommended for deferral, or withdrawn.

57. APPLICATION NO.220663 - LAND SOUTH OF OLD BATH ROAD SONNING, RG4 6GQ

Proposal: Outline planning application for the proposed erection of 57 dwellings suitable for older persons accommodation following demolition of the existing dwellings (Access, Layout, Scale and Appearance to be considered).

Applicant: Arlington Retirement Lifestyles

The Committee considered a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 13 to 132.

The Committee were advised that this application had been discussed and deferred at the November 2022 meeting of the Committee.

The Committee were advised that there were no updates contained within the supplementary planning agenda.

Trefor Fisher, Sonning Parish Council, spoke in objection to the application. Trefor thanked the Vice Chair for reading out his statement at the previous Committee meeting. Trefor felt that this was a fine development situated in an unsuitable and unsustainable location, which was out of proportion and character with the small Sonning community. Trefor added that Sonning Parish Council was in complete agreement with comments made by Wayne Smith at the previous Committee meeting, in that if this development was not viable here then it would not be viable anywhere. Trefor felt that allowing this application would set a dangerous precedent, where applicants may feel that they could reduce their affordable housing contributions if they purchased the land at a higher price. Trefor stated that an advertisement shown to the Parish Council by a local resident indicated that the site was being marketed as being very viable. Whilst the claims on this advertisement may be exaggerated, in the region of £9m to £14m profit, this was still a very big difference to the claims being presented to the Committee. Trefor noted that recent comments made by the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities indicated that applications should be judged on their merits, rather than being worried about a Planning Inspector. Trefor urged the Committee to refuse the application.

Michael Firmager, Ward Member, spoke in objection to the application. Michael felt that the application was out of character with the surrounding area despite the comments contained within the report, whilst policy TB06 stated that the Council should resist inappropriate development of residential gardens where development would cause harm to the local area. Michael was of the opinion that this application demonstrated overdevelopment, with side roads also providing access to the local rugby club and access being granted onto the busy A4. 13 dwelling were proposed via a separate application at Pound Lane, which Michael felt could be converted to a care home. Michael stated that this application would add to existing congestion issues, in an area that lacked public transport or amenities. The application catered for older individuals, who would be forced to rely on motorised transport due to the lack of public transport, which would be contrary to the Council's climate emergency objectives. Michael fully supported the Parish Council's concerns regarding the lack of affordable housing and questions regarding the actual profitability of the site, and raised concerns as to what would stop the applicant coming back again if further claims of viability were made. Michael urged the Committee to refuse the application.

Stephen Conway stated that the built form was no longer an issue that the Committee could pursue, as it was very similar to the application which had already been approved. Stephen stated that until policy was approved, the Committee could not base decisions on comments made by Ministers. Stephen asked what weight the Committee could place in the marketing document circulated by the Parish Council. Andrew Chugg, case officer, stated that very little to no weight could be placed on this document, as it was effectively looking to promote the site to sale for a buyer. The claims made within the advertisement had not been assessed, and any potential buyer would be advised to carry out their own viability assessment.

Andrew Mickleburgh thanked Trefor Fisher for his very balanced presentation. Andrew added that this application had been previously deferred to get additional information on the viability of the site, and felt that the public document gave an overview and indication of the viability situation when the units came to be sold. Andrew stated that he was reassured by the information provided.

John Kaiser queried how confident officers were that the situation would be constantly monitored to ensure that when sold, the full value of the units were taken into consideration. Andrew Chugg stated that the deferred payment mechanism effectively prevented the applicant to dispose of a certain number of units prior to a review by the Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) valuer. The particular timing of the review was up for discussion. John Kaiser stated that he was not comfortable if the properties were not valued when they were sold, and noted that Sonning was a very desirable area.

At this stage of the meeting, David Cornish proposed that the meeting move into a Part 2 private session under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, excluding the press and public from part the meeting to allow members to discuss the part 2 sheets contained within agenda item 57, on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended) as appropriate. This was seconded by Wayne Smith. Upon being put to the vote, the motion was passed and the meeting moved into a Part 2 session.

At the cessation of the Part 2 session, a motion was proposed, seconded and carried to move the meeting back to a Part 1 session.

Stephen Conway stated that he shared the Committee's scepticism with the financial information provided, however an independent viability assessment had considered the proposal acceptable. Stephen was of the opinion that the Committee had no choice but to approve the application, and pondered whether a recommendation could be made to place some wording in the Local Plan Update to stop this occurring again for future applications.

Rebecca Margetts queried how the deferred payment mechanism would be enforced and whether this application would set a precedent, and commented that other developers had issues committing to S106 agreements. Andrew Chugg confirmed that approval of this application would not set a precedent as a deferred payment mechanism was used in other Boroughs and by WBC. A monitoring process would be diarised, tying it to a S106 agreement. Brian Conlon, Operational Lead – Development Management, stated that legal officers would prepare the deferred payment mechanism and other associated legal documents. An open book appraisal would be undertaken at the completion of the first block of flats, whereby any upturn in profit would be accounted for at each stage. The

assessment would be undertaken after building had commenced to gain a true reflection of building costs.

Chris Bowring queried whether the deferred payment mechanism would be an objective assessment or a negotiation, and if so, how would the negotiation be resolved. Andrew Chugg stated that professional valuers would scrutinise what information was provided in relation to viability via an iterative process. Whilst there would never be an absolute agreement, the result was usually very close.

David Cornish stated that he would have found it reassuring if a forecast was provided of what might be provided via the deferred payment mechanism.

John Kaiser was of the opinion that any uplift in the value of the units should be put forward in full towards affordable housing contributions, until a total of forty percent affordable housing was provided. Brian Conlon stated that the percentage split of profit uplift would be agreed via the deferred payment mechanism. John Kaiser was of the opinion that the Committee should only vote to approve the application if the totality of any profit uplift went towards affordable housing contributions up to the forty percent figure.

Wayne Smith sought details of the open book valuation procedure. Brian Conlon confirmed that open book would mean that the applicant would provide the required viability information to WBC for review. Wayne Smith felt that the applicant should have purchased the land at a suitable price where a policy compliant forty percent affordable housing contribution would be provided. Wayne stated that he fundamentally disagreed with the application.

David Cornish feared that this may become a trend for future applications, but hoped that the Committee's lengthy deliberations would show other applicants that they would not simply approve such applications at face value.

Stephen Conway queried whether John Kaiser's suggestion of requiring the totality in any profit uplift to go towards affordable housing contributions could either be conditioned or put forward as an informative. Brian Conlon stated that this information would need to be put forward in front of the Committee as it was subject to negotiation. An informative would not commit the applicant to anything, however it would suggest the Committee's preferred path. Brian stated that each agreement was site specific, with some sites operating a 60/40 split, whilst others applied a 50/50 split.

Wayne Smith proposed that the application be deferred to seek details of the exact nature of the deferred payment mechanism. This was seconded by David Cornish.

RESOLVED That application number 220663 be deferred, to seek details of the exact nature of the deferred payment mechanism.

58. APPLICATION NO.222516 - "CHERRY TREES", LIMMERHILL ROAD, WOKINGHAM

Proposal: Householder application for the proposed erection of two-storey side extension raising the roof to create habitable accommodation following the demolition of the existing double garage.

Applicant: Mr N Rainer and Mrs T How

The Committee considered a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 133 to 178.

The Committee were advised that this application had previously been discussed and deferred at the November 2022 meeting of the Committee.

The Committee were advised that updates within the supplementary planning agenda included a plan received from the agent on 13 December 2022 showing that the ground level of the application site was set 1 metre higher than number 51 Dorset Way.

Rob Kelly, resident, spoke in objection to the application. Rob was of the opinion that the application would not be subservient to the current built form, whilst it would be positioned too close to the boundary edge. The application would have a detrimental effect on the rear garden privacy enjoyed by Dorset Way residents, with number 51 suffering their entire garden being overlooked by rear facing rooms of Cherry Trees. Rob felt that the large footprint and smaller plot depth of Cherry Trees already caused it to be more overbearing than any other property on Limerhill Road, whilst the proposals would only exacerbate this issue. Rob disputed the late submission from the agent claiming that there was only a 1m height differential between Cherry Trees and Dorset Way, as his garden was situated on a slope. Rob stated that planning officers had previously deemed the site inappropriate for a two-storey dwelling, and urged the Committee to refuse the application.

Nigel Rainer, applicant, spoke in support of the application. Nigel stated that he was looking to create a flexible multi-generation space allowing for family to visit whilst facilitating he and his wife to stay at the property for as long as possible. Nigel added that older people should be encouraged to stay in properties with stairs for as long as possible, for multiple health reasons. Whilst neighbours had concerns that Cherry Trees should not be developed beyond its current size, Nigel stated that he had worked hard to ensure concerns were addressed as much as possible through policy compliant proposals. A full pre-application process had been undertaken, and proposals were modest and compliant with the Borough Design Guide. Nigel added that the old hedgerow and fence were rotten and unmanageable, and had been replaced separately to this application at his own cost. Nigel stated that this project was an attempt to create a home to meet the long term needs of him and his family, whilst being as sensitive as possible to neighbouring concerns.

Adrian Mather thanked the Committee for undertaking a site visit to understand the site more fully. Adrian stated that the site contained a large bungalow on the crest of a hill, which was very dominant to the properties on Dorset Way due to its proximity to the rear boundary. Adrian felt that the application would create significant height and massing issues, with sightlines looking directly into the gardens of Dorset Way, including the totality of the garden of number 51. Adrian disputed the comment in the report that two-storeys was the norm for the area, as you could only see bungalows from Dorset Way unless you stood on an object to see further into the distance. Adrian urged the Committee to refuse the application, and noted that officers had previously refused an application for a two-storey dwelling on the site.

Stephen Conway queried what weight could be given to the fact that a two-storey dwelling had previously been refused on this site. Tariq Bailey-Biggs, case officer, stated that each application needed to be judged on its own merits, and officers felt that this application complied with policy and would not create adverse impacts.

David Cornish asked that the narrative of future Committee reports be more carefully crafted, as the whole garden of number 51 Dorset Way was visible unlike what was alluded to within the report.

Andrew Mickleburgh proposed that the application be approved as per the officer recommendation. This was seconded by Chris Bowring.

RESOLVED That application number 222516 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 147 to 148.

59. APPLICATION NO.212720 - LAND AT BRIDGE FARM, TWYFORD

Proposal: Outline application (all matters reserved except access to the site) for the development of up to 200 dwellings, including 40% affordable housing and associated infrastructure, open space, biodiversity enhancements, landscaping and green infrastructure, following demolition of existing agricultural buildings. (Means of access into the site from New Bath Road to be considered.)

Applicant: Croudace Homes

The Committee considered a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 179 to 258.

The Committee were advised that updates contained within the supplementary planning agenda included:

- Noting an additional neighbour objection;
- Replacement of plan number within condition 1;
- Replacement of paragraph 1 within condition 35;
- Amendment of paragraph 1 within condition 37;
- Minor amendment of condition 38;
- Replacement of paragraph 1 within condition 41.

Sophie Morris, case officer, advised the Committee that an additional condition in relation to air quality was proposed.

Chris Roberts, agent, spoke in support of the application. Chris stated that the applicant had worked hard to comply with and exceed planning policies where possible. The application would provide five hectares of parklands which exceeded requirements, in addition to the provision of 350 new trees, wildflower planting, bird and bat boxes, a thirty percent increase in biodiversity net gain, a fifteen percent increase in riverside biodiversity net gain, and all homes being provided with photovoltaic panels whilst being thermally efficient. Chris added that all properties would benefit from electric vehicle charging, whilst being located near to easily accessible amenities and rail links, and was in accordance with the 15 minute neighbourhood principle. A new toucan crossing would enable access to the site from the north, whilst the site would provide a suitable mix of home types and sizes. A forty percent affordable housing contribution would be provided, whilst the developer was a family-owned housebuilder who were committed to submit a reserved matters application within eighteen months subject to approval this evening. Chris stated that the Committee could be confident of a timely manner of delivery and a significant boost to housing supply within the Borough.

Sam Akhtar, adjoining Ward member, spoke in objection to the application. Sam felt that 200 dwellings was excessive for this area, and cited issues with access from a very busy A4, whereby the application would only add to issues of traffic and congestion. Sam raised concern that part of the application site was situated on a flood plain, which would negatively impact local residents in the event of a flood. Sam commented that local school places and doctors' surgeries were already oversubscribed, and felt that this application would exacerbate these issues.

Stephen Conway thanked the case officer for a balanced report. Stephen commented that although the outline application only related to access, it would agree the principle of development to accommodate up to 200 houses on this site. As such, Stephen felt it legitimate to consider matters other than access. As a result of the lack of five-year housing land supply, the tilted balance was in effect which meant that applications should be approved unless the adverse impacts demonstrably outweighed the benefits. Stephen noted the benefits of the scheme, including affordable housing which was much needed. Stephen stated that each of Twyford, Wargrave, and Charvil Parish Councils had objected to the scheme in addition to over two hundred residents and local and adjoining ward members. Stephen felt that this application would add to the cumulative impact of development along the A4 corridor, and whilst the Committee may not be able to take this into account it was clearly weighing on the minds of local residents. Stephen stated that there were legitimate concerns regarding traffic and air quality, flooding both on and off site, whilst there needed to be an obligation to ensure that local infrastructure could cope for example the Piggott Senior School. Stephen was of the opinion that to seek refusal at this stage would be difficult as it was problematic to overturn the expert testimony whilst internal consultees had not objected to the application. However, a deferral could allow additional evidence to be provided to ensure issues were addressed now and not at the reserved matters stage.

Stephen Conway queried where the walking and cycling time had been measured from on the site. Sophie Morris confirmed that this had been measured from the midpoint of the site.

Stephen Conway outlined a number of potential reasons for deferral, including to seek improvements to pedestrian access to Piggott Senior School to ensure all paths were 4m in width (including the railway bridge which currently provided a width of only 1.5m and the proposed pelican crossing which would provide a width of only 3m), additional information in relation to air quality and contributions towards air quality improvements, projected school place data for the next five to ten years, highways modelling and traffic data on the A4 in both directions, and additional detail in relation to the potential conflict between pedestrian and cycle access to the Cedar Park Nursery to the south of the site and the vehicles accessing the nursery, currently via a single track railway bridge.

David Cornish commented that when the application was considered in greater detail, a number of issues arose. David queried whether officers had read and considered the Twyford Neighbourhood Plan when considering this application. Sophie Morris confirmed that she had considered the document, but not in full detail.

David Cornish felt that the neighbourhood plan now carried more weight as it progressed past a regulation 18 consultation, whilst two other potential developments locally could be prejudiced should this application be granted planning permission. In David's opinion, granting permission for 200 houses would prejudice the outcome of the review of the

whole Local Plan Update, whilst proper weight may also not have been applied to the neighbourhood plan. David commented that he would support deferral of this application.

Andrew Mickleburgh stated that he would support deferral of this application for the reasons suggested by Stephen Conway, in addition to information regarding the contribution of the site to offsite flooding concerns and the relationship between the neighbourhood plan and this application. Ian Church, Team Manager – Growth and Delivery, confirmed that the Twyford Neighbourhood Plan carried little weight whilst in the examination phase, prior to an outcome being decided.

John Kaiser queried whether there was any value in deferring this application, sought clarity of Wokingham Borough Council's (WBC's) chances at appeal should the applicant file for non-determination, and queried why some of the issues raised had not been considered in the officer report. Connor Corrigan, Service Manager - Planning and Delivery, stated that some questions including long-term school place projections could not be answered on the night. With regards to the value in deferral, this was dependant on whether the Committee were satisfied with the proposed conditions, informatives, and information provided. Connor stated that the report gave the professional opinions of officers, and going against that opinion always attracted an element of risk should the applicant go to appeal.

Chris Bowring raised concern that members were asking valid questions and seeking deferral rather than trying to get answers and coming to a conclusion. Chris queried whether the application was for up to two hundred homes, queried why the main entrance was on the other side to where most of the housing was located, and queried whether school capacity issues were a planning matter. Sophie Morris confirmed that application was for up to 200 homes, with further detail provided at the reserved matters stage. Kamran Akhter, Principal Highways Development Management Officer, stated that most of the housing would be accessed from the roundabout whilst forty to fifty units would be provided access from the T-junction. Kamran confirmed that the capacity of the roundabout was assessed and considered acceptable. Sophie Morris stated that education officers had been consulted and had acknowledged the issue with secondary school places. All catchment pupils had been offered Piggott Senior School this year, whilst officers felt that this application would help to fill places in local primary schools.

Wayne Smith commented that Piggott Senior School had previously required additional funding to facilitate additional school places. The application site was located very close to the Piggott Senior School, and would create issues in other parts of Twyford, unless the catchment stayed the same or sports facilities were removed to allow the school to expand. Wayne commented that approximately sixty percent of respondents to the previous Local Plan Update consultation disagreed with the allocation of this site, and to date WBC had not gone back to residents to seek further opinions following the results of the survey. Wayne commented that this application was only being recommended for approval due to the lack of a five-year housing land supply, and Wayne felt that the Borough was being punished for over delivery of housing. Wayne stated that if a deferral would allow a consultation with residents, then he would support a deferral.

Rebecca Margetts queried whether the applicant could appeal on the grounds of non-determination should the application be deferred. Connor Corrigan stated than any deferral risked an appeal, as the applicant had to balance the cost and risk of an appeal against the time taken to provide additional information to members.

David Cornish sought clarity regarding the relationship between this application and the two other sites proposed within the Local Plan Update. Connor Corrigan stated that future applications could not be considered as part of this application, whilst public opinion had been taken into consideration within the officer report. Connor added that there was no indication of when the Local Plan Update would be finalised.

Stephen Conway commented that his queries were in no way critical of officers, and the questions raised were legitimate whilst a deferral would provide the Committee with information to make a more informed decision.

John Kaiser queried how long the application would need to be deferred for. Connor Corrigan stated that it would require a conversation with the applicant to ascertain how long they required to provide the necessary clarifications.

In relation to a proposed reason for deferral based on air pollution concerns, David Bridle, Environmental Health Officer, clarified that this scheme would not result in a significant impact on air quality and that there could be further increases in the projected vehicle movements through the town before the pollution levels would reach the prescribed levels. On this basis, Stephen Conway was content to withdraw this proposed reason for deferral.

Stephen Conway proposed that the application be deferred for the following reasons:

- 1) to seek consideration regarding pedestrian access to the Piggott School, in particular the widening of the pinch point at the railway bridge to 4m and the widening of the proposed southern footway to 4m;
- 2) to receive data on school place projections for the following five to ten years;
- 3) to receive traffic modelling on highways movements on the A4 in both directions;
- 4) to seek details of the form of the proposed contributions to air quality improvements;
- 5) to seek how the applicant proposes to manage the potential conflict at the southern entrance of the site, designated for pedestrian and cyclist access only, against the vehicular traffic coming to and from the Cedar Park Nursery over a single-track railway bridge;
- 6) to receive information on how the applicant could achieve zero-carbon homes.

The proposal for deferral was seconded by Andrew Mickleburgh.

RESOLVED That application number 212720 be deferred for the following reasons:

- 1) to seek consideration regarding pedestrian access to the Piggott School, in particular the widening of the pinch point at the railway bridge to 4m and the widening of the proposed southern footway to 4m;
- 2) to receive data on school place projections for the following five to ten years;
- 3) to receive traffic modelling on highways movements on the A4 in both directions;
- 4) to seek details of the form of the proposed contributions to air quality improvements;

- 5) to seek how the applicant proposes to manage the potential conflict at the southern entrance of the site, designated for pedestrian and cyclist access only, against the vehicular traffic coming to and from the Cedar Park Nursery over a single-track railway bridge;
- 6) to receive information on how the applicant could achieve zero-carbon homes.

60. APPLICATION NO.222590 - LAND TO THE REAR OF 5-7 MAYFIELDS, SINDLESHAM, RG41 5BY

Proposal: Application to vary conditions 2-11-17-18 and 19 of planning consent 152286 for the proposed erection of three detached dwellings with associated access and parking following the partial demolition of the existing dwelling. Variations include to Conditions 2 (Approved details) and 11 (landscaping) to supply new plans, Condition 17 (garages) to allow bike storage and Conditions 18 (Cycle storage) and 19 (Bin storage) to seek their removal

Applicant: Mr John Brunt

The Committee considered a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 259 to 284.

The Committee were advised that there were no updates contained within the supplementary planning agenda.

Geoff Harper, Winnersh Parish Council, spoke in objection to the application. Geoff stated that that planning permission set conditions which the developer must conform to prior to first occupation of this site, which was in October 2017. Geoff added that the developer had failed to comply with all of these conditions, and following extensive delays eventually constructed a layout different to the one which was approved, and had ignored the efforts of residents to resolve them. Geoff stated that the Parish Council's sub-Committee had felt that the developer had been given ample time to resolve the outstanding issues and meet policy requirements. Geoff felt that that the developer should be held to the original planning application and conditions, and expressed disappointment with the officer recommendation of approval as he felt this had not fully taken into account the effect on local residents. Geoff urged the Committee to refuse the application.

John Rhodes, resident, spoke in objection to the application. John stated that three spaces were said to be unallocated whilst the land registry defined them as allocated spaces. John added that the driveways were 4.4m in length whilst they were required to be 5m in length, and should a 5m vehicle be parked outside 5C this would overhang the paved walkway. John stated that cars were currently parked opposite 5B and 5C on the flat landscaped garden, making it very difficult for the residents of 5B and 5C to leave. John felt that the existing cycling requirements were not complied with as there was only one resident who could be spoken to about this matter. John stated that sheds to the rear of 5A could only be accessed by 5C. John noted that forty percent of the landscaping had been omitted from this development, moving from a nicely kept area to an unsightly border made up of timber which was beginning to fail. John stated that fifty percent of the trees planted had already died, whilst the submitted biodiversity plan had been ignored. John stated that persons who found it difficult to walk would find it very difficult to walk up the driveway. John asked that the Committee listen to the concerns of local residents.

Prue Bray, Ward Member, spoke in objection to the application. Prue stated that she was very disappointed that this application to vary conditions was at Committee five years after these conditions should have been complied with. Prue stated that a bin store and a cycle store should have been provided, whilst the garages were too small to be used to store bicycles. Prue added that there had been a significant reduction in the landscaped area, whilst much of the landscaping that was provided had already died. Prue stated that adequate parking spaces had not been provided, as the spaces were substandard in size. Prue commented that only one of the gardens was properly fenced, and residents had been forced to put up with this unfinished development for five years. Prue urged the Committee to refuse the application to vary planning conditions.

Rebecca Margetts queried why this case had been ongoing for so long. Simon Taylor, case officer, stated that the enforcement process takes time, and two enforcement cases had been undertaken in relation to this site. Simon stated that there were likely issues that would first be discussed between the owners, developers and occupiers that had only then progressed to when Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) had become involved in the enforcement case in 2020, until the application before the Committee was then submitted.

Rebecca Margetts queried how residents would have been allowed to occupy when the original planning conditions had not been met. Simon Taylor stated that planning enforcement followed up on breaches on a reactionary basis.

Alistair Neal was of the opinion that the conditions contained within the original planning application should be adhered to. Simon Taylor stated that negotiations occur as part of the enforcement process, and officers were required to consider at what level it was expedient to pursue enforcement cases.

David Cornish stated that conditions were applied to planning applications for a reason, and he felt that they were meaningless unless WBC actively enforced them. Brian Conlon, Operational Lead – Development Management, stated that WBC's planning enforcement function was reactionary, and no Local Authority had the capacity to monitor the implementation of all schemes across the Borough. Ultimately, the Committee needed to consider whether the application in front of them was acceptable or not.

Wayne Smith queried whether these properties were sold on the open market. Simon Taylor stated that they had been sold on the open market, however there was a complicated land registry.

Wayne Smith commented that when an individual bought a house, they would be expected to check the plans and go back via their solicitor if discrepancies were present. Wayne felt that the Committee needed to decide if the application before them was acceptable or not.

Stephen Conway stated that Planning Committees had historically taken a dim view of retrospective applications and variations to conditions at developed sites. Stephen sought details on the argument for expediency in this case. Simon Taylor stated that there were four aspects to the enforcement case. Firstly, WBC policy advice had been updated since approval of this property to have bins collected on the kerbside for developments of this size. Regarding the cycle storage, the officer view was that it was not acceptable to have this condition removed. The other conditions relating to highways and landscaping achieved effectively the same outcome as they related to what was accommodated at the front of the site, and were therefore considered acceptable.

John Kaiser felt that WBC should be mindful to enforce planning conditions, however, what an Inspector may see may not be the same as what members saw. John queried if the officer recommendation to approve the application was being presented as officers deemed it reasonable. Simon Taylor confirmed this to be correct.

Andrew Mickleburgh queried whether the cycle storage condition would be contained under this application. Simon Taylor stated that the condition had been amended to suit the current circumstances, however in effect the condition would be retained.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey queried how the applicant would be forced to comply with the original permissions should the Committee refuse this application. Simon Taylor stated that WBC would be compelled to issue an enforcement notice in such an event.

Chris Bowring proposed that the application be approved as per the officer recommendation. This was seconded by Wayne Smith, and upon being put to the vote the motion fell.

At this stage of the meeting, Stephen Conway proposed that the meeting be extended past 10.30pm to a finish time no later than 11pm. This was seconded by Andrew Mickleburgh. Upon being put to the vote, the motion was carried.

The Committee sought advice from officers on the appropriate wording for potential reasons for refusal. Upon receipt of this advice, Andrew Mickleburgh proposed that the application be refused as it failed to deliver cycle storage contrary to WBC's sustainable travel policy, it failed to deliver the approved landscaping scheme impacting on the broader character of the area, and the application failed to comply with car parking dimension standards. This was seconded by David Cornish.

RESOLVED That application number 222590 be refused as it failed to deliver cycle storage contrary to WBC's sustainable travel policy, it failed to deliver the approved landscaping scheme impacting on the broader character of the area, and the application failed to comply with car parking dimension standards.

61. APPLICATION NO.222456 - THE MOUNT NURSING HOME, SCHOOL HILL, WARGRAVE, RG10 8DY

Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of a new part two storey and part three storey care home building with associated communal spaces, back of house, and service areas, substation, parking, and landscaping following demolition of the existing care home and associated ancillary buildings and a change of use of land at the eastern end of the site

Applicant: Aedifica UK Limited

The Committee considered a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 285 to 340.

The Committee were advised that updates contained within the supplementary planning agenda included:

- Amendment to condition 4 (omission of references to species), and creation of new informative 12 therein;

- Amendment to condition 5 (omission of references to contract gardeners), and inclusion of those omissions within informative 12;
- Amendment to condition 28 to only require north facing balustrade elevations to be obscure glazed.

Nicola Jordan, resident, spoke in objection to the application. In her absence, a statement was read out by the Vice Chair. Nicola felt that the proposed development would be out of character with the surrounding area, whilst noise and pollution levels during construction would be detrimental for residents and local schools, including people working from home and pupils trying to learn at local schools. Nicola added that traffic and parking were already considerable issues in the vicinity of local schools, whilst pollution levels would increase from the increased traffic associated with this development. Nicola raised concerns of increased noise and odours from the development if it was expanded, whilst the development would also place additional pressures on the already overloaded GP surgeries and pharmacies in the local area. Nicola was of the opinion that there was not a need for any more care home placements locally, and asked that the application be refused.

Tim Spencer, agent, spoke in support of the application. Tim stated that the applicant focussed on delivery and operation of modern care homes, where there was an unprecedented need for care home provision nationally. Tim added that at least five additional care homes would be required to meet the existing needs of the Borough, and noted that the current build was not fit for purpose. Tim stated that the application would provide jobs for local people, contribute to the Borough's housing numbers, and free up much needed family homes. Tim stated that the applicant had engaged with officers through the pre-application stage, leading to the reduction of massing and improvements in the quality of the design, which the Parish Council were now content with. Many of the existing trees were to be retained on the site, and supplementary planting would provide additional benefits to residents and provide additional screening. Tim stated that neighbouring amenity had been carefully considered, and officers had noted the sustainable location whilst parking was proposed to be increased from 13 spaces to 27 spaces. A construction management plan would be adhered to, and disruption during the construction phase would be kept to a minimum. Tim asked that the application be approved.

Wayne Smith queried whether the application site was situated within the green belt, and sought clarity as to whether the application would add to the Borough's housing numbers. Simon Taylor, case officer, stated that the application site was not contained within the green belt, and confirmed that care home numbers did not count towards housing targets where the rooms were not self-contained. Wayne Smith stated that disruption should be mitigated via the construction management plan, which needed to be strictly enforced.

Stephen Conway queried whether the proposed structure would be overbearing on the neighbouring 'Beechwood' property. Simon Taylor stated that the retention of the hedge and the set back of the wing was not that dissimilar to the existing relationship. The existing balcony facing Beechwood was about the same height as the proposed window facing Beechwood, whereby the hedge currently screened the view.

Andrew Mickleburgh proposed that the application be approved subject to the officer recommendation. This was seconded by David Cornish.

RESOLVED That application number 222456 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 313 to 324, amendments to conditions 4, 5, 28 and insertion of new informative 12 as set out within the supplementary planning agenda, and subject to legal agreement.

62. APPLICATION NO.222556 - 304 LONDON ROAD, WOKINGHAM

Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of 1no. two bedroom dwelling.

Applicant: Mr P Stelling

The Committee considered a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 341 to 378.

The Committee were advised that updates contained within the supplementary planning agenda included:

- Noting of two additional letters of support from residents;
- Noting of an additional letter of concern received from a resident;
- Additional comments from the Council's compliance officer regarding potential contamination at the site;
- Additional condition 14 with regards to land affected by contamination, and minor amendment of condition 5 to make reference to condition 14.

Nicholas Cobbold, agent, spoke in support of the application. Nicholas felt that the site was one of the more obvious residential plots that he had come across, being vacant land within an existing built-up area with established access. Due process had been followed, starting with a pre-application resulting in a single storey bungalow proposal. Nicholas stated that concern had been raised over the impact on the character of the area, however the character of the area had not been defined alongside these objections. Nicholas stated that the area was of mixed use and of mixed built form. London Road contained bungalows, some with loft conversions, with properties operating as commercial units. Proctors Road to the rear was characterised by two-storey dwellings, and the application was designed to fit into the London Road development. The single-storey nature of the development would mean that it could not overlook neighbouring properties. Nicholas stated that the immediate neighbours had not objected to the scheme, and had in fact supported the development. Highways officers had not objected to the scheme, and Nicholas asked that the Committee approve the application.

Wayne Smith queried if the entrance would be located to the side of the existing property, in line with number 73 Proctors Road. Simon Taylor, planning officer, stated that the access was existing and provided access to the building at the rear including a dwelling which was issued a certificate in 2017, and an unlawful workshop which had a current enforcement case to regularise the use. The land subject to this application was vacant land which previously existed behind number 306 London Road, with the access created ten to fifteen years ago when the owner of number 304 bought all of the land to facilitate a workshop and other uses. Access was always existing, and no changes were proposed. Such a back land development would ordinarily be opposed as it did not meet policy TB06, however there was no introduction of side lanes with this application as they already existed, and it conformed with the rhythm and pattern of development of the area.

Rebecca Margetts queried if there was access in emergencies to the property in the event of issues with the nearby commercial building. Simon Taylor stated that the commercial unit was unlawful, and an enforcement case was underway to attempt to regularise its use. The building was very well contained and low scale, and there would be very little conflict in terms of vehicles.

Stephen Conway proposed that the application be approved, subject to the officer recommendation. This was seconded by Andrew Mickleburgh.

RESOLVED That application number 222556 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 355 to 359, amendment to condition 5 and additional condition 14 as set out within the supplementary planning agenda, and subject to legal agreement.

63. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED That under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public may were excluded from part the meeting to allow members to discuss the part 2 sheets contained within agenda item 57, on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended) as appropriate.

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Decision made in the presence of:
 James McCabe, Senior Planning Officer - Growth and Delivery
 Callum Wernham, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist

**INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER
 DECISION RECORD SHEET
 IMD 2022/19**

Title of the report	Decision on publication of a Climate Change Interim Policy Position Statement
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DECISION MADE BY Executive Member for Planning and Local Plan - Lindsay Ferris
ACTION BY Director, Place and Growth - Steve Moore
DECISION MADE ON 20 December 2022

Recommendation contained in the report

That the Executive Member for Planning and Local Plan:

- 1) approves the Climate Change Interim Policy Position Statement, contained in Enclosure 1;
- 2) agrees that it form a material planning consideration when determining planning applications.

Decision

That the Executive Member for Planning and Local Plan:

- 1) approved the Climate Change Interim Policy Position Statement, contained in Enclosure 1;
- 2) agreed that it form a material planning consideration when determining planning applications.

Reasons for Decision if different to recommendation

N/A

Alternative options considered and rejected at time of the decision

N/A

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES	
Director – Resources and Assets	No comments
Monitoring Officer	No comments
Leader of the Council	No comments

Reasons why the report was deemed to have contained confidential or Exempt information (if applicable)

N/A

Any Conflict of interest declared by any Executive Member who is consulted by a Member which relates to the decision

None

Any dispensation granted by the Head of Paid Service in respect of any declared conflict of interest

None

Background papers

The draft Climate Change Interim Planning Policy Position Statement

PUBLISHED ON: 20 December 2022

EFFECTIVE ON: 30 December 2022

CALL-IN PERIOD EXPIRES: 29 December 2022