

Leader Update

Overview & Scrutiny

13

July 2023



An update on the Challenges

Finance



Unprecedented financial position with spiralling inflation coupled with a budget gap

Joint Exec/CLT 'Challenge Sessions' continuing ensuring there is a system wide review of the use of council funding and understanding of impacts of difficult budget decisions

Cost of Living



Cost of Living Crisis, rising inflation and growing financial pressure on our communities

Development of the year 2 tackling poverty action plan led by the Hardship Alliance in conjunction with a team of Assistant Directors to drive impact

Partnership



Inconsistency in partnership relationships, leading to missed opportunities for collaboration

Progressing the development of a vision for the borough, system wide approach introduced on partnerships across the Council inc Education, Town and Parish Councils, VCS

Governance



Opportunity to improve governance, scrutiny and review

Dedicated project plan developed in response to the Centre of Public Scrutiny recommendations

Community Vision...What have we done so far



External workshops held
between January to March 2023

15



With c. 150 attendances
across the workshops



With community representation from
50+ organisations e.g. Town and Parish
Councils, NHS Royal Berkshire, CLASP,
Age UK and TVP

During these workshops, six key themes were identified:

**Health and
well-being**

**Equality,
inclusion and
opportunity**

**Environment
and
Sustainability**

**Community,
engagement,
action and
empowerment**

**Engaging with
young people**

**Engaging with
businesses**

**Leading to the development of an internal and external Steering Group structure
being created to co-own and co-create the vision for Wokingham**

High level summary of the Vision sessions with external partners



Building on strengths

- Support and buy-in to drive a vision that is co-designed and co-owned by the community
- Strong belief in positive opportunities for creating a partnership harnessing support of Wokingham Borough's diverse communities
- Collaboration between partners is strong and has led to real change and positive impact for communities



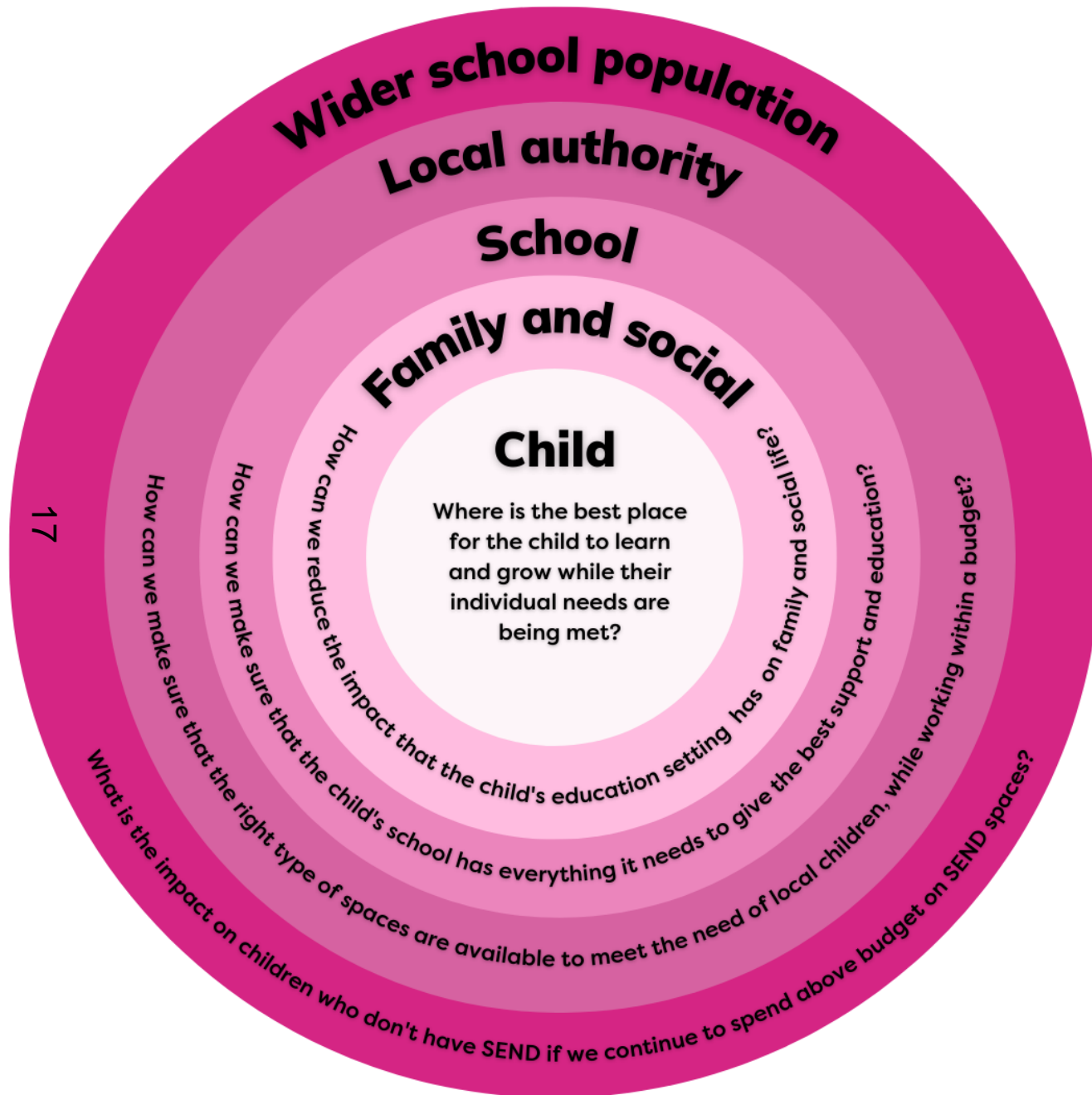
Working together

- Being truly inclusive and representative is key to building a vision that is owned by the whole community
- Understand the steps to develop the vision and what role each community group / partner has to play
- The need to remove formality and create “safe spaces” for open and honest conversation
- Ask for feedback often, and regularly update communities about progress



If the vision did one thing...

- Inspire and be aspirational about the future we want
- Empower residents, communities, partners and TPCs
- Improve quality of life for residents
- Reduce inequality and increase opportunities for all
- Be focused on outcomes and deliver on promises
- Build on strengths by deepening collaboration between partners



Working together to improve SEND education

Our vision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities in the borough is simple.

We want all children and young people to have access to good quality education that meets their individual needs in a way that is most effective for all.

Through the creation of the Safety Valve programme, working with schools, parents and our communities we are committed to delivering our vision.

Having an impact

Crowdfund launched to support **cost of living** crisis response with council and partners providing an extra £2 for every £1 donated by public

Adult Education Service maintains **'Good'** Ofsted rating

First **Vision for the Borough** event held

January 23

18

DfE approve **the council's bid** for 2 special educational needs schools

Awarded **£3.1 million** to help purchase 17 new homes for Ukrainian refugees

Decision made to move to new waste collection scheme to **encourage recycling and reduce costs**

March 23

Launch of new scheme with local charity **Kaleidoscopic** UK to support children affected by domestic abuse

Council awarded £6.3 million funding from the DfE to help deliver new services supporting SEND children and young people locally

May 23

February 23

Council hosts first **youth politics** event to support better involvement in decision making

Council **extends subsidies** of key local bus routes

Social rents **capped at less** than the maximum increase

April 23

Council receives 4 nominations for MJ Achievement Awards, the highest number of nominations for one Council nationally

June 23

Winners of **two MJ awards**: Best Social Housing initiative and Delivering Sustainability & Social Value.

Loddon Court the residential short breaks service for adults with learning disabilities, reopened following a £400,000 investment to modernise the building

Next Steps

- Continuing to provide a safe budget position now and in future years for the organisation, whilst protecting the most vulnerable within the Borough
- Moving forward with our Vision for the Borough, through co-production and community engagement
- Work in partnerships with more organisations to drive better outcomes for our borough

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