



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS
FOR THE PERIOD**

6 February 2023 to 23 February 2023

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

Susan Parsonage
Chief Executive
Published on 15 March 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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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
PERSONNEL BOARD
HELD ON 6 FEBRUARY 2023 FROM 1.30 PM TO 4.30 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Rachel Bishop-Firth (Chair), Stephen Conway, Pauline Helliard-Symons, Pauline Jorgensen, Stuart Munro, Lindsay Ferris (substituting Prue Bray) and Paul Fishwick (substituting Clive Jones)

Officers Present

Louise Livingston, Assistant Director HR

56. APOLOGIES

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

57. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest submitted.

58. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

59. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

60. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

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

61. DIRECTOR PLACE AND GROWTH

The Board interviewed for the role of Director of Place and Growth.

RESOLVED: That Giorgio Framalitto be appointed Director of Place and Growth.

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Decision made in the presence of:
Irene Kearns, Senior Estates Surveyor
Callum Wernham, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist

INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION RECORD SHEET IMD 2023/02
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Title of the report	Sale of Land near St Sebastian's Close
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DECISION MADE BY Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Business and Economic Development- Clive Jones
ACTION BY Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers
DECISION MADE ON 06 February 2023

Recommendation contained in the report

That the Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Business and Economic Development grant approval for the heads of terms included in the part 2 report for the sale of land off St Sebastian's Close, Wokingham.

Decision

That the Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Business and Economic Development granted approval for the heads of terms included in the part 2 report for the sale of land off St Sebastian's Close, Wokingham.

Reasons for Decision if different to recommendation

N/A

Alternative options considered and rejected at time of the decision

N/A

Summary of consultations undertaken

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES	
Director – Resources and Assets	No comment received
Monitoring Officer	No comment
Leader of the Council	No comments to make on the report

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

The report contained commercial terms agreed for a land sale, present to the Leader as exempt appendices.

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

Report and exempt appendices

PUBLISHED ON: 6 February 2023

EFFECTIVE ON: 14 February 2023

CALL-IN PERIOD EXPIRES: 13 February 2023

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
PLANNING COMMITTEE
HELD ON 8 FEBRUARY 2023 FROM 7.00 PM TO 10.27 PM**

Committee Members Present

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

Councillors Present and Speaking

Councillors: Shirley Boyt, Michael Firmager, Maria Gee and Charles Margetts

Officers Present

Kamran Akhter, Principal Highways Development Control Officer
Neil Allen, Head of Legal Services
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
Adriana Gonzalez
Sophie Morris
Marcus Watts

75. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted from Councillor Wayne Smith.

76. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 11 January 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

77. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

David Cornish declared a personal interest in agenda item 83, on the grounds that his daughter was a resident of Sandford Court, however she had not responded to the consultation on this application nor had she discussed the application with David.

Al Neal declared a personal interest in agenda item 82, on the grounds that he received communications from the WATCH Wokingham Group who had made representations regarding this item. Al added that he had only advised the group on the procedures of the Planning Committee, and stated that he came to this meeting with an open mind and would consider all evidence prior to making a judgement.

Stephen Conway declared a personal interest in agenda item 81, 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.

78. APPLICATIONS TO BE DEFERRED AND WITHDRAWN ITEMS

Agenda item 84, Land to the South of Cutbush Lane, was withdrawn from the agenda.

79. 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 25 to 162.

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

- Revised wording in relation to the deferred payment mechanism;
- Clarification that the S106 agreement was well-advanced and would be completed in the coming weeks should planning permission be granted;
- Clarification that the current viability issues were largely as a result of the existing use and structures on the site, resulting in a relatively high site value.

Trefor Fisher, Sonning Parish Council, spoke in objection to the application. Trefor stated that the Parish Council wished to reiterate their very strong objection to this application, including that the site was situated within an unsustainable location. Trefor added that the previous application required £1.6m of affordable housing contributions, whilst this application would only require a fraction of that amount which could set a dangerous precedent for future applications. Trefor stated that the Parish Council hoped that a timely policy change would be implemented by Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) with regards to affordable housing contributions. Trefor thanked WBC Planning officers for their work on this application, in particular for calculating the deferred payment mechanism which appeared to ensure fair affordable housing contributions going forwards should profit uplift occur. Trefor stated that in addition to this application, there were a variety of proposed developments, and developments with planning permission in the locality, which represented massive overdevelopment in what was a historic area.

Michael Firmager, Ward Member, spoke in objection to the application. Michael concurred with the points raised by Sonning Parish Council, and noted the views of local residents and local MP in objecting to this application. Michael questioned who had the final say on whether a development was unprofitable, and was of the opinion that the original application would have been refused if it only offered an affordable housing contribution of £100k. Michael was of the opinion that that this was a substandard and inappropriate development, and asked that the applicant withdraw the application or that the Committee refuse planning permission.

John Kaiser noted that the deferred payment mechanism essentially met the Committee's request from the previous meeting, ensuring that profit uplift made an appropriate contribution to affordable housing payments.

David Cornish commented that Sonning was one of the most expensive parts of the country, and as such property development should be profitable if an appropriate amount was paid for the land. David added that the Committee had pursued this line of enquiry, and were bound by prevailing Government Policy. David urged the Committee, Parish

Council and residents to respond to the Government's ongoing consultation on the NPPF to change how such calculations were carried out for future applications.

Stephen Conway stated that the Committee had taken the issue of viability as far as they could, and subject to the deferred payment mechanism he was minded to support the officer recommendation.

Andrew Mickleburgh queried whether the deferred payment mechanism allowed for up to £1.6m to be paid as affordable housing contributions, and how issues might be resolved throughout the life of the deferred payment mechanism. Andrew Chugg, case officer, confirmed that up to £1.6m of affordable housing contributions could be delivered via the deferred payment mechanism, whilst WBC and the independent valuers would scrutinise the detail regarding any profit uplift.

Al Neal queried if this application would be recommended for approval if it was submitted as a fresh application. Andrew Chugg stated that the situation had changed since the original application was submitted, as WBC could no longer demonstrate a five-year housing land supply. An independent valuation had demonstrated that the development would not be viable in line with the original affordable housing contribution.

David Cornish queried if this application could set a precedent where an application would be approved with full affordable housing contributions, only to be resubmitted at a later date with a lesser contribution and the principle of development established. Andrew Chugg stated that this application did not set a precedent, as each application would be assessed on its own merits at a particular point in time based on all relevant planning policy.

Stephen Conway commented that the built form of this application was very similar to that previously approved, and noted that a deferred payment mechanism was in place which was in accordance with national planning policy.

John Kaiser stated that a sixty-percent share in any profit uplift could prove to be a positive precedent for the Borough going forwards.

John Kaiser proposed that the application be approved as per the officer recommendation, the updated deferred payment mechanism as set out in the Supplementary Planning Agenda, and subject to legal agreement. This was seconded by Stephen Conway.

RESOLVED That application number 220663 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 29 to 38, the updated deferred payment mechanism as set out in the Supplementary Planning Agenda, and subject to legal agreement.

80. APPLICATION NO.223592 - LAND TO REAR OF 6 JOHNSON DRIVE, FINCHAMPSTEAD

Proposal: Full application for the erection of 5no. dwellings with double garages following removal/demolition of the existing outbuildings

Applicant: Mr Patrick Bancroft

The Committee considered a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 163 to 264.

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

Patrick Bancroft, applicant, spoke in support of the application. Patrick stated that the developer had been building local houses for over 30 years, and the officer report was substantively the same as that previously considered by the Committee. Patrick added that no additional objections had been received, and instead only a costly delay had been realised as a result of the previous deferral. Patrick stated that the application would end the existing brownfield use of the site, provide wildlife corridors, whilst being a significantly different application to the previously refused application for 25 houses. Patrick added that the previous Inspector's decision noted that the site was unsustainable as it was 1000m from the California Crossroad shops, which was marginal when compared to the recommended 800m, with other properties on the road having to travel the same distance. Patrick commented that the proposal would make a meaningful contribution to Wokingham Borough Council's five-year housing land supply, and added that he hoped not to have to appeal the decision in the event of a refusal.

Charles Margetts, Ward Member, commented on the application. Charles stated that the application was outside of the settlement boundary, did not feature within the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan, and a previous Inspector had made a very clear statement that the site was unsustainable. Charles contested the statement that 5 houses would make a meaningful difference to WBC's five-year housing land supply. Charles stated that he had previously raised concerns that residents had not been consulted on this application, and he was still in contact with 32 residents who had yet to receive a letter and only knew of this application as it was in the local press. Charles commented that residents deplored the behaviour of the applicant and the blight he had placed on their lives over the past 20 years, however they were realistic that WBC's local plan was on hold, and residents had decided with great reluctance not to oppose the application. Charles asked that the set of conditions put forwards by residents were applied to this application, and expected all conditions to be strictly implemented and monitored.

David Cornish commented that the limited weight applied to the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan was not consistent with similar plans within neighbouring Boroughs, and noted that the Parish Council may wish to consider legal advice on this matter. David stated that he had not appreciated a letter from the applicant, which was written in a slightly threatening tone. David added that he respected the view of the residents and would support the proposal.

Rebecca Margetts echoed comments raised by Charles Margetts and David Cornish, and added that she had not found it appropriate for the applicant to consistently remind the Committee of the lack of a five-year housing land supply, which in her opinion was being used as leverage. Rebecca stated that residents had been blighted by the applicant in the past, and this application alongside the associated set of conditions represented a favourable outcome for local residents. Rebecca urged officers to carefully monitor the development of the site and ensure that conditions were being strictly adhered to.

John Kaiser queried if five houses would be of interest to an Inspector in relation to the five-year housing land supply. Andrew Chugg, case officer, stated that it would depend on the situation at that specific point in time, and currently this would be a significant consideration.

Chris Bowring queried if the status of the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan had changed, and if so had officers taken this into account. Andrew Chugg stated that the status of the plan had not changed, and the previous statement that the plan attracted moderate weight was an inaccurate statement. Andrew added that the plan currently attracted limited weight, which had been confirmed with the planning policy team.

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

RESOLVED That application number 223592 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 165 to 177, subject to legal agreement.

81. 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 265 to 392.

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

- Minor correction to paragraph 2.1;
- Summary of new points raised by an additional letter of objection, and associated officer responses.

Bridget Datcham, Twyford Parish Council, spoke in objection to the application. Bridget stated that whilst the Committee could not fully consider the draft Local Plan Update or Twyford Neighbourhood Plan, the policies within the neighbourhood plan were worthy and did not support this application. Bridget stated that the forty-percent affordable housing would be welcome, however there was no mention of working with a housing association, whilst it was also critical that the first homes policy within the neighbourhood plan was adhered to. Bridget added that Twyford needed expanded facilities to meet the needs of existing and future residents in addition to residents of surrounding areas. There was a serious concern that properties to the south of Twyford would be seriously restricted in terms of gaining a place at the Piggott School as a direct result of this development. Bridget stated that the proposed roundabout would cause congestion at peak times, whilst present traffic may prefer to use an east to west route which conflicted with the Parish Councils plans to regenerate the village centre to create a more pedestrian friendly environment. Bridget added that the amendments to the access routes to the south of the proposed development would aid pedestrians and cyclists, however this would not resolve the difficulties they would experience once they existed onto the south of the Wargrave Road where pavements were narrow and the sight lines were difficult. Bridget felt that whilst the proposed crossing on the A4 was an improvement, it was not an adequate solution for the safety of students at peak traffic times. Bridget urged the Committee to take note of comprehensive submissions from residents regarding flooding and mineral deposits on the site. Bridget noted that there was no mention of re-wilding within the plans.

Lilian Pearson Bishop, resident, spoke in objection of the application. Lilian was of the opinion that the development would bring 200 houses, 400 cars and 800 people to the area, and added that the Bridge Farm site was neither safe nor suitable for such a development, and would be detrimental for residents of surrounding villages. Lilian stated that the traffic modelling suggested that the A4/321 roundabout would have spare capacity, and referenced images of the roundabout being heavily congested whilst children were walking alongside the congested road, breathing in emissions. Lilian stated that this development would only worsen the existing congestion, whilst more accidents would be commonplace as drivers would get frustrated and take more risks. Lilian referenced a young boy who had his jaw broken by a vehicle with a large wingmirror on this stretch of road. Lilian stated that there had been over 250 road accidents within a ten-year period between Charvil and Hare Hatch, the majority of which had occurred on the A4. Lilian stated that additional vehicle emissions would cause more respiratory illnesses and asthma, and questioned where additional GPs would be located to deal with these increased cases. Lilian was of the opinion that this development would result in additional emissions, which would be detrimental for existing residents. Lilian added that the proposed drainage strategy relied on water naturally draining through the ground, whilst much of the site had a high water table especially near the Rover Loddon. Lilian asked that the Committee refuse the application.

Chris Roberts, agent, spoke in support of the application. Chris stated that each reason for deferral had been thoroughly addressed, and the applicant had collaborated with the Council in a positive manner. The proposals now included widening of existing and proposed pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure on the A4 in accordance with LTN 1/20, taking into account existing constraints. The pinch point on the bridge was proposed to be addressed, representing an improvement to the current situation which had been endorsed by highways officers as a sensible approach. A range of footpath, signage and speed control improvements were proposed along the southern Wargrave Road pedestrian access into the site, which was also endorsed by highways officers. Chris stated that all new homes would be built to the future homes standard in accordance with the interim position statement adopted by the Council in December, and would represent the most sustainable homes ever built by the developer. Chris added that the S106 contribution of £20,000 could be used at the Council's discretion for air quality monitoring or anti-idling campaigns. Chris stated that all traffic modelling had been carried out in accordance with the Council's strategic transport modelling, and had been endorsed by highways officers. Clarification had been provided that the development was unlikely to deprive existing pupils within the Piggott catchment a place at the school. All of these benefits were in addition to benefits previously highlighted in December, including a thirty-percent biodiversity net gain, planting of 350 trees, and forty-percent affordable housing to be managed from an association on the approved list.

Stephen Conway thanked the case officer for a thorough report and for their engagement with the applicant to resolve a number of concerns. Stephen added that most of the remaining concerns related to the cumulative impact of development along the A4 corridor, leading to pressure on schools, GPs and other infrastructure. Many statutory consultees had not objected to this development, and the Committee were constrained by the planning system and the expert testimony provided in support of many aspects of this application. Stephen noted that whilst this site was included within the draft Local Plan Update, this was not adopted and the officer report stated that the site should be regarded as unallocated and judged against the existing policies within the Local Plan. Whilst policies CP9, CP11 and MD CC02 all emphasised the avoidance of development outside

of settlement boundaries within the countryside, the tilted balance as a result of a lack of demonstrable five-year housing land supply was now in effect. Stephen referenced NPPF 11D, which tilted the balance in favour of development unless the site was a protected site or the harm done would demonstrably outweigh the benefits. Stephen stated that the site was not a protected site, and whilst most of the site sat in flood zone 3A the Environment Agency had not objected to the proposals which meant that this could not be pursued as a reasonable reason for refusal. The application would deliver two key benefits, those being delivery of affordable housing and carbon neutral homes. Stephen felt that whilst these benefits were very welcome, they were not tangible compared to the harm of the development. Stephen stated that this development would preclude future extraction of minerals which was contrary to NPPF 210C, whilst the site also featured within the minerals and waste local plan as a mineral safeguarding area. Stephen stated that NPPF 174B required planning decisions to recognise the economic and other benefits of best and most versatile agricultural land. Stephen stated that the site included grade 2 and grade 3a land, which were very good and good land. As such, Stephen was of the opinion that the application was contrary to NPPF sections 210C and 174B, which was especially pertinent as the application was now being assessed against the NPPF due to the lack of a five-year housing land supply.

Andrew Mickleburgh thanked the case officer and registered speakers, and noted the responses given to the previous six reasons for deferral. Andrew hoped that other developers would apply the future homes standard, and noted the photographs showing congestion on the A4. Andrew sought details regarding the impact of the loss of agricultural land, and sought details regarding the mineral safeguarding area. Sophie Morris, case officer, stated that the site consisted of 8.7 hectares of best or most versatile agricultural land, and Natural England had not objected to the development on that basis. Sophie stated that the loss of agricultural land was not so significant given the lack of a five-year housing land supply, and recent appeal decisions had highlighted the weight placed on additional housing numbers by Inspectors. With regards to mineral extraction, the applicant had provided details regarding the possibility of prior extraction of minerals, however the site was too small to be economically viable for this sole purpose. Local mineral operators had been approached and they had indicated that they may be interested in taking minerals and processing elsewhere but they would not set up on the site. Policy DM9 in the minerals and waste plan acknowledged the process of extraction of minerals could be harmful, and as such a minimum buffer zone of 100m was required. Taking into account a 100m buffer zone to the nearest residential property, the operational area for extraction would be approximately one hectare which was not commercially viable.

Rebecca Margetts felt that the application should encourage the use of green travel, and questioned the traffic modelling data. Rebecca sought clarification regarding the access to the site. Connor Corrigan, Service Manager - Planning and Delivery, stated that there was access via the roundabout and a secondary access point. The access met the transport tests whilst the modelling was based on the most current datasets. Connor added that whilst there was some congestion in the locality and this development would add a number of vehicles, these vehicles would disperse throughout the site which would minimise the impact. Kamran Akhter, Principal Highways Development Control Officer, stated that the modelling showed that fifty-percent of traffic would go via the roundabout, with 44 AM peak trips as the worst case scenario. The threshold for congestion had not been met, and showed that there would be capacity at the roundabout to accommodate these additional vehicles.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey queried how the tilted balance impacted this application, and what impacts on air quality had been considered as a result of the proposed development. Sophie Morris stated that any scheme would have some harmful elements, and the tilted balance meant that these harmful elements needed to demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the scheme. The officer view was that any harm would not outweigh the benefits delivered by the scheme. Sophie added that the scheme would not solve the issue of a lack of five-year housing land supply, but it would contribute towards a solution. The air quality assessment was reviewed by the environment officer who had concluded that the impacts of the proposed development would not result in demonstrably harmful impacts, whilst the £20,000 S106 contribution could be used to assist with air quality monitoring.

John Kaiser queried whether approving this site could impact on other sites who were expecting to be included within the local plan update. Connor Corrigan stated that the tilted balance required local authorities to get back to a position where they could demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, and other much less sustainable locations had been granted planning permission by Inspectors on this basis.

David Cornish commented that it was unfortunate that the Twyford Neighbourhood Plan did not oppose this particular site. David stated that any development would only contribute to a small percentage increase in vehicular traffic, however there were a number of new developments using the same road infrastructure including the application for 57 flats approved earlier this evening. David queried where was the trigger point for the cumulative impact on the road network from developments. Connor Corrigan stated that industry standard modelling had been used, and had demonstrated that this development would not impact the road network to the extent where a refusal would be warranted. Kamran Akhter stated that in addition to the traffic modelling, the applicant had undertaken a traffic survey to validate the model. Kamran added that the modelling indicated that the development would not breach the threshold for congestion at the junction, meaning that the junction was under capacity.

Stephen Conway questioned the sustainability of the site as residents of dwellings towards the north of the site were very unlikely to walk or cycle to the railway station, and would instead get a lift which would generate four trips through congested roads from each property. Stephen noted that if the application was refused an appealed, all interested parties would have the opportunity to present evidence for the Inspector to make a judgement on. Stephen noted that NPPF 11D II stated that applications were required to be assessed against the policies within this framework, which included the previously mentioned NPPF 210C and NPPF 174B.

Chris Bowring commented that the Committee were required to demonstrate the harm against the benefits of the proposed development, and was of the opinion that the case officer had covered the points regarding mineral extraction and use of agricultural land.

John Kaiser sought clarity regarding the loss of agricultural land and the use of the site as a safeguarded mineral extraction site. Connor Corrigan stated that the site would only allow for a very small area of mineral extraction, which could possibly incur an objection from Network Rail, and would necessitate the need for large HGVs to facilitate extraction. 8.7 hectares of best or most versatile agricultural land was available, and it was questionable as to whether this would be a viable site for agricultural purposes. Balanced against this were the tilted balance, provision of affordable housing, and the point that this site had featured in both Local Plan Updates.

Stephen Conway proposed that the application be refused as it was contrary to NPPF 210C and NPPF 174B. This proposal was not seconded, and as such the motion fell.

Andrew Mickleburgh proposed that the application be approved as per the officer recommendation. This was Seconded by Rachelle-Shepherd-DuBey.

Stephen Conway asked that his vote, against the motion to approve the application, be recorded in the minutes.

RESOLVED That application number 212720 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 276 to 297, subject to legal agreement.

82. APPLICATION NO.223493 - TAN HOUSE FOOTBRIDGE, WOKINGHAM

Proposal: Application for Prior Approval under Part 18, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 for the erection of a single span footbridge following demolition of 2 existing footbridges.

Applicant: Network Rail

The Committee considered a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 393 to 418.

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

- Minor correction to paragraph 9, to include the word 'not';
- Reference to a supplementary statement received from the Applicant;
- An updated statement from Wokingham Borough Council's (WBC's) Highways department.

Imogen Shepherd-DuBey, Wokingham Town Council, spoke in objection to the application. Imogen stated that the Town Council would support measures to include ramped access within the final designs. Imogen added that the Town Council still had concerns over the use of perforated steel, which was notoriously hard to clean graffiti from.

Alex Cran, resident, spoke in objection to the application. Alex thanked the Committee for raising issues relating to the design and appearance of the bridge at the previous meeting, which had encouraged the applicant to consider a more suitable design. Alex stated that Members had represented the strong community feelings on this issue, and had proved that differences could be made even when faced with restrictive legislation. Alex hoped that additional progress could be made if the Council could acquire additional land to enable ramped access to be installed, and asked that Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) undertake all possible works to enable the right bridge to be delivered within tight timescales.

Natalie Wilson, resident, spoke in objection to the application. Natalie thanked the Committee for their support at the previous meeting, and felt that the deferral had allowed for meaningful differences to be made to this application. Natalie was of the opinion that the existing temporary structure should not be the baseline used to determine whether the new structure was an improvement in terms of design and accessibility. Natalie implored all parties to deliver the correct bridge at the first attempt within tight timescales, and

stated that she and other residents were dreaming of more active travel facilitated by the delivery of an accessible bridge.

Damian Haynus, applicant, spoke in support of the application. Damian stated that the position of the applicant was that there were no permissible reasons to refuse prior approval. Damian added that Network Rail had agreed to the previous deferral to allow the opportunity to address some of the concerns raised at the previous Committee. Damian stated that Network Rail were an arm's length public body, and contrary to some of the views expressed the applicant was not required to take positive steps towards equality but to have due regard to protected characteristics. In the exercise of this duty, a diversity impact assessment had been carried out to estimate the level of detriment to users via the provision of a footbridge in place of the level crossing. To the fundamental question of should crossings over the railway be accessible, the answer would always be yes. Damian stated that the memorandum of understanding entered into between WBC and Network Rail set up the framework for collaboration between the two parties, and a subsequent diversity impact assessment had been undertaken for the impacts as a result of a move from two bridges to a single span footbridge. Damian stated that a single span footbridge was a material improvement compared to the current arrangement, and the design would allow for retrofitting of ramps whilst a feasibility study was underway to see if this was possible. Damian asked that the Committee grant prior approval.

David Cornish was of the opinion that the Planning Committee was working at their best when considering this item at the last Committee. David hoped that an accessible bridge could be delivered in very tight timescales with each party working towards this goal.

John Kaiser stated that the Committee had gone as far as they could on this issue, and urged WBC, Network Rail and Wokingham Town Council to continue engagement to deliver an accessible footbridge.

Al Neal commented that if the bridge was not delivered and the right of way was lost, that would be a devastating situation.

John Kaiser proposed that the application be approved as per the officer recommendation and subject to ongoing engagement between Wokingham Borough Council, Wokingham Town Council and Network Rail. This was seconded by David Cornish.

RESOLVED That application number 223493 be approved, subject to informatives as set out on agenda pages 397 to 398, and subject to ongoing engagement between Wokingham Borough Council, Wokingham Town Council and Network Rail.

83. APPLICATION NO.222367 - LIBRARY PARADE, CROCKHAMWELL ROAD, WOODLEY

Proposal: Full application for the proposed creation of a mixed use building consisting of the retention of the existing 3 no. retail stores at ground floor level and the addition of 16 no. apartments on new first, second and third floor levels, including the erection of three and four storey rear extensions with associated car parking, cycle and bin stores, following partial demolition of the existing building.

Applicant: Mr Hardeep Hans

The Committee considered a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 419 to 470.

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

- Clarification to paragraph 64 to note that all 10 car parking spaces would have facilities for electric vehicle charging;
- Clarification that the applicant's energy consultants had indicated that the development could achieve CO₂ savings of approximately 65 percent over the Building Regulations Part L (2021) baseline, exceeding Council policy requirements;
- Comment that re-commencement conditions 3, 5 and 11 would cover materials, landscaping and boundary treatments, and would include CGI images;
- Clarification regarding the 'wind tunnel' effect referred to by third parties;
- Additional condition 23 in relation to window shutter details.

Bill Soane, Woodley Town Council, spoke in objection to the application. Bill stated that the four storey building would overlook the neighbouring Beechwood Primary School, whilst all but five of the dedicated car parking spaces would be removed. At present, there was space for 18 car parking spaces for five retail units. Bill added that only having five spaces for the retail units could result in staff of the retail units having to pay for public parking, at a considerable cost per day. Bill felt that this proposal would therefore have a negative impact on local businesses, and noted that a 'wind tunnel' effect was still possible to increase as a result of this application. Bill asked that the application be approved, as it was not in the best interests of local businesses or residents.

Bruce Chappell, resident, spoke in objection to the application. Bruce stated that he lived in one of the flats above the Lidl building with his daughter, directly opposite Library Parade. Bruce added that one of reasons he purchased his property was due to the amenity space and privacy offered due to the building's height, in addition to a quiet balcony. Bruce stated that he was shocked to see the addition of an extra floor at the proposed development, with windows directly opposite both his and his daughter's bedroom, which would result in a total invasion of their privacy. Bruce added that whilst the distance between two dwellings was within planning guidelines, in his opinion the separation between the existing building and the proposed development was inadequate. Bruce commented that he would have been happy for a planning officer to visit his property and assess the impact of the potential development, however this had not happened. Bruce noted the potential detrimental impact on the value of his property in the future as a direct result of the proposed development, whilst he would also be subject to loss of light and additional noise pollution. Bruce stated that as a shift worker, peace and quiet were very important to him and this development would be harmful in that regard. Bruce concluded that he was not opposed to development however this application represented overdevelopment in his view.

Paul Butt, agent, spoke in support of the application. Paul stated that he had been impressed by the town centre offering in Woodley, and was of the opinion that the height of the proposed development was not out of keeping with the surrounding area. Paul added that there had been recent investment into the existing retail units which would be retained as part of this development, whilst the height of the development would be comparable to the height of the building opposite as that building and the flats above it were commercial in height. Paul stated that there were two flats set back on top of the Lidl building, and the internal relationship between those and the proposed development had been carefully considered. Paul thanked planning officers for their engagement on this matter following a site meeting and internal viewing, which resulted in the amended plans

being considered this evening. Paul added that benefits of the development included delivery of 16 flats on a brownfield site including 5 affordable units, including two wheelchair accessible flats each with a disabled car parking space. Paul commented that all 10 of the car parking spaces for residential use would include facilities for electric vehicle charging, whilst the 5 retail units were as a result of the lease with the applicant. Paul stated that the energy consultant for the application had commented that CO₂ savings of sixty-five percent over and above building regulations could be achieved, which was in excess of Council policy.

Shirley Boyt, Ward Member, spoke in objection to the application. Shirley stated that it was vital for dwellings to provide generous living space, especially where private amenity space was in short supply. Shirley added that only 9 of the 16 proposed apartments had a balcony, which was not in accordance with R16 of the Borough Design Guide. Shirley felt that the quality of life for future residents would be greatly improved if there were fewer apartments, each having access to a balcony. Shirley stated that the proposed lift was to be located at the opposite end of the building to the accessible apartments, meaning wheelchair users would need to navigate the entire length of the building in an area mostly exposed to the elements. Shirley hoped that the inclusion of bathrooms on the plans for the accessible units was a mistake, as these should be fitted with level access wet rooms. Shirley was of the opinion that car parking provision was inadequate, with 16 apartments only attracting 10 resident car parking spaces, two of which were to be allocated to the accessible units. Shirley felt that the remaining units would not be car free, and residents would be forced to park in adjacent streets to the detriment of existing residents. Shirley added that retail staff would also be forced to find alternative parking, possibly in residential streets, and questioned where large delivery vehicles would park to unload for the shops on Library Parade. Shirley queried why the extraction, heating and cooling units servicing businesses at Library Parade were not shown on the plans as there would be required to relocate as part of this development. Shirley asked that the application be deferred to allow the aforementioned issues to be addressed.

Andrew Mickleburgh queried whether there would be an offsite contribution to affordable housing as forty-percent of the proposed 16 dwellings should result in 6.4 units rather than the proposed 5, queried whether the affordable units should reflect the housing mix of one and two bedroom units, queried the parking requirements for the three retail units, and queried when would be a sound case for moving against car parking standards for residential units. Adriana Gonzalez, case officer, stated that Wokingham Borough Council's (WBC's) affordable housing team had assessed the proposals for the amount and mix of units and had found them to be acceptable, whilst the details of affordable housing contribution would be contained within the S106 agreement. Adriana stated that the car parking was informally used by retail staff and the public, whilst there was already a departure of 27 spaces currently for the existing use of the building. Adriana added that car park free units were not uncommon in very sustainable locations, and noted that all of the flats above the Lidl building were car free. Kamran Akhter, Principal Highways Development Control Officer, stated that this was a very sustainable location with public car parking available in the locality, whilst a car parking management plan would be conditioned.

Stephen Conway commented that the WBC housing team would most likely have considered the two accessible units as part of the applicant's affordable housing contribution. Stephen felt that a site visit may prove informative to Members to assess the context of the site in relation to its surroundings.

Stephen Conway proposed that the application be deferred to allow a site visit to assess the impact of the proposed development on neighbouring properties. This was seconded by Andrew Mickleburgh.

RESOLVED That the application be deferred to allow a site visit to assess the impact of the proposed development on neighbouring properties.

84. APPLICATION NO.222906 - LAND SOUTH OF CUTBUSH LANE, WEST OF OLDHOUSE FARM LANE AND GATEWAY PLOT 4 AT TVSP

This item was withdrawn from the agenda.

85. APPLICATION NO.223348 - "ADDINGTON SCHOOL", WOODLANDS AVENUE, WOODLEY, WOKINGHAM

Proposal: Full planning application for a single-storey modular building erected on hard standing(94m2 footprint)with external access ramp and steps. For a period of up to three years including minor alterations to landscaping.

Applicant: Wokingham Borough Council (WBC)

The Committee considered a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 509 to 540.

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

Stephen Conway commented that this application would increase the provision of Special Educational Needs places within the Borough, which was very positive.

Stephen Conway proposed that the application be approved in line with the officer recommendation. This was seconded by John Kaiser.

RESOLVED That application number 223348 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 516 to 517.

86. APPLICATION NO.223565 - 14 PARK ROAD, WOKINGHAM

Proposal: Householder application for the proposed part single storey rear extension and part first floor front extension, including the conversion of the garage into habitable accommodation, additional fenestration and cycle storage.

Applicant: Mr Alex Moore

The Committee considered a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 541 to 558.

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

Stephen Conway stated that this application was only at Committee to provide complete transparency regarding the grant of planning permission for an officer or the relative of an officer of the planning department. Stephen added that he saw no planning issues with the proposal, and noted that neither the Town Council nor residents had objected.

Stephen Conway proposed that the application be approved as per the officer recommendation. This was seconded by John Kaiser.

RESOLVED That application number 223565 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda page 546.

87. APPLICATION NO.223023 - "BUCKHURST COURT", LONDON ROAD, WOKINGHAM

Proposal: Full application for the proposed change of use from office (Class E) to private school (Class F1), including installation of playground, play equipment and erection of additional fencing.

Applicant: Mrs Kashyap

The Committee considered a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 559 to 590.

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

Tariq Bailey-Biggs, case officer, advised the Committee that an additional condition was proposed, requiring a remediation scheme in the event that contamination was found on the site at any time during development.

Charu Kashyap, applicant, spoke in support of the application. Charu thanked the planning officer for visiting the site and producing a comprehensive report. Charu stated that the applicant had instructed their legal team to work alongside the Council to agree the S106 agreement should approval be granted. Charu added that the proposal would propose a small and unique learning environment for children who had experienced poor educational experiences within mainstream settings. Charu stated that they were committed to make a significant financial investment to deliver a warm, nurturing, unique and high quality learning environment. Over 50 consultations had been received for places at the school, and a waiting list was already in operation for September. This school would be both a private school and an independent school for children who had no other education options or who were in provisions where their needs were not being met. Charu stated that at least thirty percent of student referred to them were of compulsory school age and were not currently within education. Charu noted the points of objection raised by a local Ward Member, and clarified that the school would only be able to being operation once OFSTED were satisfied that the school could be operated safely. Charu added that she would welcome an opportunity to meet with the Ward Member on site, to allay and remaining concerns. Charu asked that the application be approved.

Maria Gee, Ward Member, spoke in objection to the application. Maria stated that there had been a statutory consultee objection from Wokingham Town Council. Maria added that there were issues in relation to pedestrian access and car pollution for those accessing the site by foot. Maria questioned whether the application should have been validated in the first instance by Wokingham Borough Council (WBC), and raised concern as to the lack of detail on dimensions which made it difficult to assess how children would be catered for. Maria queried whether the applicant had considered that should the site have been over one hectare then it would have required a flood risk assessment. Maria felt that this site should have been assessed via a land contamination assessment as it was one of 840 potentially contaminated sites within the Borough. Maria felt that the statement

within the planning application that outlined that there were no users of the site who were particularly vulnerable to contamination was incorrect. Maria added that there was a considerable amount of confusion as to how staff and pupils might access the site, as the access statement had shown that only one pupil lived within a walkable distance. Maria stated that correspondence with the planning consultant had clarified that no pupils would be walking or cycling along this road, suggesting that the site was unsustainable. Maria questioned whether the proposal would enhance and maintain the vitality of the local community and economy, as there were no local facilities. Maria raised concern regarding the transport management proposals, which appeared to rely on temporary measures to control vehicle and pedestrian access to the site. Maria was of the opinion that the site was not safe for pupils to access, and commented that this stretch of London Road was an adopted highway and she had found no evidence that the Council was in discussion with the applicant. Maria asked that the application be refused, due to inaccuracies within the application and a lack of a land contamination assessment.

At this point of the meeting, Stephen Conway proposed that the end time of the meeting be extended by a maximum of 30 minutes until 11pm. This was seconded by Andrew Mickleburgh, and upon being put to the vote the motion was carried.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey commented that the Borough needed additional Special Educational Needs (SEN) capacity, and hoped that pupils of the Borough would be accepted.

Rebecca Margetts queried what would happen if the air quality management results came back as unsuitable. Tariq Bailey-Biggs stated that the development could not commence until a mitigation strategy was in place, which was also the case for any instances of contamination.

David Cornish noted the clear need for additional SEN places within the Borough, and sought officer insight as to which of the issues raised by Maria Gee were valid. Tariq Bailey Biggs stated that the Council's SEN officer had not objected to the proposals, whilst the applicant would be required to adhere to planning policies, separate SEN statutory legislation, and OFSTED requirements. Tariq added that many of the issues raised during public speaking were matters for Building Control, and would be dealt with via that separate function.

Stephen Conway stated that there was a real need for additional SEN places within the Borough as a result of under provision, and was confident that issues raised during public speaking would be addresses via conditions, Building Control Regulations, and separate legislation specific to SEN schools and OFSTED requirements.

Stephen Conway proposed that the application be approved in line with the officer recommendation, including the additional condition in relation to a remediation scheme in the event that contamination was found on the site at any time during development, and subject to legal agreement. This was seconded by John Kaiser.

RESOLVED That application number 223023 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 569 to 574, additional condition in relation to a remediation scheme in the event that contamination was found on the site at any time during development, and subject to legal agreement.

88. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

The Committee did not move into a Part 2 session.

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
WOKINGHAM BOROUGH WELLBEING BOARD
HELD ON 9 FEBRUARY 2023 FROM 5.00 PM TO 6.16 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
Sarah Deason	Healthwatch Wokingham Borough
Nick Fellows	Voluntary Sector
Clive Jones	Wokingham Borough Council
Charles Margetts	Wokingham Borough Council
Helen Watson	Interim Director Children's Services
Sarah Webster	BOB ICB

Alice Kunjappy-Clifton	Healthwatch Wokingham Borough
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Also Present:

Luciane Bowker	Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist
Karen Buckley	Consultant Public Health
Ingrid Slade	Assistant Director Population Health, Integration and Partnerships

41. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted from Simon Dale, Susan Parsonage and Matt Pope.

42. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 8 December 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

43. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

44. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

45. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

**46. WEST OF BERKSHIRE SAFEGUARDING ADULTS PARTNERSHIP BOARD
ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22**

The Board received the West of Berkshire Safeguarding Adults Partnership (WBSAP) Board Annual Report 20/22 which was set out in agenda pages 13-32.

Keith Brown the Chairman of the WBSAP was in attendance, and during discussions the following comments were made:

- Councillor Bray was interested to know why Reading had lower number of concerns than Wokingham and West Berkshire. She added that the three areas should be reporting in a concise way;
- Keith Brown stated that numbers could go up or down for a variety of reasons, he believed that the Board was functioning well and he had no concerns;
- Keith Brown explained that adult safeguarding was evolving, in the same way that children's safeguarding had evolved in the last few years. He pointed out that, both nationally and locally, there needed to be better understanding of the nuances around adult safeguarding. There was a need to increase awareness of potential risks around self-neglect and cognitive impairment;
- A recognised risk, both nationally and locally, was the availability of staff to work in care homes;
- Members shared the concerns raised around those issues. In particular, in relation to the issue of cognitive impairment, some Members had personal experience of how dementia could incapacitate people;
- Debbie Milligan stated that GPs and staff at GP's surgeries all received safeguarding training and were aware of the risks;
- Keith Brown informed that there was growing awareness of the adult safeguarding risks relating to fraud within families;
- Helen Watson, Director of Children's Services suggested that there was an opportunity for the WBSAB to work in partnership with the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children's Partnership (BWSCP);
- Keith Brown informed that he had met with the Chairman for the BWSCP. He added that there was much scope to work together, in particular in relation to:
 - Transition – co-operation was needed during the time of transition from childhood to adulthood;
 - Family – some risks involved the whole family and were cross-generations. It was important not think in isolation;
 - Safeguarding in adulthood - sometimes linked to things that had happened in childhood;
- Debbie Milligan believed that decisions should take into account the whole family context, but in practice this was not always the case;
- Keith Brown was of the opinion that professionals should be pushing for more joint up actions, even if the legislation was still catching up on this issue.

Keith Brown offered to work with the BWSCP, the Wellbeing Board and the Council. He was prepared to come back after May to help with Members' training.

Members thanked Keith Brown for his contribution to the meeting.

RESOLVED That the report be noted.

47. PHARMACEUTICAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT - WOKINGHAM DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Karen Buckley, Public Health Consultant presented the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment – Wokingham Decision-Making Process report which was set out in agenda pages 33-36.

She explained that the local decision-making process involved the following steps:

- Democratic Services and Public Health receive notification (for example 45 days for consolidations of pharmacies, three weeks for pharmacy closures)

- Democratic Services notifies WBWB Members
- Public Health Team undertakes data analysis against PNA/national criteria
- Public Health produces briefing and shares with WBWB Members
- A decision is made by the appropriate person/s
- An item is scheduled for information at the next public meeting of WBWB
- Berkshire West Shared Public Health Team publish any supplementary statements (as required)

The Board was now required to choose one of the proposed options for making decisions where there was no meeting of the WBWB within the timeframe. The options were:

- a) Hold an extraordinary WBWB
- b) Delegate the decision to the Chair (or Vice-Chair in their absence) and Public Health Consultant
- c) Review circulated by email to all WBWB Members for a decision

Councillor Bray suggested that the decision should be communicated to all Members of the Board for transparency, and that the final decision be made by the Chair. Members were in agreement with this proposal.

David Dean, Local Pharmaceutical Community explained that there were 257 pharmacies across Berkshire and Oxfordshire. He expressed much concern with the future of the pharmacy provision in general. He explained that for a pharmacy to operate, it was necessary to have two pharmacists employed. However, there was a shortage of pharmacists and issues in relation to the funding of two pharmacists per pharmacy. There had been a decrease in the funding for pharmacies at national level.

David Dean stated that with the closure of the Winnersh pharmacy, there would be 21 pharmacies in Wokingham. The remaining pharmacies would be able to deal with the prescriptions that had previously been dealt within the Lloyds pharmacy in Winnersh.

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

- Members expressed concern that there were not enough pharmacists, and wondered if the training offer should be improved;
- David Dean stated that also of concern, was the fact that a lack of pharmacists could add pressure to the workload of GPs. He informed that part of the problem was the fact that many graduates were choosing to go into other industries;
- Members noted that local pharmacies had been extremely helpful with the covid vaccinations campaign;
- Councillor Bray stated that the Lloyds pharmacy in Winnersh had never administered the flu vaccine, however their website had accepted bookings, which was very unhelpful. She had written to them about it but had never received a reply;
- Members asked what was the reason for the sudden lack of drugs in the market? David Dean explained that there had been an excess build up of medication when the UK left the EU. Companies chose to sell their drugs to whoever paid more;
- Karen Buckley reassured the Board that there was local capacity to administer the prescriptions that were previously dispensed at the Lloyds pharmacy in Winnersh. The analysis which had been undertaken against local and national PNA criteria showed that there was not a significant impact on residents;
- Members expressed concern that some residents may have to drive to a pharmacy to pick up their prescriptions;

- Karen Buckley reassure the Board that against the national and local PNA criteria, there was access to pharmacy provision;
- Debbie Milligan asked that the information about pharmacies be communicated to all GPs in the borough. In Wokingham, only ASDA and Tesco had pharmacies that were open late at night;
- Karen Buckley agreed to do a supplementary statement, to check flu vaccine provision and late and weekend opening hours.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) When a decision is required outside of the timeframe of a planned WBWB:
 - I. the information will be circulated via email to all Members of the Board
 - II. the Chair (or Vice-Chair in their absence) and Public Health Consultant will have delegated authority to make a decision
 - III. the decision will be discussed at the next meeting of the Board
- 2) GPs will receive communication about the pharmacies' service in the borough.

48. PHARMACY CLOSURE - FE713 - LLOYDS PHARMACY, WINNERSH RG41 5AR

This item was discussed under the previous item.

49. HEALTHWATCH WOKINGHAM BOROUGH WORKPLAN 1 APRIL 2022 TO 31 MARCH 2023

The Healthwatch Wokingham Borough Workplan 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 report which was set out in agenda pages 43-66 was presented by Alice Kunjappy-Clifton and Sarah Deason.

During their presentation the following comments were made:

- Healthwatch had developed a list of priorities (as listed on page 53 of the agenda) and it was important to make sure that the NHS and Local Authority are aware of those priorities;
- Healthwatch England had undertaken a survey into maternal mental health which Healthwatch Wokingham Borough had also localised. The results would be shared when available;
- A review of previous Healthwatch reports would be undertaken to see what impact had been made as a result of the recommendations;
- The local watchlist included:
 - GP access
 - NHS dentistry
 - Maternity
 - Asylum seekers
 - Cost of living crisis
 - Continuing Health Care funding
 - Support for carers
 - Mental health support for children and young people

Councillor Bray was interested to know more about the work being undertaken with asylum seekers. Alice Kunjappy-Clifton offered to share a link to a specific report on this issue: [Asylum seeker experiences of living in West Berkshire \(healthwatchwestberks.org.uk\)](https://www.healthwatchwestberks.org.uk/asylum-seeker-experiences-of-living-in-west-berkshire)

Members thanked Alice Kunjappy-Clifton and Sarah Deason for their comprehensive report.

RESOLVED That the report be noted.

50. FORWARD PROGRAMME

The following items were added to the Forward Programme:

13 April 2023

West Berkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

Cost of living and its impact on people's health

8 June 2023

NHS Plan

Public Safety Partnership

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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF
THE EXECUTIVE
HELD ON 16 FEBRUARY 2023 FROM 5.30 PM TO 6.10 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Clive Jones (Chair), Stephen Conway (Vice-Chair), Rachel Bishop-Firth, Prue Bray, Lindsay Ferris, Paul Fishwick, David Hare, Sarah Kerr and Imogen Shepherd-DuBey

Apologies

Councillor Ian Shenton

81. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 26 January 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

82. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

83. STATEMENT FROM THE LEADER

'The Council will be debating the first Liberal Democrat budget for 20 years and I begin this evening's Executive meeting by thanking all of you for the tremendous efforts that you as an Executive are putting in to ensure we have a balanced budget to present to the Council. I would also like to thank all of the officers who have worked so hard, its been a long process, set against a backdrop of the worst Cost of Living crisis seen for 40 years, with inflation at 10%. Increasing demand for services and the huge increases in interest rates.

We have a sound forward looking and compassionate budget. We have taken tough decisions, some that we desperately didn't want to take. We have invested in the future, in Climate Change initiatives and in providing more school places. We have focussed on helping those residents most in need, especially helping to improve special educational needs. We have found the money to protect much needed bus services, which are subsidised by the Council for the next three years. We have set up a fund to support those struggling on very low incomes during this Cost of Living crisis. We have been able to do this and more because of your hard work and dedication to your roles and the hard work and dedication of the officers and because the residents gave us the opportunity to run the Council's administration after last May's local elections.'

84. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

In accordance with the agreed procedure the Chairman invited members of the public to submit questions to the appropriate Members.

85. COLIN WATTS HAS ASKED THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ACTIVE TRAVEL, TRANSPORT & HIGHWAYS THE FOLLOWING QUESTION:

Question

The impact of the major housebuilding in the Arborfield and Shinfield areas in recent years is now directly affecting traffic in the mornings from Arborfield, through Sindlesham and on to Winnersh. For example, most mornings traffic is backed up from the Hatch Farm Way/King Street junction underneath the M4, back to the Reading FC training ground on Mole Road. On bad days the traffic queue can reach even closer to Arborfield Village and

we have examples where it has been quicker to walk the 40 minutes from our home to Winnersh Railway station, rather than travel by car. What traffic management actions can the council undertake in such circumstances to reduce the environmental impact of the queuing traffic and the significant inconvenience to drivers caused by the delays encountered?

Mr Watts was not present at the meeting and so it was agreed that a written response would be provided and is included below:

Answer:

The council has been working with developers to minimise the impact of development on the existing highway network. Through the planning process we have delivered significant major schemes including the relief roads and distributor roads as well as greenways and making other improvements for walking, cycling, and public transport all with the view to promote active travel and encourage alternative options to private car use for many.

The My Journey team continues to promote active and sustainable travel and we are developing our Local Walking and Cycling Implementation Plan which is our plan for a comprehensive joined up network which will enable more people to switch to walking and cycling.

There is an ongoing increase in population in the borough and we have to ensure that there are alternative transport options available to prevent an increase in road traffic as much as possible. Lastly our Local Transport Plan is currently in development, we are currently consulting on some high-level principles which will help us understand many people's priorities for transport in the borough and help us plan better when new developments and promoted by developers / land owners.

Regarding the specific question around traffic management, we have a rolling programme of signal upgrades and continually work to try and improve performance of junctions. During one of our recent reviews an issue was identified at the signals within Winnersh, once tweaked and repaired the observed increase in queues and delays were improved. We continue to monitor our signal junction's operations and performance to ensure the best operation is achieved.

The availability of other roads such as Mill Lane Sindlesham can also have an impact on the B3030 King Street Lane and Mole Road. When Mill Lane is closed, traffic that would normally use it would be diverted through the Hatch Farm Way junction and add to the normal queues in the am peak.

Through ongoing assessments junctions like the showcase roundabout, Winnersh, which has been assessed, options to upgrade this junction to a system called MOVA (Microprocessor Optimised Vehicle Actuation) are being considered and could be developed subject to future scope/funding.

Whilst junction / signal optimisation and improvements can be beneficial, our longer-term aspirations need to focus on active travel which will also have environmental and health benefits for our residents as well as aligning to our Emergency Climate Change Action Plan.

86. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

In accordance with the agreed procedure the Chairman invited Members to submit questions to the appropriate Members

87. GARY COWAN HAS ASKED THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND THE LOCAL PLAN:

Question

The Exec Member last February in answer to my question on Hall Farm stated that “As you are aware, no new homes or jobs would be located within areas at risk of flooding, nor would development have an impact on the communities further downstream.

The consideration of flooding has been a key consideration from the outset of the master planning analysis, with a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment also undertaken”.

As 12 months have gone past my question is can you now show this Council the SFRA’s associated with Hall Farm, Ashridge, South of Wokingham and any other large potential developments being evaluated as part of the ongoing process.

Councillor Gary Cowan was not present at the meeting and so it was agreed that a written response would be provided and is included below:

Answer:

The position remains the same as advised previously.

A Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment was published alongside the Revised Growth Strategy Consultation in November 2021 and remains available on the website.

The Level 2 study considered flood risk for the two promotions at Hall Farm and South Wokingham, and supplements a Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment published in 2020 which considered all areas promoted for potential development at that time. This study is also available on the website.

I would be happy to ask officers to provide you with hyperlinks if helpful and to talk you through the findings of the studies, if that would help.

For your information, updates to both the Level 1 and Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessments are being progressed which will assess areas promoted since the original studies, reflect refined modelling, and to take account of amendments in national guidance.

88. CHARLES MARGETTS HAS ASKED THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES THE FOLLOWING QUESTION:

Question

Please can you update me on progress with the new sixth form, extra year 7 places and extra send provision planned for Bohunt school. How is it progressing and when will it open?

Answer

The Council continues to work with the Bohunt Trust to finalise the legal agreements underpinning our relationship and to develop proposals that are satisfactory to the Trust.

The Council expects the sixth form to open this September, with the new build works to be completed over the course of 2023 and 2024. I do have to add that this is still subject to satisfactory conclusion of the on-going work on legal agreements, due diligence and final agreement to a satisfactory building proposal.

Supplementary question

Firstly I would like to state my full support for what you have just said, I lobbied my own administration against their wishes to see things move forward. I am keen to be supportive in any way I can. You said that the aim was to open in September 2023, and I note the conditions you put around that, I am assuming that will be in temporary buildings rather than be a new plan building initially?

Answer

Yes and no. We have plans, it is possible that it will be some in temporary accommodation, its possible that they will use some of the existing buildings. We are in constant touch with them, we've had emails today about some details, we are meeting with them regularly and it progresses on that basis. There hasn't been an update as we haven't reached any final positions, when we do know exactly what will be ready in September, we will let all the local Ward Members know.

89. PETER HARPER HAS ASKED THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ACTIVE TRAVEL, TRANSPORT & HIGHWAYS THE FOLLOWING QUESTION:

As Councillor Peter Harper was unable to attend the meeting, Councillor Charles Margetts asked the following question on his behalf:

Question

Considering the significance of the project to change the layout of the California Crossroads and the impact on my residents, will the Executive member for Highways commit to holding a meeting in the near future with the members for Finchampstead North and Finchampstead South to provide a full briefing on the proposed works, the likely schedule, the estimated costs and the current status of the tendering process?

Answer

Thank you for your question, Peter.

The proposed improvement works to the junction came from a Planning condition from the Arborfield Garrison Strategic Development Location. The developer could have carried out the works on the junction, but Wokingham Borough Council opted at the time to improve a wider area including some of the fronting to the shops, where possible. Therefore, a section 106 agreement with funding was obtained.

During the early part of 2015, a working group was formed, consisting of Wokingham Borough Council members, including local ward members for Finchampstead, Finchampstead Parish Council members and some local business owners.

This group met periodically over a period of time and it was agreed that the area was vehicle dominated within the village centre.

Following investigation and concept design work, a presentation to local residents was given by officers, which received positive feedback. This broadly followed on from a scheme presented and included within the wider Arborfield Garrison Strategic Development location application.

It was then identified to develop the California Cross into an area which benefits local business owners and residents by creating a place where pedestrians, cyclists and vehicle traffic can co-exist.

It was intended for this scheme to have been delivered during 2019/2020, however the Thames Water works which resulted in the lengthy closure of Nine Mile Ride, followed by the global pandemic and then the closure and repairs on the Ridges prevented works from being carried out as this would have caused significant disruption.

However, I am more than happy to meet with members along with officers to provide an update on the current status of the California Cross project. Ahead of this though I can advise that the project is due to go out to tender at the end of this month.

Once we have a contractor appointed, we will be setting up a steering group with local ward members, business, and the parish council to talk them through the scheme, understand the businesses logistics and the programme of works which we wish to carry out causing the least amount of disruption as possible.

We hope to be able to meet in June 2023 following the completion of the tender process.

90. ALISON SWADDLE HAS ASKED THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR FINANCE THE FOLLOWING QUESTION:

Question

You have previously criticised the former Conservative administration for using reserves in the aftermath of a global pandemic. If that action was wrong, why are you using reserves to balance this budget?

Answer

The Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy is very clear on the appropriate use of reserves - let me read the pertinent bit: "The authority's reserves should not generally be used to pay for day-to-day expenditure. They should not, except in the most exceptional circumstances, be used to fund a budget shortfall either, without a plan in place to address the underlying deficit and to replenish the reserves."

During the pandemic, the Conservative Administration drained the General Fund and last year they took over £2.3M out of this Council's General Fund Reserves to prop up the budget. While I agree that this reserve can be used for emergencies, it should be the last resort and there is no evidence that there was a plan put in place to restore the fund to its original level. I am personally not convinced that all other options were explored.

This year's budget was handed to us with a General Fund Balance of only £9M. The budget overall did not include some key items, such as the deficit in Home to School transport or the shortfall in the Capital funding for Winnersh Park and Ride, both of which had been known about by the previous administration for some time and it also still reflected the depleted General Fund Reserves. Now, with our Partners and our Liberal Democrat leadership, we are working to replenish these Reserves and over the next year we will bring them back up further into the safe zone. Not yet to the levels we were a few years ago, but we are working on it.

I agree that the reporting of the General Fund in our MTFP is only showing our predictions for the end of Quarter 3, this year – we still have Quarter 4 to go and it initially looks like it might be short. However, if you look at the words on page 9, you can also see that it says that we fully intend for it to be back to £9M at the end of this year. Next year, we do intend to build in more resilience in the General Fund Reserves throughout the next financial year of 23/34.

This is all pretty amazing when you consider that, this year's budget was set before the war in Europe occurred, causing unprecedented inflation affecting all areas of this Council just as much as our residents. Our officers and the Executive have had to make difficult decisions about savings and changes to revenue income to bridge this gap and produce a balanced budget for next year.

91. MATTERS REFERRED TO THE EXECUTIVE

92. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET 2023/24

The Executive Member for Housing reported that with reference to recommendation 2 below, he would have preferred the rise in council house dwellings rents to be less than 5.99% but that this was a full percentage point less than the government cap. A balanced decision had been taken that this was necessary, as this was a year of intense financial pressure on the borough and particularly on those on low incomes who needed support. The money generated would be used to help those tenants who ran into difficulties and were most in need.

It was noted that recommendation 5 should be amended to 5.99%.

RESOLVED: That the Executive made the following recommendations to Council. That:

- 1) The Housing Revenue Account budget for 2023/24 (Appendix A of the agenda papers) be approved;
- 2) That Council house dwelling rents be increased by up to 5.99% effective from 3 April 2023 in line with the council's Rent Setting Policy that was approved by Executive on 27 October 2022.
- 3) Garage rents to be increased by 5.99% effective from April 2023;
- 4) Shared Equity Rents to be increased by 5.99% effective from April 2023;
- 5) Tenant Service Charges to be increased by 5.99% effective from April 2023;
- 6) The Housing Major Repairs (capital) programme for 2023/24 as set out in Appendix B be approved;
- 7) Sheltered room guest charges for 2023/24 remain unchanged at £9.50 per night per room.

Reason for Decision

The revenue and capital budgets for 2023/24 are set and tenants rent levels are set for 2023/24 to ensure sound finances and value for money in providing housing services for council tenants.

93. CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND STRATEGY 2023-2026

The Executive Member for Finance reported that whilst the capital programme was looking stable for the next year, years two and three would bring greater challenges. The capital programme this year would fund an expansion in school places, creating urgently needed school places. Funding for alternative transport schemes, urgent work at Toutley Depot as well as various roads and infrastructure improvements.

In addition, the Developer contributions report, approved by the Executive includes funding for sixth form expansion in schools, new social housing on Wellington Road, bus stop infrastructure in Arborfield, the A327 cycleway, improving transport choices and reducing congestion.

It was noted that the work around Earley foot bridge would be carried forward into the next year.

RESOLVED: That the Executive noted and recommended to Council that:

- 1) the Capital Strategy for 2023 - 2026 at Appendix A of the agenda papers, be approved
- 2) the three-year capital programme for 2023 - 2026 at Appendix B of the agenda papers, be approved;
- 3) the draft vision for capital investment over the next five years at Appendix C of the agenda papers be approved;
- 4) the use of developer contribution funding (s106 and CIL) for capital projects as set out in Appendix D of the agenda papers, be approved. (Approval is sought up to the project budget.)

Reason for Decision

The capital programme and strategy 2023-2026 sets out the capital investment for the benefit of the community and how this is funded.

94. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2023-2026

RESOLVED: That the Executive;

- 1) noted the Treasury Management Strategy as set out in Appendix A, of the agenda papers including the following additional appendices;

☐

- Prudential Indicators (Appendix B)
- Annual Investment Strategy 2023/24 (Appendix C)
- Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy (Appendix D)

- 2) noted that the Audit Committee agreed the Treasury Management Strategy, including the change of minimum credit rating for investments, on 1 February 2023 and have recommended the report to Council.

Reason for Decision

To agree the treasury management procedures, limits, and objectives for 2023/24.

Effective and safe use of our resources to deliver service improvements and service continuity through the management of the council's cash flow and investments while funding the capital programme.

95. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2023-2026 INCLUDING REVENUE BUDGET SUBMISSION 2023/24

The Executive Member for Finance thanked everyone involved in working towards achieving a balanced budget, it had been a year long process. The administration had managed to close the revenue gap of £4m and £40 in the capital programme this year, but this had required some difficult decisions to be taken. The administration would need to continue to take difficult and responsible choices going forward.

RESOLVED: That the Executive:

- 1) recommended to Council that the Summary of Budget Movements (SOBM) be approved. (Appendix A of the agenda papers);
- 2) noted the report of the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee relating to Scrutiny of the Budget Setting Process 2023-24 and the Medium Term Financial Plan 2023-2026 (as set out in Appendix B to the report);
- 3) approved the schedule of fees and charges, as set out in Appendix C to the report, to be effective from the dates listed on the schedule and the schedule of fees and charges, as set out in Appendix E in relation to the decision at Licensing and Appeals Committee;
- 4) agreed delegated authority for the Chief Finance Officer to draw funds from the Dedicated Schools Grant to support delivery of the Safety Valve Programme.
- 5) noted in relation to the capital programme, additional challenges have emerged in the secondary school places capital programme and were currently being worked through and would be reported to Executive in early 2023/24 to seek the necessary budget provision.

Reason for Decision

To provide the Executive with the key revenue budget extract for 2023/24 of the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2023-2024 for submission to Council.

96. SELECTION OF THE COUNCIL'S PREFERRED REGISTERED PROVIDERS

The Executive Member for Housing thanked everyone involved in this work, it had been a long and exhaustive process.

The Executive noted that each registered provider had been asked to detail their proposals to work towards carbon neutral homes. This would be monitored going forward.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1) the following Registered Providers (RP) be approved as Partners for the next three-year period commencing on 1 April 2023, with a further two years subject to satisfactory performance:

A2Dominion

Aster

Housing Solutions

Loddon Homes Limited
Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing
Places for People
Silva
Sovereign Housing Association
Vivid

2) noted that performance during the initial partnership period will be assessed by Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the end of the three year period.

3) the Council and the nine RPs enter into a Partnership Agreement. The Agreement will detail expectations and responsibilities and will outline the basis for regular performance monitoring. The agreement will also contain an action plan which all partner RPs will be expected to adhere to.

Reason for Decision

The delivery of affordable homes is an underpinning principle of the Council's vision. The approval of carefully selected Registered Provider (RP) Partners for the Council will ensure that those RPs delivering affordable housing in the borough via s106 agreements and other land opportunities are aligned to the Council's strategic vision and aspirations. In doing so, this will positively benefit the community through provision of high quality, well-managed affordable homes, with the Council gaining full nomination rights to these homes.

97. CONTRACT FOR LEGAL ADVICE FOR ADULTS & CHILDREN'S SERVICES RESOLVED: That the Executive:

i) approved the continuation of provision of adults and children's legal services by the Joint Legal Team based in Reading Borough Council on the basis of the "Heads of Terms" (appendix 1); and

ii) delegated to the Director of Children's Services and Director of Adults' Services, in consultation with the relevant officers in legal, finance and service areas, authority to enter into a contract for joint services with Reading Borough Council.

Reasons for Decision

The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Executive of the "Heads of Terms" (attached as Appendix 1 of the agenda papers) which will inform the new 5 year Shared Agreement for the Joint Legal Team (JLT) serving Adults' and Children's Services which will involve expenditure of approximately £4.6 million over 5 years.

98. CONTRACTED BUS SERVICES

The Executive Member for Active Travel, Transport & Highways reported that local bus services were vital for the Wokingham and wider area. They were a lifeline for the community. During the summer last year, whilst under significant financial pressure, an additional £300,000 had been invested into local bus services. This enabled services to be operated until 31 March 2023.

The Council had secured s106 funding from developer contributions, however it should be noted that this funding was finite. A growth bid would need to be submitted and approved if services were to be continued from September 2026. This report sought an extension of

existing services which would provide continuity and assurance to residents and local businesses.

The Executive thanked Rebecca Brooks and other officers for their hard work.

RESOLVED: That the Executive:

1) agreed to a further extension of the existing contracts between 1 April 2023 and 31 August 2023 for the following services:

- a) local bus services for Wokingham Town and the surrounding areas (Norreys Estate, Mulberry Grove, Woosehill, Emmbrook, Wokingham Without and Crowthorne, Winnersh, Hurst, Twyford, Charvil, Sonning and Woodley)
- b) local bus services for the villages which lie south of the M4 (Shinfield, Spencerswood, Swallowfield and Riseley)
- c) Services on the A327 corridor,
- d) the 19a/b/c services between Lower Earley, Maiden Erlegh, Woodley, the Royal Berkshire Hospital and Reading Town Centre

2) agreed to the retender of local bus services and agreed to make the increased budget available for the above services, as detailed in the exempt information in the report.

3) agreed to the release of any appropriate S106 funding to support any such decision in recommendation 2.

4) noted that S106 funding will only be sufficient to fund the services for a three-year period. A growth bid will need to be submitted if services were to continue beyond September 2026.

5) agreed to delegate the authority to award contracts for the above bus service to the Director of Place & Growth in consultation with the Executive Member for Active Travel, Transport and Highways.

Reason for Decision

Existing local bus contracts came to their natural end on 30 June 2022. The contract term was modified until 31 March 2023 under procurement Regulation 72 (1)(c) and approved via an Individual Executive Member Decision. The contracts were retendered in Winter 2022 for the same level of service at the same cost. No successful bids were received.

The Executive is now asked to agree to the extension of the services for a further five months until the end of August 2023, and the retender of the services for a further three years. The Executive is also asked to agree to further budget and the release of S106 funding to allow the continuation of the services for a further 5 months until the end of August 2023, and the retender and delivery of the services for a further 3 years.

Agenda Item 6

SACRE (STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION)

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON 20 FEBRUARY 2023 AT 6.20 PM

Committee Members Present

Group A

Beth Rowland	Free Church
Nigel Harman	Free Church
Shira Solomons	Judaism
Shahid Younis	Islam

Group B

Linda Galpin	Church of England
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Group C

Julie Easton	Primary RE Teacher
Nick Barnett	Soulscape
Philip Theobald	Primary School Headteacher (present in the last five minutes of the meeting)

Group D

Jackie Rance	Wokingham Borough Council
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Clerk to Sacre

Luciane Bowker

LA Link / RE Advisor

Angela Hill, Emily Waddilove

1 ELECTION OF CHAIR

Stephen Vegh was elected Chair of SACRE until the next election in November 2023.

As the meeting was not quorate at the start, this decision was ratified later on when the meeting was quorate.

2 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Beth Rowland was elected Vice-Chair of SACRE until the next election in November 2023.

As the meeting was not quorate at the start, this decision was ratified later on when the meeting was quorate.

Beth Rowland chaired the meeting in Stephen Vegh's absence.

3 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Apologies were submitted from Catherine Jinkerson, Samantha Lawless, Anju Sharma and Stephen Vegh.

SACRE was informed that Linda Galpin and Philip Theobald were going to join the meeting later.

4 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the SACRE meeting held on 7 November 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and would be signed by the Chair at a later date.

5 HOW ARE THINGS IN WOKINGHAM SCHOOLS?

Emily Waddilove, Local Authority Link explained that much of the information given at the last meeting was still valid. Schools were continuing with their excellent work programme to support children to catch up following the pandemic. It was noted that some existing issues had been exacerbated by the pandemic, for example school attendance, and increased special educational needs, which was both national as well as a local issue.

The following national and local challenges were highlighted:

- Difficulties in relation to the recruitment of teachers and support staff;
- The fact that children from disadvantaged backgrounds had been disproportionately negatively impacted by the pandemic and needed to catch up;
- The cost of living crisis and inflation affecting families, higher energy and food costs for schools;
- The support needed for the continuous arrival of Hong Kong and Ukrainian families;
- The planned teacher strike actions.

Beth Rowland commented that it was unhelpful that some unions had advised their members not to inform schools of their intention to strike. This made planning very difficult for schools.

RESOLVED That the update be noted.

6 RELIGIOUS STUDIES EXAM ENTRIES/OUTCOMES

Emily Waddilove shared a slide containing the Religious Studies exam entries and outcomes.

The government had advised that it was not useful to compare the results of last year's exams with the results of 2021 or 2020, as teacher assessments were used in those years rather than exams. The advice was to compare 2022 results to the 2019 results. However, the marking of exams in 2022 had been more lenient than before the pandemic, and students had been given some information about which topics were going to be in the exam.

The results showed that Wokingham had performed well and above the national average. However, there had been a significant reduction in the percentage of students that had been entered for GCSE (although there was still a higher percentage of students entered in Wokingham than was entered nationally). The government required schools to teach Religious Studies at Key Stage 4 but there was no requirement to enter students for the GCSE. Wokingham syllabus strongly encouraged schools to enter as many students as possible for the GCSE.

Emily Waddilove explained that she had been unable to find the results for A-Levels, but three Wokingham secondary schools had entered a total of 32 students for RS A-Level.

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

- A concern was expressed that schools may be choosing not to put poor performing students forward for exams in order to protect their statistics;
- Members wondered if there was an issue of insufficiency of RE specialist teachers at schools;
- Members asked for more information on the data set, such as the demographics;
- Angela Hill, RE Advisor pointed out that Ofsted outcomes were not based on external examinations, so she did not believe this was a motivator for schools. She stated that there was no legal obligation to enter students for the exams and some students simply did not want to take the exams – some schools may be entering only students who choose to take RS GCSE;
- Members commented that there could be an issue in relation to the fact that RE was taught only one hour a week, and this may not be sufficient time to cover the contents of the GCSE course. It would also be interesting to find out what syllabus the children that were not doing the GCSE were following.

It was agreed that Angela Hill and Emily Waddilove would produce some survey questions to send to secondary schools to find out more about their RE provision at KS4. Emily Waddilove suggested that sending a survey after Easter would probably be the best time to facilitate schools' response. She would liaise with Angela Hill to draft the wording of the questions, circulate the draft questions to SACRE by the end of March, and send the survey to schools after Easter.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) The Religious Studies exam entries and outcomes results be noted;
- 2) Schools would receive a survey aiming to learn more about schools' RE provision at Key Stage 4, and how schools could be supported; and
- 3) The results of the survey would be reported back to SACRE at the next meeting.

7 DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND BUDGET

Angela Hill referred to some aspects of the current development plan. It was highlighted that there was a requirement and expectation for SACRE members to attend development opportunities such as training and network sessions with NASACRE, as well as Wokingham teacher network meeting and training events, and visits to schools if possible.

Angela Hill explained that a development plan for the new financial year would be drafted, based on the assumption that members would like the current programme of support for schools to continue. SACRE members were invited to suggest any other form of support for schools they would like to see included in the plan. Emily Waddilove explained that there was a well established work programme of support for schools (both secondary and primary), including training and network opportunities. She informed that any unspent budget in the new financial year was likely to be used on developing the new syllabus.

Beth Rowland explained that SACRE members were welcome (provided they gave notice in advance) to visit schools to gain understanding about what schools were covering in RE. She encouraged members to take part in training and networking sessions.

Members were interested to know how schools received the training sessions and networking opportunities. Emily Waddilove stated that the feedback was very positive.

Sometimes attendance could be an issue, in particular for secondary schools, however this had improved with the introduction of online training.

Angela Hill confirmed that the feedback was very positive, she informed that topics were agreed democratically and teachers appreciated the help they received.

Julie Easton stated that in her experience the training sessions were very good, they provided an opportunity to ask questions and share experiences. They also kept teachers up to date with the curriculum and gave them confidence.

In relation to the budget document in the agenda pack, Emily Waddilove explained that any writing in blue represented spending that had occurred since the last meeting. This year it was unlikely that there would be any unspent budget.

A budget meeting with Beth Rowland was scheduled for 28 March 2023.

It was noted that holding virtual SACRE meetings was saving money that could be spent on schools, and it was also easier for some people to attend. This year only one face to face SACRE meeting was planned.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) The Development Plan and Budget Report be noted; and
- 2) A draft Development Plan for the 2023/24 financial year would be presented at the next meeting.

8 ANNUAL REPORT UPDATE

Emily Waddilove stated that the 2021/22 Annual Report had been circulated in December 2022, there was a requirement to submit this report to NASACRE in December. The production of this report had to follow a set procedure.

The annual report included information about Ofsted inspections of Wokingham schools during the 2021/22 academic year. Emily Waddilove drew attention to quotes from some Ofsted reports. Not all Ofsted reports mentioned RE, but when RE was mentioned, the feedback was mostly positive. There were two schools that Ofsted had commented that could improve their RE offer.

This report would be shared with schools once it had been formatted in an attractive design, with pictures. When sharing the report, Emily Waddilove would highlight the positive feedback from Ofsted and make contact with the two schools that Ofsted had pointed out could improve their RE offer, to ensure they were aware of the support available.

Emily Waddilove suggested including an Ofsted update as a standing item in the Autumn term going forward. Members agreed that this was a good idea.

Clare Walsh asked for clarification on a comment made by Ofsted about a need for better planning. Emily Waddilove stated that Ofsted was focused on the curriculum, she believed that this referred to a lack of coherence and sequencing of the curriculum. It was possible that this referred to ad-hoc teaching and inconsistency. Unfortunately, Ofsted comments were not very detailed.

Angela Hill added that nationally, there was a growing expectation that RE should be preparing students for a multi religious and secular world.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Ofsted updates would be included as a standing item in the Autumn term meeting; and
- 2) The Annual Report be noted.

9 FEEDBACK FROM TEACHER NETWORKS AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Angela Hill informed that since the last SACRE meeting, there had been a secondary network meeting on 2 November 2022. That meeting had focused on the syllabus review and exploring trickier topics in Christianity.

A training session for secondary school teachers had been scheduled for December 2022, but only two teachers had been able to attend, so a decision was made to re-schedule that meeting. However, due to the upcoming strikes this had to be postponed again, it was now scheduled for 30 March 2023.

RESOLVED That the update on training opportunities be noted.

10 BERKSHIRE SACRES HUB UPDATE

Angela Hill informed that Berkshire SACREs Hub was in the process of organising meetings with different faith groups to start working on the new syllabus. Anne Andrews from the Oxford Diocese was coordinating this work, and some members had already contacted her. Members were reminded that if they wished to be involved in this work, they could contact Emily Waddilove, Luciane Bowker, SACRE Clerk or Anne Andrews directly.

Clare Walsha expressed an interest in joining the discussions to represent Humanists. There was general support for Clare Walsha to join the meetings.

Angela Hill stated that the Real People Real Faith Project was going strong. This project consisted of a series of short videos with people from different faiths answering questions. This resource was being well utilised by schools. 18 more videos were being produced, including some videos on Humanism.

RESOLVED That the Berkshire SACREs Hub update be noted.

11 DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR 2023/24

Angela Hill informed that a document containing the Development Plan for 2023/24 would be circulated via email. She informed that the training programme would continue.

Angela Hill then moved on to national updates, starting with NASACRE updates. She drew attention to the NASACRE training event planned for 26 June 2023, this was going to be an online event hosted by an executive member of NASACRE, it would be particularly useful for new SACRE members.

Members who wished to attend training or other events were asked to contact Luciane Bowker, Angela Hill or Emily Waddilove.

There were two spaces for SACRE members to attend the NASACRE face to face conference on 22 May 2023 in London, members who wished to attend were asked to contact officers.

As part of the celebrations of 30 years of NASACRE, they were asking for nominations of people or groups who had undertaken outstanding work during this period.

Angela Hill then made the following points relating to national updates:

- A grant of £600 had been received from a charity towards teaching Christianity in schools;
- There was a spiritual arts and creativity global competition which was free to enter and had been running for many years. Entry was now open and there were six themes;
- Free webinars were running for primary and secondary Early Carers Teachers;
- The original hubs were still running;
- Science and religion think thank project was included in the plan;
- Links and information on the projects would be circulated to SACRE

RESOLVED That the report be noted.

12 RELIGION AND BELIEF IN WOKINGHAM: CENSUS 2021 DATA

Emily Waddilove shared a slide containing statistic data information about region and belief in Wokingham from the 2021 national census, comparing it with national data statistics.

Of note was the fact that 37% of the population, nationally and in Wokingham had responded that they had no religion. Officers were of the opinion that this meant that those people did not affiliate themselves with any established religion, but this did not necessarily mean they did not believe in a god.

There had been a steady decrease, over the last 20 years in the number of people that declared themselves as Christians.

When people were asked about any other religion, the responses had included paganism and shamanism. The non-religious responses included agnostic, atheist and humanist.

It was important to consider these responses when reviewing the syllabus and SACRE membership.

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

- Beth Rowland asked for information going back 50-60 years in order to analyse trends. Emily Waddilove agreed to investigate to find out if this information was available;
- Julie Easton suggested a book which contained historical information and trends – Religion in Britain A Persistent Paradox by Grace Davie published by Wiley Backwell;
- Clare Walsh pointed out that the percentage of people with no religion was much higher in the younger generation;
- Shahid Younis asked if there was a breakdown of demographics (age, gender). Angela Hill informed that this was available for the national picture, and pointed to the

Office for National Statistics (ONS) website for further information – an interactive map could be found there.

RESOLVED That the report be noted.

13 NATIONAL UPDATES RELATING TO EDUCATION AND RE, INCLUDING NASACRE UPDATES

This item was covered during discussions of previous items.

14 DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

The dates of the next meetings were confirmed as follows:

12 June 2023 – in person at 6.15pm in David Hicks 1, Shute End, Wokingham

6 November 2023 – online via Teams at 6.15pm

19 February 2023 – online via Teams at 6.15pm

15 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The appointments of Chair and Vice-Chair were ratified and confirmed.

SACRE members were asked to consider accepting Clare Walsha as a co-opted member of SACRE, representing Humanists.

Clare Walsha explained that Humanists believed in:

- the natural world, science and evidence, and not in supernatural beliefs and god;
- that it was possible to find happiness and fulfilment in life, and that there was no afterlife; and
- It was important to be respectful of others and the nature.

Clare Walsha informed that the symbol for Humanism was a 'Happy Human' and this could be found in their website. She added that she was a member of Humanists UK and Reading Humanists. She had recently been trained as a school speaker on Humanism and was hoping to be able to present about the Humanist's beliefs at schools.

Members voted unanimously to accept the appointment of Clare Walsha to SACRE.

SACRE Self-evaluation Tool produced by NASACRE

Emily Waddilove advised that a meeting had been scheduled for 21 March 2023 at 3pm via Teams, to discuss how Wokingham's SACRE wanted to use the SACRE self-evaluation tool produced by NASACRE. SACRE members were invited to attend and were asked to contact Emily Waddilove to indicate that they wished to attend.

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Decision made in the presence of:
Ian Bellinger, Service Manager for Growth and Delivery
James McCabe, Senior Planning Officer, Growth and Delivery
Callum Wernham, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist

INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION RECORD SHEET IMD 2023/04
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Title of the report	Wokingham Borough Council response to the West Berkshire Pre-submission Local Plan
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DECISION MADE BY Executive Member for Planning and Local Plan - Lindsay Ferris
ACTION BY Director, Place and Growth - Simon Dale
DECISION MADE ON 22 February 2023

Recommendation contained in the report

That the Executive Member for Planning and Local Plan agrees that Wokingham Borough Council:

- 1) Supports West Berkshire District Council's approach to meeting their Local Housing Need in full;
- 2) Requests West Berkshire District Council acknowledge that the Plan contains flexibility to assist with meeting the existing unmet housing need from Reading Borough;
- 3) Expresses concern over whether the Plan will meet Gypsy and Traveller needs in full, but welcomes the commitment to addressing this through a separate Development Plan Document;
- 4) Confirms that Wokingham Borough Council is currently unable to assist with meeting any unmet employment need arising from the Plan;
- 5) Expects that West Berkshire District Council will work closely with Wokingham Borough Council to ensure appropriate infrastructure is delivered to mitigate the impact of any development which would have cross boundary implications.

Decision

That the Executive Member for Planning and Local Plan agreed that Wokingham Borough Council:

- 1) Supports West Berkshire District Council's approach to meeting their Local Housing Need in full;
- 2) Requests West Berkshire District Council acknowledge that the Plan contains flexibility to assist with meeting the existing unmet housing need from Reading Borough;
- 3) Expresses concern over whether the Plan will meet Gypsy and Traveller needs in full, but welcomes the commitment to addressing this through a separate Development Plan Document;
- 4) Confirms that Wokingham Borough Council is currently unable to assist with meeting any unmet employment need arising from the Plan;
- 5) Expects that West Berkshire District Council will work closely with Wokingham Borough Council to ensure appropriate infrastructure is delivered to mitigate the impact of any development which would have cross boundary implications;
- 6) Welcomes further engagement as West Berkshire District Council's Local Plan progresses.

Reasons for Decision if different to recommendation

The Executive Member requested an additional statement welcoming further engagement as West Berkshire District Council's Local Plan progressed.

Alternative options considered and rejected at time of the decision

N/A

Summary of consultations undertaken

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

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

None

PUBLISHED ON: 22 February 2023

EFFECTIVE ON: 2 March 2023

CALL-IN PERIOD EXPIRES: 1 March 2023

Decision made in the presence of:
 Ian Bellinger, Service Manager for Growth and Delivery
 James McCabe, Senior Planning Officer (Growth and Delivery)
 Callum Wernham, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist

**INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER
 DECISION RECORD SHEET
 IMD 2023/05**

Title of the report	Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: Reforms to National Planning Policy: Consultation Proposals
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DECISION MADE BY Executive Member for Planning and Local Plan - Lindsay Ferris
ACTION BY Director, Place and Growth - Simon Dale
DECISION MADE ON 22 February 2023

Recommendation contained in the report

That the Executive Member for Planning and Local Plan agrees that Wokingham Borough Council submit the comments contained in Enclosure 1 as this council's response to the government consultation 'Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: reforms to national planning policy' (December 2022).

Decision

That the Executive Member for Planning and Local Plan agreed that Wokingham Borough Council submit the comments contained in Enclosure 1 as this council's response to the government consultation 'Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: reforms to national planning policy' (December 2022).

Reasons for Decision if different to recommendation

N/A

Alternative options considered and rejected at time of the decision

N/A

Summary of consultations undertaken

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

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

Covering report and enclosure providing the full recommended response to the consultation.

PUBLISHED ON: 22 February 2023

EFFECTIVE ON: 2 March 2023

CALL-IN PERIOD EXPIRES: 1 March 2023

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 22 FEBRUARY 2023 FROM 7.00 PM TO 9.20 PM

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Jim Frewin (Chair), Andrew Mickleburgh (Vice-Chair), David Cornish, Andy Croy, Graham Howe, Norman Jorgensen, Pauline Jorgensen, Stuart Munro and Alison Swaddle

Other Councillors Present

Councillors: Morag Malvern, Alistair Neal, Ian Shenton and Sarah Kerr

Officers Present

Neil Carr, Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist

1. STATEMENT BY THE CHAIR

Jim Frewin made the following statement:

“Members of the Committee will be aware that, at the start of the year, we received a number of actions and suggestions from a Scrutiny Improvement Review. We have worked hard to take on board the suggestions for improvement. The previous meeting was independently reviewed and we have now received feedback which suggests that we are moving in the right direction with Overview and Scrutiny. The next step is to hold an externally facilitated workshop for Overview and Scrutiny Members. This will be arranged at a suitable time for Members. In the meantime, a big thank you from me to everyone who took part in the Scrutiny Improvement Review”

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted by Peter Dennis and Adrian Mather.

Morag Malvern and Al Neal attended the meeting as substitutes.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 18 January 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

6. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

7. PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE WASTE COLLECTION SERVICE

The Committee considered a report on proposed changes to the Waste Collection Service, set out at Agenda pages 13 to 26. The Committee also received two supplementary presentations providing more detail on specific issues raised by Members prior to the meeting.

Ian Shenton (Executive Member for Environment, Sport and Leisure) attended the meeting supported by officers – Rebecca Bird, Richard Bisset, Oliver Burt (re3), Simon Dale, Fran Hobson and Emma Tilbrook (Eunomia).

Ian Shenton introduced the item, referring to the aims of the proposed changes – driving forward its commitment to waste minimisation, diversion, recycling and carbon reduction whilst helping to tackle the financial challenges facing the Council.

The report gave details of the proposal for the Council to move from its current arrangements of weekly refuse and recycling collections to an Alternate Weekly Waste (AWC) collection model for the Borough. The proposal was in line with WBC's environmental and climate commitments as a move to AWC would encourage residents to dispose of recyclable material more effectively as well as minimising overall waste generation. In summary, the proposal was that WBC would:

- move to a fortnightly collection of refuse in wheeled bins, ceasing the supply of blue bags;
- move to a fortnightly collection of dry recycling using the existing green reusable sacks, already available to residents;
- maintain the existing weekly food recycling collections and the paid-for garden waste collections.

The proposed changes would apply to kerbside properties only. Other arrangements would be put in place for flats and those properties without access to kerbside collection.

The report stated that, across England, many councils had been running AWC's for over 25 years. Nearly 80% of English councils already carried out AWC collections to boost recycling and restrict the amount of refuse produced. Neighbouring councils, Bracknell Forest and Reading moved to AWC some time ago. Bracknell Forest changed in 2007, increasing their recycling rate by 13% per annum. Reading changed in 2006, increasing their recycling rate by 10% per annum. Bracknell Forest had subsequently moved to three weekly collections.

The future of the Council's waste collection service had been considered initially by a cross-party working group. The working group had commissioned work on potential options from specialist organisations – WRAP and Eunomia. The modelling work had reduced an initial 12 options down to four. Two options were then subject to public consultation. The report stated that the two options would deliver savings and environmental improvements within the constraints of the existing waste collection contract. Option 1 would implement AWC for refuse and mixed dry recycling. Option 2 would implement three weekly collection of refuse with fortnightly collections for mixed dry recycling.

As a result of the modelling, benchmarking and two consultation exercises, the proposal was for Option 1, which would be submitted to the Executive in March 2023. The benefits of moving to AWC were summarised as:

- Savings upwards of circa £0.5m in 2024/25 rising to circa £1.5m in 2025/26;
- An increased recycling rate of circa 64%, up from 54% currently;
- A carbon saving of 2,400t CO₂ per annum – from reduced waste disposal, transport and fuel.

Officers gave details of the two consultation exercises used to inform the development of the proposed service changes. In October 2021, an initial consultation was launched to gain residents' high-level views on waste collection and recycling in the Borough. A more detailed consultation then followed between October and December 2022. The second consultation sought residents' views on the two final options outlined in the report. The key findings of the second consultation were:

- 74% of respondents liked, could accept or were neutral about fortnightly, refuse and recycling collections;
- 30% of respondents liked, could accept or were neutral about three weekly refuse and recycling collections;
- 78% of respondents liked, could accept or were neutral about wheeled bins for general rubbish.

Officers also confirmed that a full Equality Impact Assessment had been carried out in relation to the proposed changes. As a result, mitigations had been introduced for specific groups. For example, larger households would receive a larger wheeled bin and the assisted collection service would continue for residents who could not bring containers to the edge of the property.

In the ensuing discussion, Members raised the following points:

If wheeled bins were being introduced for refuse, why were they not being introduced for recycling as well? It was confirmed that the Government's position was not clear on the separation of recycling at the moment, so it was proposed to retaining the existing green sacks until the Government's position became clearer.

Operationally, would the proposed new arrangements be cheaper for Veolia? It was confirmed that contract efficiencies totalling £290k were included in the proposals (realised from 2025/26). The waste contract was due to be re-let in 2026. This would be a separate process. Discussions had already been held with Veolia about the proposed AWC arrangements. Negotiations about changes to the Waste contract, to reflect the new arrangements, had not yet commenced.

The cost of implementing the proposed option was estimated at £1.995m (funded from the Waste Equilisation Fund). Was there an additional cost to the Council in terms of lost interest on this money? Officers confirmed that there would be a loss of interest earned estimated at circa £300k over a 13 year period.

Why was it proposed to start buying the new bins in 2023 – there would be additional costs re storage, etc.? It was confirmed that the procurement process would start in 2023, with a long lead in time. The bins would be delivered in batches. Work was ongoing to identify potential storage/security options within the Council's own facilities in order to minimise any additional costs.

A key element of the proposed savings was behaviour change amongst residents. What evidence was there that the suggested 10% increase in recycling could be achieved? Officers commented that the projected increase was based on the experience of other councils. Benchmarking had taken place using similar councils to WBC who had implemented a similar change. The proposed service changes would be highlighted in an

extensive communications campaign across the Borough. It was likely that Government targets for recycling would increase, so it was important that the Council made progress on this issue.

The consultation information indicated that there were three under-represented groups. Did the Council hear the views of all sections of the community? It was confirmed that a postcard with details of the proposals was sent to every household in the Borough. A wide range of communication tools was used including social media and contact with specific community groups. It was suggested that a demographic analysis of the consultation responses be circulated to Members. It was also suggested that the communications plan supporting the new arrangements include the provision of information for people moving into the Borough – perhaps via the new WBC website.

Was the collection of glass a specific issue which needed to be addressed in the new arrangements? It was confirmed that the current arrangements worked well – residents were able and willing to use the Bring Banks. Collecting glass from the kerbside would have a significant financial impact.

In relation to the cross-party working group, what were the full range of options explored before the final two options were identified? Officers confirmed that there were originally 12 options which were assessed in terms of savings delivered, environmental benefits and carbon reductions. There was also an analysis of the “future proofing” of the service in relation to potential changes of Government policy and recycling targets. It was suggested that details of the original 12 options be circulated to Members for information.

If the new arrangements were approved and implemented, how would the impacts and savings be measured, monitored and reported? Officers commented that there were currently two KPIs which were reported as part of the quarterly performance reporting to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Executive. Further KPIs could be developed in order to measure specific aspects of the service. Progress would also be reported to this Committee as required by Members.

The report stated that the new arrangements would apply to properties with access to the kerbside. Of the 64,000 kerbside properties in the Borough, around 99% could accommodate a wheeled bin. Survey work would identify the actual number of properties that could not accommodate wheeled bins. It was suggested that details of the modelling be circulated to inform Members on the increased recycling performance required from kerbside properties to compensate for the properties which did not adopt the new arrangements. It was noted that specific measures would be introduced for residents in flats, such as the use of recycling champions and targeted campaigns for individual blocks.

In 2022, an increased target for food recycling was announced in order to save £350k. This was to be supported by a communications campaign. How successful had the campaign been and was there data available to demonstrate the increased levels of food recycling? It was suggested that evidence be circulated to Members to confirm the increased levels of food recycling and the impact of the communications campaign.

There was concern that the financial data in the Overview and Scrutiny report was not consistent with the data submitted to the Budget Council meeting on 16 February 2023. For example there was a difference of £200k in the assumed savings for 2024/25. There was also a difference in the residual amount of the Waste Equalisation Reserve following the proposed changes and a difference in the waste disposal costs set out in the Medium

Term Financial Plan. It was confirmed that the report to the Executive in March 2023 would contain accurate data on costs and savings and would be consistent with the Medium Term Financial Plan.

The report stated that the proposed new arrangements would deliver a carbon saving of 2,400t CO₂. How was this carbon saving calculated? Officers confirmed that the carbon saving was made up of reduced levels of waste disposal, transport and fuel costs. The projected carbon saving had been agreed with the Council's Climate Emergency officer team. It was suggested that a detailed breakdown of the carbon saving be circulated to Members and included in the report to the Executive.

It was confirmed that the report being considered by the Management Committee would form the basis of the report being submitted to the Executive in March 2023. Consequently the Recommendations box contained two sets of recommendations, one recommendation for the Management Committee and three recommendations for the Executive. The section headed "Recommendations to the Executive" did not apply to the Management Committee. The Management Committee was not being asked to recommend approval of the proposed changes set out in the report.

It was proposed by Pauline Jorgensen and seconded by Jim Frewin that a summary of the Committee's discussion be submitted to the Executive, alongside the officer report, together with the additional information and/or clarification requested by Members at the meeting.

Upon being put to the vote, the proposal was agreed.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Ian Shenton and the relevant officers be thanked for attending the meeting to give the presentation and answer Member questions;
- 2) a summary of the Committee's discussion be submitted to the Executive at its March 2023 meeting in order to inform its consideration and decisions on the proposed changes to the waste collection service;
- 3) the Executive also receive copies of the additional information requested by the Committee, viz:
 - the full Equality Impact Assessment;
 - a demographic analysis of the consultation responses;
 - details of the original 12 waste options reported to the cross-party working group;
 - details of the modelling on the increased volumes from kerbside properties required to compensate for the flats and other properties not adopting the new arrangements;
 - data showing the increased levels of food recycling in 2022/23 against targets and an assessment of the impact of the underpinning communications campaign;
 - confirmation that the costs and savings included in the Executive report are consistent with the costs and savings in the Medium Term Financial Plan;
 - a breakdown of the reported 2,400t CO₂ saving arising from the proposed new waste collection arrangements.

8. CUSTOMER EXCELLENCE PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Committee considered a presentation on the Customer Excellence Programme, set out at Agenda pages 27 to 34. Jackie Whitney and Sarah Zama attended the meeting to give the presentation and answer Member questions.

The presentation gave details of the aims of the Council's Customer Excellence Programme. These included:

- Customer experience – improved and consistent customer experience across services and ownership to be organisation-wide;
- WBC Website – new website which centred on the needs of customers;
- Customer Data & Insight – customer insight used proactively as part of a customer-centric strategy to drive continuous improvement across WBC;
- Customer Journey Management – easy access to services for all, focussed on customer need. Clear organisation-wide accountability for the success of customer journeys.

The presentation highlighted a number of activities over the next 3-6 months, including:

- bringing together Customer Excellence with the Community and Partnership Organisational Foundation Programme;
- developing Customer Experience key performance indicators, e.g. a service reporting dashboard for Housing;
- new website – design and develop new pages for the corporate website and six service-specific sites (to launch in July 2023);
- new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system – review existing digital customer journeys and build improved journeys (to launch in spring 2024);
- Customer Strategy – public consultation with a view to launch in early summer 2023 (report to the Executive in March 2023);
- customer journey mapping – Children's Services (SEND), Council Tax and Digital journeys ready for new CRM development;
- Library Offer – outputs of discovery phase and engagement with library teams/customers to inform a Community Strategy during 2023.

In the ensuing discussion, Members raised the following points:

In relation to customer accessibility, what steps were being taken to maximise the use of plain English in WBC services and publications? It was confirmed that three key principles were being applied: Care, Clarity and Confidence. Officers were working with CLASP to review the Council's communications with residents. The new Customer Charter was due to be launched in the summer of 2023.

In relation to the new website, it was important to ensure that map-based pages were kept up to date.

As with all IT projects, there was a risk of project failure. If the project failed, was there a recovery plan? If the project was a success, would it raise expectations in terms of additional resources? Officers confirmed that the risk of failure was mitigated by the strength of the team working on the project.

Were there safeguards in place to control the sharing of confidential data? It was confirmed that safeguards were built into the CRM system to ensure oversight of any privacy issues.

Was the system operationally critical? What safeguards were there in case of system failure? Officers confirmed that the CRM system was not the system used by WBC. For example, Social Care and Planning had their own systems. The new system would deal with high volume enquiries such as waste and recycling.

How had the voice of WBC staff been incorporated into the development of the new system? It was confirmed that staff workshops had been held together with customer mapping exercises.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Jackie Whitney and Sarah Zama be thanked for attending the meeting to give the presentation and answer Member questions;
- 2) Further updates on the Customer Excellence Programme be submitted to the Committee in due course;
- 3) The draft Customer Excellence Strategy be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee on 15 March 2023.

9. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORTS

The Committee considered the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Reports for 2022/23, set out at Agenda pages 35 to 56. As set out in the Council Constitution, each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees was required to submit an Annual Report to Council in March each year. The Annual Reports included an introduction to Overview and Scrutiny and a summary of the issues considered in 2022/23.

RESOLVED: That the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Reports for 2022/23 be approved for submission to Council in March 2023.

10. CONSIDERATION OF THE CURRENT EXECUTIVE AND IEMD FORWARD PROGRAMMES

The Committee considered a copy of the Executive Forward Programme and the Individual Executive Member Decision Forward Programme, as set out on Agenda pages 57 to 68.

It was noted that the latest report on proposed increases to Off Street Parking charges would be considered by the Executive in March 2023.

RESOLVED: That the Executive Forward Programme and the Individual Executive Member Decision Forward Programme be noted.

11. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMMES

The Committee considered its forward work programme and that of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees as set out on Agenda pages 69 to 76.

RESOLVED: That the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programmes for the remainder of 2022/23 be noted.

12. ACTION TRACKER REPORT

The Committee considered the latest Action Tracker report, as set out at Agenda pages 77 to 80.

RESOLVED: That the Action Tracker report be noted.

Decision made in the presence of:
Neil Allen, Head of Legal Services
Ed Shaylor, Head of Enforcement and Safety
Callum Wernham, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist

INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION RECORD SHEET IMD 2023/03
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Title of the report	Environment And Safety Department Enforcement Policy
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DECISION MADE BY Executive Member for Environment, Sport and Leisure - Ian Shenton
ACTION BY Director, Place and Growth - Simon Dale
DECISION MADE ON 23 February 2023

Recommendation contained in the report

That the Executive Member for Environment, Sport and Leisure authorise the Director of Place & Growth, and officers delegated in turn by them, to implement the Environment and Safety Department Enforcement Policy (“the Policy”), contained as enclosure 1 to this report, including service specific enforcement policies appended to it as amended by the Executive Member at the meeting as set out below, and to publish the Policy on the Council’s website.

Decision

That the Executive Member for Environment, Sport and Leisure authorised the Director of Place & Growth, and officers delegated in turn by them, to implement the Environment and Safety Department Enforcement Policy (“the Policy”), contained as enclosure 1 to this report, including service specific enforcement policies appended to it as amended by the Executive Member at the meeting as set out below, and to publish the Policy on the Council’s website.

Amendments to Enforcement Policy

In Appendix 7, Advertising Boards, Agenda Page 36, this Policy is designed to deal solely with the use of the Council’s powers as a Highway Authority under the Highways Act 1980, associated legislation and case law. It does not cover the regulation of Advertisements generally and specifically under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 and associated legislation, which are dealt with separately and referred to here as “the Advertising legislation.” Any permission or enforcement action under this Policy is without prejudice to the Council’s powers under the Advertising legislation and Consent given under this Policy should not be inferred to be deemed consent under the Advertising legislation.

In Appendix 8, Public Rights of Way, Agenda Page 41, it should be made clear that an informative to the local land charges record for the property as a disputed piece of land will only be made after the householder has been informed of the council’s intention to do so, and has had an opportunity to make representations.

On Page 7 of the agenda pack, Financial Implications, it should be made clear that income from financial penalties may contribute to service budgets, subject to the legislative power, but the use of financial penalties is not designed to create income. The budgeted figures

merely reflect anticipated likely income, which may be more or less. Financial penalties are designed to encourage compliant behaviour and deter non-compliance.

Reasons for Decision if different to recommendation

The following amendments and clarifications to the enforcement policy were agreed by the Executive Member.

Appendix 7, Advertising Boards, Agenda Page 36, this Policy is designed to deal solely with the use of the Council's powers as a Highway Authority under the Highways Act 1980, associated legislation and case law. It does not cover the regulation of Advertisements generally and specifically under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 and associated legislation, which are dealt with separately and referred to here as "the Advertising legislation." Any permission or enforcement action under this Policy is without prejudice to the Council's powers under the Advertising legislation and Consent given under this Policy should not be inferred to be deemed consent under the Advertising legislation.

Reason: to make it clear that this Policy is limited to the use of the Council's powers as a Highway Authority and any consent given or enforcement action taken under this Policy is without prejudice to the Council's powers under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 and associated legislation and its Planning Enforcement Policy.

Appendix 8, Public Rights of Way, Agenda Page 41, it should be made clear that an informative to the local land charges record for the property as a disputed piece of land will only be made after the householder has been informed of the council's intention to do so, and has had an opportunity to make representations.

Reason: to give householders an opportunity to object to inclusion of an informative in local land charges and make representations before a decision to make such an inclusion is made.

On Page 7 of the Agenda, Financial Implications, it should be made clear that income from financial penalties may contribute to service budgets, subject to the legislative power, but the use of financial penalties is not designed to create income. The budgeted figures merely reflect anticipated likely income, which may be more or less. Financial penalties are designed to encourage compliant behaviour and deter non-compliance.

Reason: to clarify that whilst sound budget management requires an estimate of anticipated income from financial penalties, the penalties introduced by this Policy are designed to encourage compliant behaviour and deter non-compliance, rather than to generate income for the Council.

Alternative options considered and rejected at time of the decision

N/A

Summary of consultations undertaken

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES	
Director – Resources and Assets	None received
Monitoring Officer	None received
Leader of the Council	None received

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

PUBLISHED ON: 23 February 2023

EFFECTIVE ON: 3 March 2023

CALL-IN PERIOD EXPIRES: 2 March 2023

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