



## TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on Monday, 21 December 2020 at 7.00 pm. The meeting will be held virtually and webcast live through the Council's website in accordance with the Coronavirus Act 2020 and The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 (S.I.2020 No. 392). The agenda for the meeting is set out below.

RAY MORGAN  
Chief Executive

## **AGENDA**

### **PART I - PRESS AND PUBLIC PRESENT**

#### Part I - Press and Public Present

- 1 Apologies for Absence  
To receive any apologies for absence.
- 2 Minutes (Pages 5 - 10)  
To approve the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 23 November 2020 as published.
- 3 Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes  
To review and outstanding items from the previous minutes.
- 4 Urgent Business  
To consider any business that the Chairman rules may be dealt with under Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 5 Declarations of Interest  
To receive declarations of disclosable pecuniary and other interests from Members in respect of any item to be considered at the meeting.

## Presentations

### 6 Serco Update

Reporting Person: Geoff McManus

## Matters for Scrutiny

### 7 Corporate Peer Review Feedback Update (Pages 11 - 30)

Reporting Person: Ray Morgan

### 8 Treasury Management Mid-Year Review 2020/21 (Pages 31 - 38)

Reporting Person: Leigh Clarke

### 9 Work Programme (Pages 39 - 70)

Reporting Person: Councillor D Hughes

## Performance Management

### 10 Performance and Financial Monitoring Information

To consider the current publication of the Performance & Financial Monitoring Information (Green Book). Members are asked to bring their copy of the Green Book to the meeting.

Reporting person: Councillor D Hughes

## Task Group Updates

### 11 Task Group Updates (Pages 71 - 74)

To receive updates following the recent meetings of the following Task Groups:

- Economic Development Task Group
- Housing Task Group

Reporting person: Councillor D Hughes

AGENDA ENDS

Date Published – 11 December 2020

For further information regarding this agenda and arrangements for the meeting, please contact Hanna Taylor, Democratic Services Officer, Ext 3056, Email [Hanna.Taylor@woking.gov.uk](mailto:Hanna.Taylor@woking.gov.uk)



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MINUTES  
OF A MEETING OF THE  
**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

held on 23 November 2020

Present:

Cllr D E Hughes (Chair)  
Cllr M A Whitehand (Vice-Chair)

Cllr S Hussain	Cllr J E Bond
Cllr C Rana	Cllr G G Chrystie
Cllr M I Raja	Cllr J R Sanderson

Also Present: Councillors D Bittleston, K Davis and D Harlow, Jon Herbert (Strategic Housing and Development Manager), Gareth John (WBC Solicitor), Ray Morgan (Chief Executive) and Louise Strongitharm (Housing Director).

Absent: Councillors R Mohammed

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor R Mohammed.

**2. MINUTES**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on Monday, 19 October 2020 be approved and signed as a true and correct record.

**3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES**

The Chairman advised the Committee that the Woking Football Club and Associated Developments Task Group Part II report had since been published on Woking Borough Council's website and available for the public to view.

Councillor Sanderson provided an update on the small group of members that were working with Surrey Lifelong Learning Partnership and liaising on joint working and future projects. Three focuses had been identified which were: a Bike Project, funding and support for 18-24 year old to find work and support for younger families.

Following the recent meeting of the Joint Committee, where the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had submitted a paper of suggested improvements to consider, it was reported that many of the recommendations were agreed by the Committee. The Chairman thanked members and officers for their help and contribution.

Members shared their experiences applying for CIL funding and the process involved, some felt that officers could be more involved with managing larger projects.

**4. URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business to discuss.

**5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, Councillor D Harlow declared a non-pecuniary interest arising from her position as a Council appointed Director of the Thamesway Group of Companies.

In accordance with Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Director of Housing, Louise Strongitharm, declared a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) arising from her position as a Director of the Thamesway Group of Companies.

**6. SHEERWATER REGENERATION PROJECT UPDATE**

Cllr David Bittleston provided an overview of the history of Sheerwater, which was built up in 1950s to rehouse 5,000 people who had been effected by the bombing in the Second World War One of the biggest issues was that the estate was built when few people owned cars however now-a-days there were at least two cars per household and parking had been a major problem.

The desire to build affordable and social homes and new leisure facilities in the area was discussed and it was previously suggested by a previous developer to knock down the centre of Sheerwater and re-build. The previous proposals were supported by Council however funding prevented the project going forward.

Cllr Bittleston referred to the report detailing the scheme outline and that the Council had purchased 110 out of the 120 properties required, contract discussions were taking place with a further eight and then final two were in contact. The work undertaken by officers, including Peter Bryant, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Louise Strongitharm, Director of Housing and the Housing team was praised. The 120 properties were previously Council Homes, however had been purchased through the "Right to Buy" Scheme and two thirds of these properties became private rents.

The CPO was required to ensure that acquisition for all other items, such as land was clear and prevented issues arising in the future.

Thamesway had managed to deliver the scheme on target, on budget and to deadline to date, with few impacts from Covid-19 due to forward thinking and ordering materials in advance and storing securely on site. The Leisure facilities would be available for Bishop David Brown School to use by July 2021, and open to the public by October 2021. The 92 dwellings in the purple phase of which 46 would be social rents and 46 market rent, would be completed by May 2021. Preparation for work on the next phases - Red, Yellow and Copper, had begun.

Members were greatly appreciative of the update and history of the project that had been detailed. Cllr Bittleston that once the public were able to see the finished product, there would be increased interest in the properties. It was confirmed that more than 50% of the units would be rentals (similar pricing to the Kingsmoor Park properties) with the option to

participate in the “Earn Your Deposit” Scheme. The Purple phase would be 100% rental units.

Some concern was raised over future issues that may arise from the use of the Compulsory Purchase Order, and how Woking Borough Council would address these issues. Cllr Bittleston addressed the potential issues and advised that the two properties that did not have an agreement in place were in the later phases of the programme, and the Tenant Liaison Team were working hard to provide suitable options for those who had not yet come to a decision. The position of those living within the Red Line Zone, whether it be in temporary accommodation, tenants or homeowners, were reviewed regularly and reported to officers at the monthly Sheerwater Regeneration Officer Group meetings.

The aim of the project is to build facilities that a community needed, and therefore the leisure facilities would be delivered first, followed by the housing. Compassion was voiced for any disruption caused to the public during this time, but their health and wellbeing would benefit from improved community facilities and infrastructure.

Within 50 years the project would have paid for itself, the properties would remain Council stock and therefore the Council would be able to continue to provide affordable housing to those who need it.

It was confirmed that 46% of the entire project would be social rent equivalent (Kingsmoor Park rates). The Committee discussed the ongoing demand to produce more social homes within the borough, which was a priority for the Housing team which were being creative with Government funding to assist with meeting the housing need. Mr Morgan added that further difficulties were faced for families affected by the benefit cap.

The positive impact of the completion of the Sheerwater Regeneration Project would have on the housing supply was discussed, and that the pressure on the Housing Register would also decrease as there would be more options of good quality properties available.

Details of what a Thamesway Home meant was shared, and that the environmentally friendly homes would be affordable to run with efficient heating costs. The estate would also include electrical vehicle charging points, bicycle provisions and sufficient parking spaces.

The flood risk was reduced from the town centre, through Sheerwater and to West Byfleet as a result from the Victoria Square development, which retained one third of the water leaving the site and relieved the pressure on the Rive ditch. Members praised the environmental considerations within the development.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Bittleston and Mr Morgan for the update.

## **7. HOUSING TOPIC SCRUTINY - FUTURE HOUSING STRATEGY**

Jon Herbert, Strategic Housing and Development Manager, introduced the report which was the final instalment of the three part review undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee which would help to develop the Five Year Housing Strategy. Since the last strategy there had been various changes to government legislation and policies, the priority of the new strategy would be to increase the delivery of affordable housing, utilising the current housing stock and to deliver an improved experience for customers and residents.

Mr Herbert summarised the details of the draft objectives in the report, and advised the Committee of the link between Housing provisions and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy which would be discussed in the near future, and would result in actions to be implemented.

The viability of affordable housing in planning applications was discussed, Ms Strongitharm advised that 19% of affordable housing was delivered through the Section 106 Agreement, more diverse ways of delivering affordable housing need to be explored such as reviewing land assets for any potential sites that could be developed and to continue to bid for government grants, continue working with Thamesway on private sites and programmes with Housing Associations.

Members felt that the housing demand, with 1,100 people on the Housing Register, would never be met for various reasons including private developers not committing to the delivery of affordable housing as advised in their original proposals. Cllr Harlow, Portfolio Holder for Housing, advised that not all those on the Housing Register required a property urgently and that they were prioritised into different bands which identified those with the greatest need. The ageing population and increase of families splitting up affected the needs analysis. Helping the elderly downsize to a more appropriate home for their needs then allows additional homes for families to move into, that are three and four beds. The number of those of the Woking Borough Council Housing Register would not be viewed as particularly high in comparison to other local authorities, however it was dependent on the Allocations policy. In Woking the Allocations Policy was strict with who can join the register. Ms Strongitharm felt that it would be difficult to ever meet the growing need for housing but hoped that the waiting time would reduce, and in the future work towards meeting wider needs.

Data was fed into House Mark, that provided benchmarking figures however the majority of data was held by NVH, and when that service moves in-house it was anticipated that the service could be better utilised.

During discussion, Ms Strongitharm advised that a resident would be offered a cash incentive to downsize their property and would also be placed in Band B on the register however it was unlikely that someone would move from a three bed house to a one bedroom flat, but it was thought that the offer could be made more appealing to them, such as having a property with a spare bedroom. More research was being conducted in how other authorities reviewed downsizing and what they offered.

The Social Housing White Paper was being reviewed by the Housing Department currently and the Government's response to the Planning White Paper was also awaited.

For those wishing to purchase via the open market, there were shared ownership schemes available however did come with their own issues.

In order to focus developers on delivering quality properties, an awards scheme could possibly be implemented which would highlight the good quality developments by ranking new build developments using the results of a satisfaction survey.

Following the presentations over the three Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings by the Housing Team, members were encouraged to share their thoughts and opinions with the Chairman and it was agreed that a paper brought to the next meeting of the Committee on 21 December that summarised member feedback on the housing scrutiny topic review.



The Chairman also requested that a small group of Councillors would review three viability case study examples following concerns raised and to understand the rights developers had as it dramatically effects the amount of affordable housing within the borough. The findings would be reported to the meeting in December.

The Chairman thanked officers for the in-depth review and contribution to the Committee over the three meetings.

## **8. WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chairman introduced the Work Programme, and noted the upcoming topics that would be scrutinised by the Committee. Members would have the opportunity to feedback following the Housing Scrutiny Topic Review at the meeting scheduled for 21 December.

The Committee agreed that the Investment Strategy review would be deferred until the 2021/22 municipal year following Covid-19. The follow up work on Freedom Leisure scheduled for January and March would be condensed into March's meeting as it was felt that Covid-19 had effect its operation so much that it would not be an appropriate time to hold another survey and review customer experience etc.

RESOLVED

That the Work Programme be noted.

## **9. PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL MONITORING INFORMATION**

Cllr Davis, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services highlighted, for public awareness, that 2,000 dwellings in the borough do not put out food waste, which may be composted or it could be included in the general waste, which is not good for the environment.

Cllr Sanderson highlighted that the amount of recycling, that was steadily increasing, was down in August and that the amount of fly-tipping showed an increasing trend from last year which might possibly be an impact of Covid-19.

Following the observations from Cllr Sanderson, it was advised that the figures for the waste were reported one month behind, the latest information would be discussed at a meeting later in the week and reported in the next Green Book which would assist with identifying any issues or trends. The trend in fly-tipping may be a result of dumps being shut during the pandemic and lockdown period.

Businesses within the town centre tend to use private contractors for their collection of recycled waste therefore it is unsure how much was being recycled. The Council and subsidiary companies should set an example for recycling waste, however there was also room for improvements to ensure best practise.

Following a question raised by the Chairman, Louise advised that resources were redirected from the work on empty homes to assist with the impacts of Covid-19. However last month the work was able to resume and over 300 properties that were believed to be empty for 6 – 24 months were written to, responses were received back from 1/3 and it was reported that 33 weren't actually empty. The Housing team would liaise with Benefits on

the properties that were occupied but had not paid council tax. Work would begin next month on the properties that had been vacant for longer than 24 months. As previously requested by the Committee, the Chairman asked whether the list of empty properties could be given to Cllrs, broken down for their Ward.

It was agreed that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should focus on the performance element of the Green Book, and that if the Committee had previously reviewed a version of the Green Book then it would not be required to look at it at the next meeting if a more recent version was not available. The financial performance is considered at the Finance Task Group and also the Executive, however, this did not preclude discussion at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee if members wished to do so.

The Chair made a commitment to following up on elements discussed by members on performance in the Green Book, if portfolio holders were not present at the committee meeting. The feedback would be circulated. Following feedback from members it was requested that the latest version of the Green Book would be included in the agenda and on Modern.Gov software for members to access easily.

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm  
and ended at 9.35 pm

Chairman: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



# Corporate Peer Challenge **Woking Borough Council**

12<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> November 2019

Feedback Report Final

## 1. Executive Summary

Woking Borough Council (WBC) has been leading the clear sighted, ambitious and successful regeneration of the town centre and has bold plans for further developments. This is funded through an approach with significant long term borrowing to deliver regeneration and to generate income at a scale which is atypical amongst district councils. This entrepreneurial model has been achieved through a strong and collaborative relationship between members and officers over a number of years. The staff of Woking Borough Council operate in a can do culture that finds solutions to the challenges they encounter to deliver success for themselves, the Council and the people of Woking. Officers are not bound tightly by organisational boundaries and they proactively engage in work not traditionally within the remit of a Borough council.

Partners of all types speak highly of the Council's staff that they work with and their obvious dedication and hard work and it is a testament to the Council that the staff profile is stable even with the opportunities nearby London affords. The Council's vision and strategies and the outcomes it then delivers are focused on benefiting the people of Woking, particularly the more vulnerable members of society.

The broad political consensus on the ambitions has enabled the high profile and charismatic Chief Executive to provide the vision, direction and solutions necessary to achieve success. He has an impressive track record over a number of years. The challenge for the Council is to secure the legacy of this leadership through ensuring that the strategic vision is adopted by all stakeholders with a good understanding of the delivery plan to secure the immediate and long term future of the organisation and the borough.

Whilst there are many obvious successes for the Borough the Council may wish to consider preparing a strategy that outlines and explains the Council's vision and priorities and communicate it to all stakeholders so others can fully appreciate and own what the Council is trying to achieve now and in the future and that the decisions taken to achieve these are clearly aligned to the Council's priorities.

There is an opportunity to make it easier for elected members and officers to be aware of and understand the Council's overall financial position. There is also an opportunity to enhance the role and profile of political leadership in the Council and in the community. The peer team recommends that you consider how to refresh the approach to citizen engagement and expand the use of customer feedback and benchmarking to inform your performance management.

To support greater transparency the peer team recommend that the Council review the effectiveness and resourcing of Overview and Scrutiny and address concerns about a perceived lack of transparency and oversight of the trading companies and bring to a conclusion your succession plans for the Corporate Management Group and the Communities function.

With reference to the Council's financial position, it may wish to consider structuring the future borrowing to align to the life of assets across the Council's portfolio. This could be considered along with renewing the efficiency strategy in order to bridge the gap in the Medium Term Financial Strategy without relying solely on investment returns.

## 2. Key recommendations

- Prepare an overarching organisational strategy so others can understand and own what you are trying to achieve now and in the future
- Communicate the rationale for the Council's vision and priorities to all stakeholders
- Refresh your approach to citizen engagement to move away from perceptions such as "Here it is, we're going to do it", and "We get pretty pictures and it's a done deal"
- Make it easier for elected members and officers to be aware of and understand the Council's overall financial position
- Enhance the role and profile of political leadership in the Council and in the community
- Consider structuring future borrowing to align to the life of assets across the Council's portfolio could be considered
- Consider renewing your efficiency strategy in order to bridge the gap in your MTFS without relying solely on investment returns
- More clearly articulate how decisions are aligned to the Council's priorities, in order to address perceptions such as "The new buildings are just for outsiders"
- Review the effectiveness and resourcing of Overview and Scrutiny
- Address concerns and mistrust about a perceived lack of transparency and oversight of trading companies
- Expand the use of customer feedback and benchmarking to inform your performance management
- Explore further opportunities to modernise interaction with residents and businesses, e.g. video updates, tenants digital services
- Bring to a conclusion your succession plans for the CMG and the Communities function

## 3. Summary of the Peer Challenge approach

### The peer team

Peer challenges are delivered by experienced elected member and officer peers. The make-up of the peer team reflected your requirements and the focus of the peer challenge. Peers were selected on the basis of their relevant experience and expertise and agreed with you. The peers who delivered this Corporate Peer Challenge at Woking Borough Council were:

- **Cllr Paul James**, Leader, Gloucester City Council
- **Cllr Tim Bick**, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, Cambridge City Council
- **John Robinson**, Chief Executive, Newark & Sherwood District Council
- **Sarah King**, Corporate Director, Support Services and S151 Officer, Eastleigh Borough Council

- **Craig Taylor**, Communities Manager, Rushcliffe Borough Council
- **Marcus Coulson**, Challenge Manager, Local Government Association

## Scope and focus

The peer team considered the following five questions which form the core components looked at by all Corporate Peer Challenges cover. These are the areas we believe are critical to councils' performance and improvement:

1. Understanding of the local place and priority setting: Does the council understand its local context and place and use that to inform a clear vision and set of priorities?
2. Leadership of Place: Does the council provide effective leadership of place through its elected members, officers and constructive relationships and partnerships with external stakeholders?
3. Financial planning and viability: Does the council have a financial plan in place to ensure long term viability and is there evidence that it is being implemented successfully?
4. Organisational leadership and governance: Is there effective political and managerial leadership supported by good governance and decision-making arrangements that respond to key challenges and enable change and transformation to be implemented?
5. Capacity to deliver: Is organisational capacity aligned with priorities and does the council influence, enable and leverage external capacity to focus on agreed outcomes?

## Scope

In addition to these questions, the scope the Council set of the Peer Challenge Team was:

***The Council has asked for a Peer Challenge to enable it to receive an independent review of its arrangements and proposals so that it can be satisfied that it has taken into account the issues it needs to address in pursuing its wider objectives.***

## The peer challenge process

It is important to stress that this was not an inspection. Peer challenges are improvement focussed and tailored to meet individual councils' needs. They are designed to complement and add value to a council's own performance and improvement focus. The peer team used their experience and knowledge of local government to reflect on the information presented to them by people they met, things they saw and material that they read.

The peer team prepared for the peer challenge by reviewing a range of documents and information in order to ensure they were familiar with the Council and the challenges it is facing. The team then spent three days onsite at Woking Borough Council, during which the team:

- Spoke to more than 97 people including a range of Council staff together with councillors and external stakeholders
- Gathered information and views from more than 35 meetings, visits to key sites and additional research and reading
- Collectively spent more than 120 hours to determine our findings – the equivalent of one person spending 3½ weeks in Woking

This report provides a summary of the peer team's findings. It builds on the feedback presentation provided by the peer team at the end of their on-site visit (Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> – Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2019). In presenting feedback to you, they have done so as fellow local government members and officers, not professional consultants or inspectors. By its nature, the peer challenge is a snapshot in time. We appreciate that some of the feedback may be about things you are already addressing and progressing.

## **4. Feedback**

### **4.1 Understanding of the local place and priority setting**

The peer challenge team met a group of highly motivated elected members and officers at Woking Borough Council who are committed to Woking and the benefits they can provide for the people of the borough. They have an outward focused, place-making perspective with a clear and strong focus on the regeneration of the town centre that has been ongoing for a number of years. The town centre has changed considerably in the past few years with investment in the retail and office sectors. There is also the ongoing construction of housing targeted at specific groups in the borough, notably 16-30-year olds who are underrepresented. The aim is to attract them so they stay in the borough and make the overall population a more diverse and cohesive one. Without this approach local house prices in both the owner-occupied and rented sector would make developing mixed communities much more difficult. This approach demonstrates how the Council takes responsibility to develop the borough for the benefit of all. The peer team found a generally positive perception about the Council's understanding and promotion of inclusion and diversity, although there is an opportunity to make this approach clearer for others.

The peer team saw evidence that the senior decision-makers demonstrate a forward thinking, proactive approach to financial challenges that is more enterprising and bolder than many District Councils.

An area of improvement the peer team recommend is for the Council to prepare an overarching strategy so others can understand and own what the Council is trying to achieve now and in the future. Whilst the peer team accept this is not an approach the Chief Executive has felt necessary to adopt in the past it would enable others who see the changes taking place in the town centre and surrounding area and put them into context. Coupled with clearer communication of the rationale for the Council's vision and priorities, this would enable all stakeholders to understand that at the heart of this, at times, quite dramatic change, is a very value driven approach focused on benefits for as many of the people in the Borough as possible, which is commendable.

The Council should also consider refreshing its approach to citizen engagement to move away from a style summed up by one stakeholder as "Here it is, we're going to do it", and another as "We get pretty pictures and it's a done deal" to one of genuine early engagement where the decision has not already been taken and all options and choices are possible. In this way a greater variety of stakeholders would feel closely involved in the development of Council strategy and policy and be invested in it.

### **4.2 Leadership of Place**

Woking Borough Council is an ambitious, innovative and creative Council that has a strong track record of success. The Council has a forward thinking and energetic leadership where there is "No such thing as standing still" and this is mostly reflective of the Chief Executive Ray Morgan. The whole group of elected members and officers are



passionate and proud of their place and they have a strong reputation amongst partners who appreciate their proactive approach which is focused on outcomes and driven through effective relationships that are seen by these partners as supportive and collegiate.

The Council cultivates relationships with partners that are purposeful and Woking focused. There are two aspects to this which are blended together, firstly a focus on commercial development, summed up by a partner who said, "The Council totally gets business", and secondly a focus on being compassionate, summed up by another partner commenting that "Woking stands up for the disadvantaged". This strongly values driven approach results in tangible, visible and positive evidence of leadership that creates physical development of the local environment, the creation of key partnership networks and a very positive reputation.

There is a high profile regeneration scheme in Sheerwater led by the Council. The scheme is an ambitious one, including plans for considerable investment in housing, roads, parks, shops and community facilities, making the area a desirable and attractive place to live. There is a close linkage with this scheme and the Hoe Valley School where the athletics track is located.

The creation of the ThamesWey Group of companies in 1999 has been an innovative and creative model to deliver housing for the betterment of local people. Although originally conceived as a way of implementing the Council's green and energy efficiency objectives, the group is now playing a vital role in the delivery of affordable housing and its potential to grow further has been realised since the previous peer challenge in 2015. As a result, ThamesWey are often asked to do things that are difficult and beyond the reach of other areas of the Council and they do so proudly and with success.

Whilst the Chief Executive is able to create and deliver innovation across the borough through different partners there is an opportunity to adjust the focus to ensure that others feel fully involved in the decision-making from the very beginning. The peer team recommend that the Council reflect on the approach to building consensus. Furthermore, and directly linked to the previous point the Council should consider how to more clearly articulate how decisions are aligned to the Council's priorities. One example the peer team heard was that, "The new buildings are just for outsiders", which refers to the new tower blocks going up as part of the Victoria Square development in the middle of Woking. These high rise blocks offer significant housing provision aimed at retaining the 16-30 age group that leave Woking and cannot return due to high house prices. The aim is for the apartments to be let at market value accompanied by the Council's "Earn Your Deposit Scheme" which enables the tenant to accumulate a deposit towards the purchase of a home. It is this type of reasoning that stakeholders could hear about to fully appreciate the Council's plans so they feel part of the future of the town and are able to influence and own the vision.

The 2015 Corporate Peer Challenge commented positively on the relationship between Woking Borough Council and Surrey County Council. This was based on good relationships and some innovative joint working to address local need. This is still evident and a new opportunity has arisen as the County Council is planning to move to a new headquarters in Woking, something the Borough Council has been very much

encouraging. This can lead to further improved relationships and further integration of services.

Whilst onsite a question arose of the Council's relationship with some of its immediate neighbours. The peer team understands why the Council's primary focus is on Woking itself but believes it should assure itself that it is maximising the opportunities to work with partners beyond Woking for the benefit of the borough and wider area, particularly where significant employers are located on the edge of the borough and have an impact beyond its boundaries.

### **4.3 Financial planning and viability**

The Council is actively managing the financial risk associated with significant levels of borrowing of £1.3bn and rising, and has approval to borrow up to £2.3 billion. This level of borrowing is atypical amongst district councils. Woking is an outlier compared to all other district councils as its debt servicing is two and half times net revenue budget and commercial income funds the equivalent of 75% of the budget. Members and officers, by and large, felt comfortable with this level of indebtedness given the value of the assets held and being generated within the portfolio. However some concern was reported to exist by some Members and within the community at the risks of, for example, the economy entering into a recession. Careful asset management will be vital to protect against such eventualities.

The Council's investment strategy is designed to deliver social return within the borough through the creation of economic vitality and sustainability and it has been successful in this endeavour for some years. The Chief Finance Officer has an innovative approach to financial management and demonstrates a good understanding of risk, this is consistent with the Council's 'can do' attitude. The financial strategy allows the Council to maintain services and expand provision in areas not traditionally the responsibility of a borough council and external advice is taken to provide financial expertise on large projects as appropriate, so it would appear that risk is being managed effectively.

The areas the Council may wish to consider developing would be to make it easier for elected members and officers to be aware of, and understand, the Council's overall financial position. The peer team heard that outside of the Chief Executive and his immediate team it is not always clear what investments have been made, how the trading companies' structure works, and how the financial risks are structured. Increased transparency would allow greater discussion and even scrutiny of the financial aspect of Council business that would be shared by elected members and others.

The Council may wish to consider structuring future borrowing so that it aligns with the life of assets across the Council's portfolio. This would incur less cost over time. Furthermore, the peer team suggest that Woking consider renewing the efficiency strategy in order to bridge the gap in the Medium Term Financial Strategy without relying solely on investment returns. Higher Public Works Loan Board rates may make it more difficult to acquire properties with sufficient yield to deliver the returns the Council is seeking and the scale of the Council's ownership makes identifying

opportunities within the Borough more difficult. A more diverse approach to filling the budget gap will reduce pressure on the Council to make more and more acquisitions.

#### **4.4 Organisational leadership and governance**

The Executive Members at Woking Borough Council are fully engaged in the business of the day and are taking active ownership for their portfolios. From the evidence that the peer team saw and heard there appear to be good relationships between members and officers which were characterised as generally healthy and respectful. This a positive position to be in to develop a coherent response to future challenges the organisation may face.

The Chief Executive and his Corporate Management Group (CMG) have a complementary mix of skills that allows them to create new ideas, maintain the progress of current projects as well as engage in internal challenge to consider and manage risk.

The Council has made an effective investment in member training and development that was based on a recommendation in the previous LGA Corporate Peer Challenge from 2015. The democratic services and human resources functions are well led and there is a full suite of officer development opportunities for staff. Officers at all levels spoke highly of the training and development opportunities available to them and they felt valued.

There is a proactive, open engagement with internal audit within CMG welcoming recommendations and suggesting areas to be reviewed as appropriate. Furthermore, there is a good relationship with the Trade Union which is both respectful and fruitful. The contract management function with outsourced services is improving with a move towards a more partnership based approach in most cases rather than managing by the letter of the contract. This improves relationships and goodwill with these outsourcing partners.

The Council may wish to consider reviewing the effectiveness and resourcing of Overview and Scrutiny so that elected members can further develop their ability to hold the executive to account. One potential outcome of the above would be to address some of the concerns and mistrust about a perceived lack of transparency and oversight of the trading companies. Whilst there may be occasions when confidentiality is necessary, the structure of the trading companies does not need to be so opaque, especially when one considers that at some point in the future a new leader and officer cadre will need to understand how these are set up and run.

Linked to the above point is the peer team's recommendation that wherever possible the Council should take decisions in the public domain and give members ample opportunity to consider what an appropriate level of information prior to meetings is. While the peer team did not examine in detail the reports presented to Members on property acquisitions, we heard that a number of them were expected to digest huge volumes of information in a relatively short space of time. The Council may wish to reflect on the appropriate level of information provided and the process of member briefing prior to formal decisions being made.

As a whole there is a culture at the Council of strong officer leadership, which has delivered profound and positive change for the borough and its residents. As the organisation moves forward there is an opportunity to enhance the role and profile of political leadership in the Council and in the community to rebalance the Member/Officer relationship. Part of that rebalancing will be for the political leadership to develop and articulate their vision for the Council and Borough beyond the next election.

There would be greater resilience in the decision making on major projects if a more collegiate style was adopted. There are a range of major projects in the pipeline as well as the need to manage the day to delivery of services and ensure the organisation is fit for purpose for the future. The peer team felt that the current officer leadership style needs to be broadened out into a more inclusive model. It was felt by some Councillors that, on occasions, local Ward Members were brought into the discussion mid-way through project development. Early engagement could help limit the risk of project stall or failure. This is partly related to the visibility and succession planning points made earlier. The peer team believe this is central to making the most of the organisational capacity to address the next round of challenges.

As part of a revised style and culture in the Council it is well worth considering how to expand the use of customer feedback and benchmarking to inform Council performance management. The peer team heard a great deal about the major developments ongoing in Woking whilst onsite. What we didn't hear so much about was the day-to-day activity of the Council and particularly how it is driven by the measures of performance and how this may be linked to a cycle of improvement.

#### **4.5 Capacity to deliver**

There is a 'can do' culture throughout the organisation and clear examples were given by staff and partners throughout our time onsite. This finding replicates the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge from 2015 suggesting that the culture is firmly embedded in the Council and understood by those with whom they work. It was clear to the peer team that staff feel empowered to take decisions and are encouraged to be innovative, this was illustrated by the comment that "People are released to be creative", that we heard more than once.

The staff leading Democratic and Legal Services and Human Resources displayed a genuine commitment to staff training and development, backed by investment. The Council has participated in the LGA Graduate Programme for the past four years and the graduates are felt to have made a valuable contribution to the outcomes of the Council with clear benefits for the graduates and the organisation. The Council continues to utilise the apprenticeship levy funds by promoting internal work-based training opportunities and employing apprentices in areas such as legal, sports development and revenues.

In 2018 the Council began a major management development programme in partnership with Korn Ferry. This work targets senior and middle managers with the main objective being to increase the confidence, capability and resilience of all

management levels to enable them to meet future challenges and is linked back to the Council's Behaviour and Skills Framework. This seeks to ensure that development supports sustainable capabilities of staff for the future.

The Council provides an extensive programme of training and briefings for elected members, seeking to ensure that they have all the knowledge and skills necessary for their role as Councillors. The Council has successfully met the standards set by South East Employers' Charter for Member Learning and Development for the last ten years, adopting new ways of delivering training and introducing a behaviours and skills framework. The Korn Ferry programme has been extended to elected members with the objective being to achieve a greater level of strategic thinking and cohesion across the members of the Executive, enabling them to think about and plan for future challenges, including succession planning.

Whilst staff reported being stretched in their roles they did not feel over stretched and there was evidence to demonstrate that additional capacity is allocated at the point of inception of priority projects to ensure they can be delivered. There was also evidence that staff concerns were being acted upon, for example where the peer team heard about an incidence of bullying and harassment, it was also outlined how this was appropriately and effectively addressed.

The peer team heard about creative additions to the resourcing of the organisation for the benefit of the community such as the Transport Engineer post and the work with Family Support. These are both examples of where the Council provides services beyond its statutory duty.

The Council may wish to explore further opportunities to modernise interaction with residents and businesses. Such examples might be through the use of video updates and greater use of digital services for housing tenants. The LGA will be in touch to signpost the Council to others who do this well.

The peer team wish to suggest that the Council be cautious of the risk of project overload as there were many different activities explained and discussed whilst the team were onsite. Whilst this represents a vibrant and outcome focused organisation it did also feel like there were many projects going on at the same time. If staff feel stretched with their overall capacity they are likely to continue with these projects due to the significant reservoir of goodwill built up over the years. However this positive culture and working environment is not endless.

To an outsider the trading company arrangements appear opaque and require some considerable focus in order to understand how they all work. This is understood by the senior management team but this is less understood by others, including staff and stakeholders. The future senior managers have a huge agenda to fulfil and they will need both drive and public recognition. Therefore the Council may wish to bring to a conclusion the succession plans for CMG to establish clarity and also recruit into a lead officer role covering the Communities function which was an acknowledged gap in the senior management structure.

The Council is due to face something of a challenge in the coming years with the likely retirement of Ray Morgan the Chief Executive, Douglas Spinks, Deputy Chief Executive and Peter Bryant, Head of Democratic & Legal Services. There is also the widely understood retirement of Leader, Councillor David Bittleston, at the next elections in May 2020 that will create a new Conservative Group Leader and an unknown outcome from that election for the Council. This represents over 100 years of knowledge and experience successfully steering this organisation into its present healthy position. As with all other areas of its business this issue has been recognised and plans put in place. The recent appointment of Louise Strongitharm as Director of Housing addresses a known lack of senior capacity in this area which complements the established leadership demonstrated by Leigh Clarke as the Director of Finance. However with the leadership of Chief Executive, Ray Morgan the advantage has been his inspirational drive for the Council in all areas, and is seen as central to it by all partners. The downside of this approach is that the same partners expressed some concern of what happens when Ray departs, encapsulated by one health partner who commented, "Ray is so instrumental, what happens when he is not around?" As has been mentioned previously part of the inevitable rebalancing that will occur at this time will be for the political leadership to develop and articulate their vision for the Council and the Borough.

## 5 Next steps

You will undoubtedly wish to reflect on these findings and suggestions with your senior managerial and political leadership before determining how the Council wishes to take things forward.

As part of the peer challenge process, there is an offer of continued support which you can access through the **LGA Principal Adviser for the Region, Mona Sehgal** who is the main contact between your authority and the LGA. Mona can be contacted via email at [mona.sehgal@local.gov.uk](mailto:mona.sehgal@local.gov.uk) or by Telephone: 07795 291006 and can provide access to further support. We are also offering you a follow up visit in one year's time to consider progress on the recommendations of this report.

All connected with the peer challenge would like to wish you every success going forward. Many thanks to you and your colleagues for inviting the peer challenge and to everyone involved for their participation. In particular, please pass on our thanks to Frank Jeffery, Democratic and Legal Services and his team for their excellent support in organising the challenge and in particular Natalie Khan, Democratic Services Officer who managed an excellent job both before and during the onsite work. It was much appreciated.

**On behalf of the peer challenge team. November 2019**

**Marcus Coulson**

Programme Manager

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**CORPORATE PEER REVIEW UPDATE**

**Executive Summary**

This report provides an update on the implementation of the recommendations of the Corporate Peer Review.

The introduction to the report sets out the resolution approved by the Executive.

Subsequent sections of the report set out the current position in respect of each of the resolutions.

In accordance with its normal practice, Officers of the Local Government Association with contact the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council during 2020/21 to follow up upon its review.

The Chief Executive will be available at the meeting to answer any questions raised by the Committee.

**Recommendations**

The Committee is requested to:

**RESOLVE That**

- (i) the Corporate Peer Review Update be noted.

The Committee has the authority to determine the recommendation(s) set out above.

**Background Papers:** None.

**Reporting Person:** Ray Morgan, Chief Executive  
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**Date Published** 16 December 2020

## 1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Executive at its meeting on 16 July approved the Council's response to the Local Government Association Peer Challenge and resolved that

- (i) Officers prepare a summary strategy document based on existing approved strategies and present it to Council for approval as part of the Business Plan process for 2021/22;
- (ii) following the approval by Council of the summary document of existing approved strategies, proposed at (i) above, to undertake a programme of communications with residents and stakeholders outlining the wider policy approach of the Council;
- (iii) Officers undertake a series of public engagement events to explain the framework for town centre development proposals;
- (iv) the Citizens Panel be re-established and a programme of issues upon which to consult it be established with an initial focus on the health and well-being in partnership with the Integrated Care Partnership;
- (v) a survey of Members be undertaken to establish what further information they would find helpful to include in the Green Book and what further awareness raising and/or training is required in respect of the Council's financial arrangements;
- (vi) the proposal to Council in respect of a Standards Protocol to allow Members access to commercially sensitive information in respect of Thameswey Group companies, and any other Woking Borough Council subsidiaries, be supported;
- (vii) the consideration by the Director of Finance of the appropriateness of borrowing periods be highlighted when the Council is requested to approve its annual budgets and its annual accounts;
- (viii) the Council's efficiency strategy be revitalised in two main parts, one to explore procurement savings and the other to explore operational efficiencies through automation and use of digital services;
- (ix) an Internal Audit Review be undertaken into the resources required to ensure the effectiveness of the Overview and Scrutiny function;
- (x) Officers review the extent to which customer feedback opportunities and Local Government Association case studies could be used in the management of the Council's services with a view to improving outcomes and securing efficiency improvements linked to the efficiency strategy;
- (xi) the use of Zoom, Teams and Digital services will all be expanded and continued, post Coronavirus, and form part of the efficiency strategy, use of automation; and

- (xii) in the autumn the Council should consider its longer-term management arrangements as part of its 2021/22 business planning process.

1.2 This report provides an update on progress in respect of each resolution.

## **2.0 Summary Strategy Document – Resolution (i) and (ii).**

2.1 The summary document, described as the “Corporate Strategy” will be presented to Council at its meeting on 11 February 2021. It will reflect the established policies, strategies and service plans incorporated in the Budgets concurrently submitted for approval.

2.2 Following adoption by Council, the key messages will be publicised through the wider resident engagement activities announced by the Leader of the Council on 15 October 2020.

## **3.0 Public Engagement Events and Citizens Panel – Resolution (iii) and (iv)**

3.1 The Leader of the Council announced at the Council meeting on 15 October of her intention to more widely engage with residents. The proposals envisaged by resolutions (iii) and (iv) will be incorporated in those arrangements.

3.2 A Community Forum will be launched in the New Year (2021) and be hosted by Peter Gordon, formerly of Eagle Radio. The Forum will provide a Platform for engagement with residents for both the Council, in respect of topics it wishes to promote, and for Residents and Business to propose for discussion. The first Council Topic will be in respect of town centre developments (Recommendation (iii)).

3.3 The Community Forum will initially have four key areas of engagement-

- The Residents’ Panel – see detail at paragraph 3.4 below;
- Shaping Woking – incorporate information and public engagement about plans for the future development of Woking;
- Planet Woking – incorporate information and public engagement about the environment; and
- Enterprise Woking – incorporate information and public engagement about activity including that undertaken by Woking Works, Woking Chamber of Commerce and Surrey Chamber.

3.4 Further areas of engagement will be developed as necessary to incorporate engagement with Youth, Sports etc.; effectively a flexible framework which will enable engagement with residents and businesses.

3.5 The “Residents’ Panel” (Recommendation (iv)) will be launched in January 2021 inviting residents to enrol from the launch until the end of March 2021. The criteria for the Panel will seek to ensure that it is representative of the population of the Borough and the residents on the panel will have some flexibility over how they wish to be engaged in consultations. There will also be provision for the creation of sub sites of the Panel to address specific topics, for example Housing Revenue Account Tenants or Meals Service recipients. The Residents’ Panel will be embedded in the service culture of the Council and be used for feedback on the performance of Council services as well as seeking the view of residents on a wide range of activities affecting life in the Borough.

**4.0 Survey of Members (Resolution (v)).**

- 4.1 This matter has been discussed at the Finance Task Group but no specific changes have been agreed. Views vary between being simpler for public consumption and more detail but no one has yet identified what is missing.
- 4.2 An online reference resource has been acquired from CIPFA, “An Introductory Guide to Local Government Finance” and will be made available to Members in 2021. The annual survey of members, for training purposes, will continue to operate and will capture any further training needs.
- 4.3 The Finance Task Group will keep under review the adequacy of the Green Book.
- 4.4 Members may at any time ask for any additional information or training need and Officers will make the necessary arrangements.

**5.0 Member Access to Subsidiary Company Commercially Sensitive Information (Resolution (vi))**

- 5.1 The Protocol to allow Members access to commercially sensitive information of subsidiary companies was approved by Council on 30 July 2020.

**6.0 Review of Borrowing Periods (Resolution (vii))**

- 6.1 The Director of Finance is undertaking a review of the Council’s Borrowing Periods as part of the preparation of the Budgets for 2021/22.

**7.0 Efficiency Strategy (Resolution (viii))**

- 7.1 There has been no progress in revitalising the efficiency strategy. An initial review of staffing levels secured the current year savings target but it is acknowledged that more work will need to be undertaken in future years. The uncertainty created by the Covid-19 pandemic has required some projects and other activities to be temporarily suspended, to focus efforts on the response and to allow time to establish the immediate and medium term financial position of the Council. This will be further considered as part of the Budget process for 2021/22.

**8.0 Internal Audit Review of Resources for Overview and Scrutiny (Resolution (ix))**

- 8.1 The Internal Audit review will be included in the Internal Audit plan for 2021/22 with the work scheduled to be completed early in the plan.

**9.0 Customer Feedback and Local Government Association Case Studies ((Resolution (x))**

- 9.1 The setting up of the Residents’ Panel will provide the platform for incorporating more customer feedback into the management of services. This will become effective during 2020/21.
- 9.2 There has been no work in progressing the use of Local Government Association case studies to assist in enhancing the performance of services. This will be considered further as part of the Efficiency Savings review.

**10.0 Digital Services (Resolution (xi))**

- 10.1 The Council has extensively adopted Zoom in both its Member level operations and day-to-day services. It has greatly assisted in reducing the use of paper and moving towards “paperless” meetings. This will remain a feature of administration post Covid.

- 10.2 The implementation of “Teams” as part of the upgrade of the Council’s information technology services is currently in hand and will be completed during 2020/21.
- 10.3 The wider use of automation will be taken forward as part of the work on updating the Efficiency Strategy.

**11.0 Management Arrangements (Resolution (xii))**

- 11.1 The structure of the Corporate Management Group has been strengthened and the roles of the Chief Executive and Director of Planning are subject to a recruitment process which will see both new appointments determined by January 2021 to take effect for 1 April 2021.
- 11.2 Arrangements for the promotion of the Legal Services Manager to the role of Director of Legal and Democratic Services are in hand to take effect from 1 July 2021.

**12.0 Local Government Association**

- 12.1 In accordance with its normal practice Officers of the Local Government Association with contact the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council during 2020/21 to follow up on its review.

**13.0 Implications**

- 13.1 The report is an update and there are no implications to report.

**14.0 Conclusions**

- 14.1 This report is an update providing progress information on the implementation of the Corporate Peer Challenge resolutions of the Executive.

REPORT ENDS



## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 21 DECEMBER 2020

### TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID-YEAR REVIEW

#### Executive Summary

To comply with the 2009 CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountants) Code of Practice on Treasury Management, the Council has agreed that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be responsible for ensuring effective scrutiny of the treasury management strategy and policies. In addition, the publication of comprehensive Treasury Management information in the Green Book enables scrutiny to be undertaken throughout the year.

This report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee provides an overview of Treasury Management for the first six months of the year against the Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators for 2020/21.

The Strategy has been complied with, and there are no matters to report to the Committee.

#### Recommendations

The Committee is requested to:

**RESOLVE** that the report be received and compliance with the Council's approved strategy be noted.

The Committee has the authority to determine the recommendation(s) set out above.

**Background Papers:** None.

**Reporting Person:** Leigh Clarke, Chief Finance Officer  
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**Date Published:** 11 December 2020





### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The 2009 CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountants) Code of Practice on Treasury Management introduced the requirement for formal scrutiny of the Treasury Management function. In 2010/11, Council agreed that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be responsible for ensuring effective scrutiny of the treasury management strategy and policies. This report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee provides an overview of Treasury Management for the first six months of the year against the Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators for 2020/21.
- 1.2 The monthly Green Book reports on total interest receipts and payments and also contains a comprehensive section on Treasury Management, detailing external commitments (borrowing, deposits and investments in and other advances to group companies, joint ventures and external organisations), details of long term loans, deals outstanding at the month end and any new deals taken in the month. The level of detail contained in these reports, and the frequency with which the information is published, goes beyond that suggested in the guidance issued by CIPFA.
- 1.3 Updated versions of the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (Prudential Code) and Treasury Management in the Public Service Code of Practice and Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes (Treasury Management Code) were issued in December 2017. Both of these codes are effective for the 2020/21 financial year.
- 1.4 There has been no change in the definition of Treasury Management in the Treasury Management Code, but the term “investments” has been specifically qualified to include non-financial assets which are held primarily for financial returns, such as investment property portfolios. The Code draws a clear separation between treasury and non-treasury investments and the role of the treasury management team. It is recognised that the treasury management team is unlikely to have specialist skills in such areas as property investment. The Treasury Management Strategy will not include any level of detail on non-treasury investments and therefore reporting will focus solely on treasury (financial) investments.
- 1.5 There is overlap between the new Capital and Investment Strategies, and the Council’s Treasury Management strategy. Therefore the three strategies are presented together, as part of the budget setting papers in February, enabling the links to be highlighted whilst minimising duplication. A suite of appendices are included which can be referred to from any of the core strategies.

#### Capital Strategy

- 1.6 The Capital Strategy has a wide scope covering the Council’s overall approach to capital investment. It demonstrates how the Council takes capital expenditure and investment decisions in line with service objectives and properly takes account of stewardship, value for money, prudence, sustainability and affordability.
- 1.7 The purpose of the capital strategy is to give a clear and concise view of how the Council determines its priorities for capital investment, decides how much it can afford to borrow and sets its risk appetite. It includes references to elements of the Investment Strategy, Treasury Management Strategy and the Council’s Investment Programme.
- 1.8 The Capital Strategy sets out the Council’s long term approach in line with the long term nature of capital and investment decisions. There is a direct link to the Council’s Local Plan, place shaping activities and other long term strategies.
- 1.9 Group activities and joint ventures are also included in the Capital Strategy, including the processes for ensuring effective due diligence and defining the Authority’s risk appetite.

## Treasury Management Mid-Year Review

1.10 The guidance requires that proportionality, in respect of overall resources, is also considered.

### Investment Strategy

1.11 The Investment Strategy provides a better explanation of investment activities, explaining 'why' as well as 'what' investments are made. A range of indicators and disclosures are recommended in the guidance.

1.12 Investments held for treasury management purposes are covered by the Treasury Management Strategy (see below), with the focus of the Investment Strategy being other investments such as loans, shares and property.

1.13 Whilst the Council has a significant and increasing property portfolio, these assets are not held for investment purposes. Each acquisition has a strategic purpose with a direct link to Council objectives or services. Shares and Loans are also used to support the Council's objectives. Property, loans and shares are treated as capital expenditure and financed as with other Investment Programme projects. However these items are disclosed as assets held as investments on the Council's balance sheet and so the guidance has been applied.

## 2.0 Treasury Management Prudential Indicators

2.1 On 13 February 2020 the Council approved Prudential Indicators for the period 2019/20 to 2023/24 as part of the annual budget process. Performance as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020 against the approved limits is shown below.

	2020/21	2020/21
<b>TREASURY MANAGEMENT PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
	<b>Approved limit</b>	<b>Actual at 30/9/20</b>
<b>Authorised limit for external borrowing -</b>		
Borrowing	£1,904,214	£1,518,822
Other long term liabilities	£24,676	£26,232*
Total authorised limit for external borrowing	£1,928,890	£1,545,054
<b>Operational boundary for external borrowing -</b>		
Borrowing	£1,894,214	£1,518,822
Other long term liabilities	£24,676	£26,232*
Total operational boundary for external borrowing	£1,918,890	£1,545,054
<b>Upper limit for fixed interest rate exposure</b>	100%	100%
<b>Upper limit for variable rate exposure</b>	70%	0%
<b>Upper limit for total principal sums invested for over 364 days (per maturity date)</b>	£3,000	£0

2.2 \* Estimate based on September 2020 projections. The PFI Finance Lease Liability will reduce during 2020/21 and the budget reflects the end of year position

### 3.0 Current Treasury Position

3.1 The Council's treasury position at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020 comprised:

	Principal	Ave Rate
<u>Borrowing</u>	£000	%
Long term borrowing	1,358,822	2.86%
Short term borrowing	160,000	0.62%
<b>Total Borrowing</b>	<b>1,518,822</b>	
<u>Deposits</u>		
External Investments		
- Short term on advice of TUK	0	0.00%
- Short term WBC Treasury	2,000	0.05%
- on call with Lloyds TSB	6,450	0.00%
<b>Total External Deposits</b>	<b>8,450</b>	
<b>Long Term Investments in Group Companies/ Joint Ventures/External Organisations</b>	<b>874,320</b>	3.29%

### 4.0 Borrowing Requirement

4.1 The borrowing requirement set out in the 2020/21 strategy was £390m.

4.2 The Covid pandemic has had a considerable impact on local government finances. Whilst the government has provided support through a series of grant payments, these have not covered all the Council's costs nor does the income compensation scheme fully mitigate income losses. Into 2021/22 there is no guarantee that this government support will continue. Whilst the pandemic may ease, the economic consequences and the financial impact on the Council are likely to take much longer to recover. The Council is particularly affected by loss of commercial rents and the risk of potential further non-payment in the future due to business failure.

4.3 In preparing the draft Investment Programme for 2021/22 it was therefore necessary to temporarily suspend projects which were not committed but which would have had revenue consequences through use of the Council's revenue reserves or financing costs of borrowing. These projects will continue to be reviewed as the financial outlook becomes more certain with the intention of re-instating projects as resources allow. The approved limits in section 2 have not been adjusted to reflect these projects being suspended.

4.4 The Government introduced an increase in PWLB margins over gilt yields in October 2019 increasing the cost of borrowing from the PWLB. A consultation on these margins, which raised the possibility of this increase being reversed, ended on 31 July 2020. The Authority partly deferred taking long term PWLB borrowing for the first half of 2020/21 (borrowing only £40m from the PWLB from 1 April 2020 to 30 September 2020). This allowed it to benefit from taking the lower rates available through short-term borrowing for part of the year and to secure cheaper long term PWLB rates if there was a reduction in PWLB margins later in the year.

4.5 The consultation response was published in November and the Government advised that PWLB rates would reduce by 1%. Other measures were also introduced, the most significant of which was that Local Authorities who were acquiring assets primarily for yield would not be able to access PWLB borrowing (even if the purchase of the asset was not being funded by PWLB borrowing). As discussed above, the acquisitions included in Woking

## Treasury Management Mid-Year Review

Borough Council's investment programme are largely for economic regeneration or service requirements and not primarily for yield.

- 4.6 Following the reduction in PWLB rates Officers are now considering taking longer term borrowing in 2020/21. The mix of long and short term borrowing is continually being reviewed to ensure an appropriate balance is maintained.
- 4.7 The following fixed rate loans have been taken from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) during the first six months of 2020/21:-

Loan number	Start date	Principal	Interest Rate	Type of Loan	Borrowing Period
186269	16/04/2020	£20,000,000	2.48%	Annuity	50 years
197955	12/05/2020	£20,000,000	2.43%	Annuity	50 years

Full details of the Council's loans are reported monthly in the Green Book.

### 5.0 Debt Rescheduling

- 5.1 No debt rescheduling has taken place to date in the 2020/21 financial year and therefore the Treasury Management Panel has not met.

### 6.0 Investment Strategy

- 6.1 The Council's investment priorities are the security of its capital, the liquidity of its investments and finally the return on the investment. The balances held in the last year have been minimised to assist in delaying the need to borrow, and so it has not been necessary to use the range of investments available in the strategy.
- 6.2 The investments used to manage cash flow to date in 2020/21, and the limits applied, are as indicated below.
- Money market funds – four funds, three with a limit of £50m per fund and one with a limit of £30m.
  - Deposits with other local authorities – up to £4m per authority.
  - Deposits with Lloyds Bank – no limit as this is the Council's banker.
- 6.3 Whilst deposits with other local authorities and Building Societies are permitted by the Strategy it has not been necessary to make such investments or place funds on the advice of Tradition UK (TUK) during the year to date.

#### Creditworthiness Policy

- 6.4 The Council uses Fitch ratings to derive its investment criteria for investments other than with other local authorities and Building Societies. Where a counterparty does not have a Fitch rating, the equivalent Moodys rating will be used.
- 6.5 The Council takes account of Link Asset Services' creditworthiness service, and receives notification of changes to ratings as well as a comprehensive weekly list. This service uses credit ratings from all three rating agencies (Fitch, Moodys and Standard and Poors), but also takes account of credit watches, credit outlooks and other information. These factors are combined to indicate the relative creditworthiness of counterparties and provide a recommended duration for investments.

### Country Limits

- 6.6 Under the 2009 Code of Practice, the Council should determine the minimum credit limit on a country basis as well as for institutions. The Treasury Management Strategy sets out that the Council will only use approved counterparties from countries with a minimum sovereign credit rating of AA- from Fitch Ratings (or equivalent agencies if Fitch does not provide). It should be noted that the UK is excluded from the minimum country limit as per the Executive decision on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016; without this decision, the Council would have been unable to place investments in the UK.
- 6.7 Information on changes to country ratings is received as part of the Link Asset Services creditworthiness service, and records are updated by Treasury Management staff.
- 6.8 In the six months to 30<sup>th</sup> September, no deposits were placed outside of the UK.

### **7.0 Use of External Service Providers**

- 7.1 The Council uses Link Asset Services as its external treasury management advisors.

### **8.0 Implications**

#### Financial

- 8.1 The financial implications are implicit in the body of this report.

#### Human Resource/Training and Development

- 8.2 The CIPFA code requires members and staff involved in treasury management to receive training and the Council's training requirements will be reviewed in order to provide appropriate training.
- 8.3 The contract with Link Asset Services provides for staff attendance at various conferences and seminars as well as providing a helpline facility, and Treasury Management staff have attended seminars and courses run by Link Asset Services during the year.

#### Community Safety

- 8.4 There are no community safety implications arising directly from this report.

#### Risk Management

- 8.5 An objective of the treasury management strategy is to maximise the return on the Council's investments subject to minimising the level of risk of incurring losses, as described in paragraph 6.1.

#### Sustainability

- 8.6 There are no sustainability implications arising directly from this report.

#### Equalities

- 8.7 There are no equalities implications arising directly from this report.

#### Safeguarding

- 8.8 There are no safeguarding implications arising directly from this report.

**9.0 Conclusions**

9.1 The Treasury Management position during the first half of the year and as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020 is set out in this report. The actions taken have been within the approved Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators for 2020/21 and there are no matters to report to the Committee.

REPORT ENDS



**WOKING BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**Overview and Scrutiny**  
**Work Programme**

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## INTRODUCTION TO WOKING BOROUGH COUNCIL'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

This Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme is published with the purpose of assisting the Council in its overview and scrutiny role. The Work Programme covers the following areas:

- Items for consideration at future meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- An extract from the latest version of the Council's Forward Plan.
- Any Scrutiny Review Topics proposed by Members of the Council for inclusion on the Work Programme.
- Any topics identified for pre-decision scrutiny.
- Details of the current Task Groups under the Committee's remit.

The Work Programme is designed to assist the Council with its overview and scrutiny role by providing Members with an indication of the current workload, subjects to be considered for review and items which the Executive expects to consider at its future meetings, so that matters can be raised beforehand and/or consultations undertaken with a Member of the Executive prior to the relevant meeting.

### The Committee

**Chairman:** Councillor D E Hughes

**Vice-Chairman:** Councillor M Whitehand

Councillor D Bittleston

Councillor S Hussain

Councillor J Bond

Councillor R Mohammed

Councillor G G Chrystie

Councillor M I Raja

Councillor J R Sanderson

### 2020/21 Committee Dates

- 15 June 2020
- 13 July 2020
- 14 September 2020
- 19 October 2020
- 23 November 2020
- 21 December 2020
- 25 January 2021
- 22 February 2021
- 22 March 2021



**Suggested Additions to the Work Programme**

Decision to be Taken	Proposed by	Officer Comment
<p><b>Safer Working Partnership – Community Safety Plan.</b> The Police and Justice Act 2006 gave local authorities responsibility for considering crime and disorder matters. In 2010 the Committee agreed that the Safer Working Partnership Plan would be brought forward annually for scrutiny.</p>	Chairman and Vice-Chairman	It was scheduled to be viewed at the meeting on 23 March 2020, which was cancelled due to the Covid outbreak.
<p><b>Investment Strategy.</b> To understand the Council's position on funding for projects and schemes such as the Flood Alleviation Plan, due to Covid-19.</p>	Chairman and Vice-Chairman	
<p><b>Climate Change Emergency.</b> To understand what actions have been taken since the Climate Change Emergency had been declared.</p>	Chairman and Vice-Chairman	
<p><b>Freedom Leisure.</b> For the Committee to receive an annual review and an update since the 2019/20 review.</p>	Chairman and Vice-Chairman	This item will be carried over into the 2021/22 municipal year.



**Annual Items of the Committee**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Month Scheduled</b>	<b>Reporting Officer</b>
JWS Management Performance	January	Richard Bisset
Annual FOI report Annual NVH Complaints Review Report	February	Hanna Taylor Jo McIntosh
Safer Working Partnership – Community Plan Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee	March	Camilla Edmiston Chairman of the OS Cttee
Celebrate Woking Review and Forward Plan Treasurey Management Mid-Year Review	November	Chris Norrington / Riette Thomas Leigh Clarke



**Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting – 25 January 2021**

<b>Decision to be Taken</b>	<b>Consultation</b>	<b>Background Documents</b>	<b>Contact Person</b>
<b>Performance Management</b>			
<b>Performance &amp; Financial Monitoring Information.</b> For the Committee to consider the current publication of the Performance & Financial Monitoring Information (Green Book)	None	None	Chairman
<b>Matters for Determination</b>			
<b>Work Programme.</b> For the Committee to receive the updated Work Programme.	None	None	Hanna Taylor
<b>Matters for Consideration</b>			
<b>Joint Waste Management Performance Review.</b> To review the changes implemented since the last review.	None	None	Richard Bisset
<b>Play Area Maintenance.</b> To review the maintenance work completed since the last update in November 2019, and whether the programme can be changed from 25 years to a shorter period.	None	None	Arran Henderson Tracey Haskins
<b>Surrey Lifelong Learning Partnership.</b> For the Committee to receive an update on the review and discussions with the group and how to progress joint working and links with Council services.	None	None	Cllr J Sanderson

**Task Group Updates**

<b>Task Group Terms of Reference Review.</b> For the Committee to receive the three task group draft Terms of Reference for review.	None.	None.	Chairman
<b>Task Group Update.</b> To receive an update on the work of the Task Groups under the remit of the Committee.	None	None	Chairman



**Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting – 22 February 2021**

<b>Decision to be Taken</b>	<b>Consultation</b>	<b>Background Documents</b>	<b>Contact Person</b>
<b>Performance Management</b>			
<b>Performance &amp; Financial Monitoring Information.</b> For the Committee to consider the current publication of the Performance & Financial Monitoring Information (Green Book)	None	None	Chairman
<b>Matters for Determination</b>			
<b>Work Programme.</b> For the Committee to receive the updated Work Programme.	None	None	Hanna Taylor
<b>Matters for Consideration</b>			
<b>Freedom of Information Requests.</b> To review the statistics and requests that proceed to the Information Commissioners Office.	None	None	Hanna Taylor
<b>Overview of Complaints Received and Contract Review.</b> For the Committee to review the complaints for 2020 and identify any trends. The Committee wish to review some areas of the contract.	None	None	Joanne McIntosh New Vision Homes
<b>Task Group Updates</b>			
<b>Task Group Update.</b> To receive an update on the work of the Task Groups under the remit of the Committee.	None	None	Chairman



**Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting – 22 March 2021**

Decision to be Taken	Consultation	Background Documents	Contact Person
<b>Performance Management</b>			
<b>Performance &amp; Financial Monitoring Information.</b> For the Committee to consider the current publication of the Performance & Financial Monitoring Information (Green Book)	None	None	Chairman
<b>Matters for Determination</b>			
<b>Work Programme.</b> For the Committee to receive the updated Work Programme.	None	None	Hanna Taylor
<b>Matters for Consideration</b>			
<b>Family Centres Update.</b> For the Committee to receive an update a year on from the consultation that determined the re-modelling of the remaining Children’s Centres in the Borough to create Family Centres as part of a wider Family Service, led by Woking Borough Council.	None	None	Adam Thomas
<b>Annual Report of the Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee.</b>	None	None	Chairman
<b>Task Group Updates</b>			

<b>Task Group Update.</b> To receive an update on the terms of reference of the three Task Groups under the remit of the Committee .	None	None	Chairman
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### Latest Version of the Forward Plan

The Forward Plan gives an indication of the decision to be taken by the Executive. Published monthly, the Forward Plan has traditionally given an indication of the decisions to be taken over the following four months.

**19 November 2020**

Key Decision	Subject	Decision to be taken	Consultation (Undertaken prior to the meeting unless otherwise stated)	Background Documents	Contact Officer
<b>Yes</b>	Review of Fees and Charges 2021-22	To recommend to Council that the discretionary Fees and Charges for 2021-22 be approved.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder, and service users where appropriate.	None.	Chief Finance Officer (Leigh Clarke)
<b>Yes</b>	Next Steps Accommodation Programme	To recommend to Council a property acquisition, subject to Government grant funding being secured, in order to enable the Council to provide suitable move-on accommodation for rough sleepers who have been accommodated during the Covid-19 pandemic and prevent their return to the streets.	Cllr Harlow, Portfolio Holder.	None.	Director of Housing (Louise Strongitharm)
<b>Yes</b>	Management Arrangements	To consider a proposal for future key project management arrangements.	Cllr Azad, Leader of the Council.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)

<b>No</b>	Calendar of Meetings 2021-22	To recommend to Council the Calendar of Meetings for 2021-22.	Cllr Azad, Portfolio Holder.	None.	Director of Legal and Democratic Services (Peter Bryant)
<b>No</b>	Draft General Fund Budget 2021-22	To receive the draft General Fund 2021-22 for the purpose of finalising proposals for service budgets and Council Tax.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder, and Business Managers.	None.	Chief Finance Officer (Leigh Clarke)
<b>No</b>	Draft Housing Revenue Account Budget Update 2021-22	To receive the draft Housing Revenue Account estimates 2021-22 for the purposes of finalising proposals for service.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder, and Business Managers.	None.	Chief Finance Officer (Leigh Clarke)
<b>Yes</b>	Draft Investment Programme 2020-21 to 2024-25	To receive the draft Investment Programme.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder, and Business Managers.	None.	Chief Finance Officer (Leigh Clarke)
<b>No</b>	Health and Wellbeing Strategy	To update the Executive on the Strategy.	Cllr Harlow, Portfolio Holder, Internal Officers.	None.	Director of Community Services (Julie Fisher)
<b>No</b>	Woking Football Club and Associated Developments	To note the report.	Cllr Azad, Leader of the Council.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>No</b>	Performance and Financial Monitoring Information	To consider the Performance and Financial Monitoring Information contained in the Green Book.	Cllr Azad, Portfolio Holder.	None.	Chief Finance Officer (Leigh Clarke)
<b>No</b>	Monitoring Reports - Projects	To provide quarterly reports on the progress of projects in the interests of financial prudence and corporate governance.	Cllr Azad, Portfolio Holder.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)

## Special Grants Executive - 10 December 2020

Key Decision	Subject	Decision to be taken	Consultation (Undertaken prior to the meeting unless otherwise stated)	Background Documents	Contact Officer
<b>Yes</b>	Applications for Financial Assistance 2021/22	To receive the annual report on applications for the Community Support Scheme for the 2021/22 financial year.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder, Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>No</b>	Age UK Surrey - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>No</b>	Byfleet Bowls Club - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>No</b>	Cherry Trees - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>Yes</b>	Citizens Advice Woking - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>No</b>	Community Advice Forum - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)

<b>Yes</b>	Coram Life Education - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>No</b>	Crossroads Care Surrey - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>No</b>	Engage Woking Schools - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>No</b>	Friends of the Elderly - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>No</b>	GASP Motor Project - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>No</b>	Headway Surrey - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers,	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>No</b>	Home-Start Runnymede and Woking - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>No</b>	Inclusive Intergenerational Dance - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>No</b>	Intergenerational Music Making - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)



<b>No</b>	Jigsaw (South-East) - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>Yes</b>	LCAG Lift Up Together and Little Minions - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>No</b>	Let's Read Ltd - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>Yes</b>	LinkAble - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>Yes</b>	MASCOT - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>Yes</b>	Mayford Village Hall - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>No</b>	Mediation Surrey - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>No</b>	Outline - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>No</b>	Relate West Surrey - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)

<b>No</b>	Sight for Surrey - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>No</b>	Surrey Care Trust - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>No</b>	Surrey Drug and Alcohol Care Ltd - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>No</b>	Surrey North Area Cruse Bereavement Care - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>No</b>	Surrey Welfare Rights Unit - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>No</b>	TALK Surrey CIO - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>No</b>	The Brigitte Trust - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>No</b>	The Club at Old Woking - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>No</b>	The Counselling Partnership - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)

<b>Yes</b>	The Lighthouse - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>Yes</b>	The Maybury Centre Trust - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>No</b>	The Therapy Garden - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>No</b>	The Useful Wood Company - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>Yes</b>	The Woking Community Furniture Project - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>Yes</b>	Trinity Methodist Church (ROC Woking) - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>No</b>	West Surrey Family History Society - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>No</b>	Woking Age Concern - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)

<b>No</b>	Woking and District Men's Shed - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>Yes</b>	Woking and Sam Beare Hospices - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>No</b>	Woking and Weybridge Branch of Parkinson's UK - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>No</b>	Woking Blackhawks Basketball Club - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>Yes</b>	Woking Community Transport (Bustler) - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall. Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>Yes</b>	Woking Community Transport (Town Centre Buggy) - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>No</b>	Woking Family Contact Centre - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>No</b>	Woking High School Academy Trust - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)

<b>No</b>	Woking Parks Bowls Club - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>No</b>	Woking People of Faith - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>No</b>	Woking Shopmobility - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>No</b>	Woking Street Angels - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder Internal Officers	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>No</b>	Woking Strokeability - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>No</b>	Woking Talking Newspaper (1988) Association - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>Yes</b>	Woking United Reformed Church Charity - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>No</b>	Woodham Parish Hall - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)

<b>Yes</b>	York Road Project - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>Yes</b>	Your Sanctuary - Application for Financial Assistance	To determine the grant application.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder. Internal Officers.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)

**14 January 2021**

<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Decision to be taken</b>	<b>Consultation (Undertaken prior to the meeting unless otherwise stated)</b>	<b>Background Documents</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
<b>No</b>	Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 - IPSO Report	To receive the IPSO report and agree any necessary resulting actions.	Cllr Azad, Portfolio Holder.	None.	Director of Legal and Democratic Services (Peter Bryant)
<b>No</b>	Performance and Financial Monitoring Information	To consider the Performance and Financial Monitoring Information contained in the Green Book.	Cllr Azad, Portfolio Holder.	None.	Chief Finance Officer (Leigh Clarke)





## 4 February 2021

Key Decision	Subject	Decision to be taken	Consultation (Undertaken prior to the meeting unless otherwise stated)	Background Documents	Contact Officer
<b>Yes</b>	General Fund, Service Plans, Budgets and Prudential Indicators 2021-22	To recommend to Council the General Fund, Service Plans, Budgets and Prudential Indicators for 2021-22.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder, Business Managers.	None.	Chief Finance Officer (Leigh Clarke)
<b>Yes</b>	Housing Revenue Account Budgets 2021-22	To recommend to Council the Housing Revenue Account Budgets for 2021-22.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder, Business Managers.	None.	Chief Finance Officer (Leigh Clarke)
<b>Yes</b>	Investment Programme 2020-21 to 2024-25	To recommend to Council the full review of the Investment Programme and priorities.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder, Business Managers, Finance Task Group.	None.	Chief Finance Officer (Leigh Clarke)
<b>Yes</b>	Capital, Investment and Treasury Management Strategies	To recommend to Council the Capital, Investment and Treasury Management Strategies for 2021-22.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder.	None.	Chief Finance Officer (Leigh Clarke)
<b>Yes</b>	Housing Management and Maintenance Service	To recommend to Council that the delivery approach for Housing Management and Maintenance Services from 1 April 2022 be confirmed (following resident consultation).	Cllr Harlow, Portfolio Holder and Housing Task Group, tenant and leaseholder consultation.	None.	Director of Housing (Louise Strongitharm)

<b>No</b>	Churchyard Closure and Transfer of Maintenance Responsibility – St Mary The Virgin Horsell	The Executive is requested to resolve that the responsibility for the maintenance of the closed churchyard at St Mary The Virgin Horsell is transferred to Woking Borough Council.	Cllr Davis, Portfolio Holder.	None.	Director of Neighbourhood Services (Geoff McManus)
<b>No</b>	Performance and Financial Monitoring Information	To consider the Performance and Financial Monitoring Information contained in the Green Book.	Cllr Azad, Portfolio Holder.	None.	Chief Finance Officer (Leigh Clarke)
<b>No</b>	Monitoring Reports - Projects	To provide quarterly reports on the progress of projects in the interests of financial prudence and corporate governance.	Cllr Azad, Portfolio Holder.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)

## 25 March 2021

Key Decision	Subject	Decision to be taken	Consultation (Undertaken prior to the meeting unless otherwise stated)	Background Documents	Contact Officer
<b>Yes</b>	Medium Term Financial Strategy	The decision is sought to set the framework for Officers to develop detailed proposals for consideration by the Council to ensure the medium term financial stability of the Council in the context of its objective to support growth and to maintain services for local people.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder.	None.	Chief Finance Officer (Leigh Clarke)
<b>Yes</b>	Smarts Heath Road Woking Gymnastic Centre	To recommend to Council funding arrangements for the implementation of the approved scheme.	Cllr Azad, Portfolio Holder.	None.	Chief Executive (Ray Morgan)
<b>Yes</b>	Robin Hood	To recommend to Council the provision of Loan Finance to Rutland Woking for the development of the former Pub site for residential accommodation.	Cllr Azad, Portfolio Holder.	None.	Deputy Chief Executive (Douglas J Spinks)
<b>No</b>	Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 - Annual Monitoring Report	To receive details of RIPA authorisations during 2020 calendar year.	Cllr Azad, Portfolio Holder.	None.	Director of Legal and Democratic Services (Peter Bryant)

<b>No</b>	Write off of Irrecoverable Debt	To write off debts over £10,000.	Cllr Ashall, Portfolio Holder.	None.	Chief Finance Officer (Leigh Clarke)
<b>No</b>	Performance and Financial Monitoring Information	To consider the Performance and Financial Monitoring Information contained in the Green Book.	Cllr Azad, Portfolio Holder.	None.	Chief Finance Officer (Leigh Clarke)

**Current Task Groups Responsible to the Committee**

The table below provides a list of current Task Groups established by the Committee, including an indication of the resource requirements and the anticipated completion date. Updates on the progress of individual Task Groups are included elsewhere on the Committee's agenda.

<b>Task Group</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Membership</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Date Established</b>	<b>Anticipated Completion Date</b>
Economic Development Task Group	To identify and seek the implementation of measures to mitigate the impact of the economic downturn on the residents, community organisations and businesses in the Borough of Woking.	Cllrs Ali, Azad, Barker, Bond, Davis, Elson, and Johnson.	Officer and Councillor time.	11.03.09	Ongoing
Finance Task Group	To review Financial issues as and when identified by the Committee. Financial Performance of the Council Management and Administration of Accounts procurement Strategy, Pension fund, Financial Strategy.	Cllrs Ashall, Azad, Aziz, Bond, Davis, Hughes, and Sanderson.	Officer and Councillor time.	25.05.06	Ongoing
Housing Task Group	To review Housing issues as and when identified by the Committee, including Housing Strategy, Housing Business Plan, Housing Service Plans, Housing Revenue Account, Housing Conditions, Housing Needs, Private Sector Housing, Home Improvement Agency, Housing and Council Tax Benefits, and monitor/review progress of the PFI Scheme	Cllrs Aziz, Bridgeman, Forster, Harlow, Johnson, Kemp and Mohammad.	Officer and Councillor time.	25.05.06	Ongoing



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 21 DECEMBER 2020

## HOUSING TASK GROUP UPDATE

### Executive Summary

Councillor Ian Johnson, Chairman of the Housing Task Group, provided an update from the last meeting of the Task Group that was held on 17 November 2020:

#### Housing Strategy.

The group reviewed a draft of the Housing Strategy to cover the period to 2026 and made a number of observations:-

- 1 Timeframes should be attached to objectives to enable measurement of performance
- 2 With increasing use of technology we need to be aware of the support needed for residents who were not IT savvy or had no access to systems
- 3 Care leavers should be specifically mentioned within objectives
- 4 As properties are designed to be more environmentally-friendly, any kit installed ought to be easy understand and use by occupiers and
- 5 The importance of linkages with the health and well-being agenda and engaging with residents including those supported by the York Road Project.

#### Housing Management and Repairs.

The performance of New Vision Homes and Breyer Group was discussed. Void property turnaround had reduced from 50 days and targeted to fall to 25 days by the year end. Repairs were taking longer than in 2019 albeit 96% -99% of emergency work was carried out within set timeframes. A key concern was a drop in rental receipts due to arrears which were projected to be between £1.4m and £1.7m at the end of 2021, depending on further lockdowns, Christmas, and employment losses. Some timing differences would arise from delays in payments following initial claims for Universal Credit.

#### Other matters

- The task group was pleased to note the successful bid for funding under the government's Next Steps Accommodation programme and congratulated colleagues for their work
- An independent consultant had been engaged to review the 20+ contracts of NVH in anticipation of migration of the housing management service to WBC in 2022.
- Covid had impacted on inspection of properties within the Selective Licensing scheme. Nevertheless, a number of properties had been visited and improvements made. Questionnaires to tenants were being issued to better assess performance of the scheme.

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 21 DECEMBER 2020

- The terms of reference of the task group were due for update. A draft was reviewed and it was agreed that subject to a few points it would be passed to CMG and then on to O/S in accordance with the usual procedure.”

### Recommendations

The Committee is requested to:

**RESOLVE That** the update be noted.

**Background Papers:** None.

**Reporting Person:** Councillor Ian Johnson, Chairman of the Housing Task Group  
Email: [cllr.ian.johnson@woking.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.ian.johnson@woking.gov.uk)

**Contact Person:** Councillor Ian Johnson, Chairman of the Housing Task Group  
Email: [cllr.ian.johnson@woking.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.ian.johnson@woking.gov.uk)

**Date Published:** 11 December 2020



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TASK GROUP UPDATE

### Executive Summary

Councillor Ian Johnson, Chairman of the Economic Development Task Group, provided an update from the last meeting of the Task Group that was held on 21 October 2020:

“The task group reviewed, in October prior to the latest lockdown, progress on the programme within the Framework for Recovery Programme established in April (and previously reported to Overview and Scrutiny) in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Business Liaison team’s activity was focused on the action plan to reopen the economy following lockdown, providing good communications with business and the public and managing the public realm to enable the local economy to open successfully and safely.

Messaging campaigns through “Love Local” as an extension to #WeAreWoking “we are open” to encourage people back into Woking, along with a re-enforcing health message were all designed to promote a post-lockdown Woking. This marketing material was used on social media and in public spaces, car parks, Woking Magazine and Woking News & Mail.

Help was provided to business via the Woking Works website, which gave guidance on reopening, with support from a number of local firms, one to one business support and promotion of services provided by Surrey Chambers and Woking Chamber of Commerce. A number of webinars were produced with guest presenter, including Cllr Kevin Davis as portfolio holder in one case, which were well attended. Other Council teams who were busy providing advice included Environmental Health who had advised 130 businesses, particularly in respect of social distancing such as at supermarkets.

These efforts were showing some signs of success as footfall slowly improved though judging by car park ticketing was still nearly 50% down in September over 2019. A great deal of effort had been put into creating a positive and safe environment throughout the town centre, including in privately controlled premises.

Woking firms were nominated in the majority of categories in the Surrey Food and Drink Awards 2020 and the results were announced at the end of November with the following winners in their category: -

Best Independent Food and Drink Retailer- Deli Class, Horsell

Sustainability Initiative Award – Good Living Brew Co, Horsell

Customer Service Award – Boz’s Fruit and Veg, Woking

The following were highly commended in their categories: -

Best Independent Food and Drink – Boz’s Fruit and Veg

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 21 DECEMBER 2020

Butcher of the Year- Prince and Son Family Butchers. Horsell

Food Producer of the Year – The Goldfinch Kitchen, Horsell

Drink Producer of the Year – Thurston’s Brewery, Horsell

Sustainability Initiative Award - Eden Greens Urban Farm, Woking

In these challenging times these firms have done Woking, and themselves, proud and deserve congratulations on their successes.”

### Recommendations

The Committee is requested to:

**RESOLVE** That the update be noted.

**Background Papers:** None.

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**Date Published:** 11 December 2020