



COUNCIL

31 March 2022

To: The Mayor and Members of
WOKING BOROUGH COUNCIL

SUMMONS TO A MEETING

You are hereby summoned to attend an ORDINARY MEETING of the COUNCIL to be held in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Gloucester Square, Woking on THURSDAY, THE THIRTY-FIRST DAY OF MARCH 2022 at 7.00 pm to transact the business specified in the agenda overleaf

JULIE FISHER
Chief Executive

Civic Offices,
Woking

NOTE: Filming Council Meetings

Please note the meeting will be filmed and will be broadcast live and subsequently as an archive on the Council's website (www.woking.gov.uk). The images and sound recording will also be used for training purposes within the Council. Generally the public seating areas are not filmed. However by entering the meeting room and using the public seating area, you are consenting to being filmed.



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AGENDA

Prior to the commencement of business, Reverend Lucy Brierley, Minister of the United Reformed Church, Woking will say prayers.

1. MINUTES.

To approve the minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 10 February 2022, as published.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

3. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS.

4. URGENT BUSINESS.

To consider any business which the Chairman rules may be dealt with under Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST. (Pages 7 - 8)

- (i) To receive declarations of interest from Members and Officers in respect of any item to be considered at the meeting.
- (ii) In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, Councillor A Azad declares a non-pecuniary interest in any items concerning the companies of which she is a Council-appointed director. The companies are listed in the attached schedule. The interests are such that speaking and voting are permissible.
- (iii) In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, Councillor K M Davis declares a non-pecuniary interest in any items concerning the companies of which he is a Council-appointed director. The companies are listed in the attached schedule. The interests are such that speaking and voting are permissible.
- (iv) In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, Councillor D Harlow declares a non-pecuniary interest in any items concerning the companies of which she is a Council-appointed director. The companies are listed in the attached schedule. The interests are such that speaking and voting are permissible.
- (v) In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, Councillor C S Kemp declares a non-pecuniary interest in any items concerning the companies of which he is a Council-appointed director. The companies are listed in the attached schedule. The interests are such that speaking and voting are permissible.
- (vi) In accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Chief Executive, Julie Fisher, declares a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in any items concerning the companies of which she is a Council-appointed director. The companies are listed in the attached schedule. The interests are such that Mrs Fisher may advise the Council on those items.
- (vii) In accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, Joanne McIntosh, declares a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in any items concerning the companies of which she is a Council-appointed director. The companies are listed in the attached schedule. The interests are such that Mrs McIntosh may advise the Council on those items.

- (viii) In accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Director of Planning, Giorgio Framalocco, declares a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in any items concerning the companies of which he is a Council-appointed director. The companies are listed in the attached schedule. The interests are such that Mr Framalocco may advise the Council on those items.
- (ix) In accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Director of Neighbourhood Services, Geoff McManus, declares a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in any items concerning the companies of which he is a Council-appointed director. The companies are listed in the attached schedule. The interests are such that Mr McManus may advise the Council on those items.
- (x) In accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Director of Housing, Louise Strongitharm, declares a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in any items concerning the companies of which she is a Council-appointed director. The companies are listed in the attached schedule. The interests are such that Mrs Strongitharm may advise the Council on those items.

6. QUESTIONS.

To deal with written questions submitted by Members under Standing Order 8.1. Copies of the questions and of the draft replies (which are subject to amendment by the Leader of the Council) will be laid upon the table.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEES WBC22-010. (Pages 9 - 12)

To receive and consider recommendations from the Executive and Committees.

- 7a. Review of Code of Conduct Arrangements STA22-001.
- 7b. Planning Peer Review.
- 7c. Notice of Motion - Cllr A Kirby - Easy access to Council recordings EXE22-033.
- 7d. Working for all Strategy and Directorate Service Plans EXE22-007.
- 7e. Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) EXE22-030.
- 7f. Safeguarding Policy EXE21-053.

8. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WBC22-013. (Pages 13 - 38)

9. ANNUAL REPORT BY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES WBC22-012. (Pages 39 - 62)

10. ANNUAL REPORT ON MEMBER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT WBC22-011. (Pages 63 - 80)

11. NOTICES OF MOTION WBC22-014.

To deal with any motions received in accordance with Standing Order 5.0. Any motions received before the deadline has passed for the receipt of motions will be published and a copy of the list will be tabled at the meeting.

11a. Notice of Motion - Cllr S Dorsett - Russian Invasion of Ukraine.

“Woking Borough Council is saddened and disturbed by the unprovoked aggression against Ukraine, which has caused horrific devastation, and created an escalating humanitarian crisis with millions displaced or affected. In light of this, and as a way of expressing support for the people of Ukraine and members of our communities who are from or who have ties with Ukraine this Council;

- a. Condemns the unprovoked Russian invasion of Ukraine and stands in solidarity with the people of Ukraine and their families and friends, including those local to Woking.
- b. Stands ready to provide support and open our arms to innocent people displaced and affected by this unprovoked Russian aggression.
- c. Will work with and support the efforts of our local communities to provide help, support and comfort to those in need.”

11b. Notice of Motion - Cllr K Davis - Housing Allocations.

“It is vitally important that our residents directly benefit from new housing development in their local area. The Council already requires a 2-year local connection for applicants joining its Housing Register for affordable homes, as well as expecting any shared ownership homes secured through the Section 106 process to be first marketed to those living or working in the Borough.

However, the Council should consider going further in promoting a “Local First” approach by:

- Investigating any further flexibilities that could be incorporated into the Housing Allocations Policy to prioritise local residents;
- Exclusively marketing any new homes built and sold by Thamesway for a set period of time to residents living in that Ward or Neighbourhood Area;
- Considering a local connection policy for any new homes delivered under the Government’s new “First Homes” tenure that prioritises residents living in that Ward or Neighbourhood Area before opening up to the Borough.”

11c. Notice of Motion - Cllr D Roberts - Benefits Management.

“The council undertakes programmes of work to deliver benefits to the borough and controls are put in place to ensure the work is delivered on time, on budget and to scope. Whilst delivering to scope should result in the delivery of benefits, it may not always be the case. Complex projects spanning many years can require interim decisions to balance budgets, timescales, and scope because of issues arising throughout the life of the project.

This council is committed to both best practice and transparent project reporting including benefits tracking from the point at which it is considered for approval by members through to the conclusion and delivery of the project.

This council will therefore investigate how it will implement benefits management on all major projects as part of existing standard project controls such as risk and issues management.”

AGENDA ENDS

Date Published - 23 March 2022

Note: At the close of the meeting the Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor Liam Lyons, would like to invite the following to join him in the parlour:-

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor S Hussain, and Councillors M Ali, S Ashall, M Bridgeman, J Brown, S Dorsett, W Forster, D Hughes, S Hussain, I Johnson, A Kirby, N Martin, R Mohammed, M Raja, D Roberts and M Whitehand, Independent Co-Opted Member Claire Storey and Independent Person Tim Stokes, together with Officers attending the meeting.

Schedule Referred to in Declaration of Interests

Council-appointed directorships

Councillor A Azad	
Export House Limited	Thameswey Guest Houses Limited
Kingfield Community Sports Centre Limited	Thameswey Housing Limited
Rutland Woking (Carthouse Lane) Limited	Thameswey Limited
Rutland (Woking) Limited	Thameswey Maintenance Services Limited
Rutland Woking (Residential) Limited	Thameswey Solar Limited
Thameswey Central Milton Keynes Limited	Thameswey Sustainable Communities Limited
Thameswey Developments Limited	Victoria Square Residential Limited
Thameswey Energy Limited	VSW Hotel Limited
Victoria Square Woking Limited	

Councillor K M Davis	
Brookwood Cemetery Limited	LAC 2021 Limited
Brookwood Park Limited	Woking Necropolis and Mausoleum Limited

Councillor D Harlow	
Thameswey Guest Houses Limited	Thameswey Solar Limited
Thameswey Housing Limited	Thameswey Maintenance Services Limited
Thameswey Limited	Thameswey Sustainable Communities Limited

Councillor C S Kemp	
Kingfield Community Sports Centre Limited	Thameswey Guest Houses Limited
Thameswey Central Milton Keynes Limited	Thameswey Housing Limited
Thameswey Developments Limited	Thameswey Limited
Thameswey Energy Limited	Woking Shopping Limited

Julie Fisher, Chief Executive	
Thamesway Limited	Victoria Square Residential Limited
VSW Hotel Limited	Victoria Square Woking Limited

Joanne McIntosh, Director of Legal and Democratic Services	
Thamesway Developments Limited	Thamesway Housing Limited
Thamesway Guest Houses Limited	Thamesway Limited

Giorgio Framallicco, Director of Planning	
Brookwood Cemetery Limited	Thamesway Central Milton Keynes Limited
Brookwood Park Limited	Thamesway Energy Limited
Brunswick Road (Pirbright) Residents Company Limited	Thamesway Limited
Energy Centre for Sustainable Communities Limited	Thamesway Maintenance Services Limited
Export House Limited	Thamesway Solar Limited
Kingfield Community Sports Centre Limited	Thamesway Sustainable Communities Limited
Woking Necropolis and Mausoleum Limited	Woking Shopping Limited

Geoff McManus, Director of Neighbourhood Services	
Brookwood Cemetery Limited	Thamesway Energy Limited
Brookwood Park Limited	Thamesway Limited
Energy Centre for Sustainable Communities Limited	Thamesway Maintenance Services Limited
Export House Limited	Thamesway Solar Limited
Kingfield Community Sports Centre Limited	Thamesway Sustainable Communities Limited
LAC 2021 Limited	Woking Necropolis and Mausoleum Limited
Thamesway Central Milton Keynes Limited	Woking Shopping Limited

Louise Strongitharm, Director of Housing	
Rutland Woking (Carhouse Lane) Limited	Thamesway Developments Limited
Rutland Woking (Residential) Limited	Thamesway Guest Houses Limited
Rutland (Woking) Limited	Thamesway Housing Limited
Thamesway Limited	

COUNCIL – 31 MARCH 2022

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEES

Executive Summary

The Council is invited to consider the recommendations from the meeting of the Standards and Audit Committee held on 3 March 2022, the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 22 March 2022 and the meeting of the Executive held on 24 March 2022, as set out in this report. The minutes of the Planning Committee and the Executive will be published in due course. The extracts from the minutes of the meeting of the Standards and Audit Committee and the reports of the Planning Committee and the Executive are set out in this report.

STANDARDS AND AUDIT COMMITTEE – 3 MARCH 2022

7A. REVIEW OF CODE OF CONDUCT ARRANGEMENTS STA11-001

The Committee received a report which set out the recommendations arising from a review of the Council's arrangements for dealing with allegations of misconduct by Councillors. The review had been undertaken by the Monitoring Officer in consultation with Members, the Chairman of Standards and Audit Committee and Independent Person to establish whether the procedures were fit for purpose and effective.

The outcome of the review was welcomed as a more supportive and timely process, noting that the previous scheme had been found to be confusing and slow. In considering the details of the proposals, Councillor Hughes moved and Councillor Roberts seconded an amendment to the Summing Up process to allow complainants to have the opportunity to rebut any matters raised within the Panel to which they disagreed as a right, rather than at the discretion of the Chairman of the Standards Panel. On being put to a vote, all Members present supported the amendment which therefore formed part of the substantive recommendations before the Committee.

Councillor Hughes reported on three points received from Claire Storey, Chairman of the Committee, who had been unable to attend the meeting. The points were:

- In respect of the structure and make-up of the Standards Panel, consideration be given to enabling the membership to come from a wider pool of individuals.
- Political balance of the Standards Panel to be maintained.
- Consideration should be given to the appointment of a second Independent Person

It was noted that the points had been discussed with Officers prior to the meeting and that it was intended to bring a separate paper forward to a future meeting to address the three points.

The recommendations for Council before the Committee, subject to the agreed amendment, were supported.

RECOMMENDED to Council

That (i) the arrangements for dealing with Allegations of Misconduct by Councillors under the Localism Act 2011 be adopted subject to the following amendment:

Recommendations of the Executive and Committees

“Summing up

The Investigating Officer sums up the complaint.

The Complainant to have the opportunity to rebut any matters raised within the Panel to which they disagree.

The Subject Member or their representative sums up their case.”;

- (ii) the Standards Hearing Sub-Committee shall be renamed the Standards Panel; and**
- (iii) the Council’s constitution be updated to include the arrangements.**

PLANNING COMMITTEE – 22 MARCH 2022

7B. PLANNING PEER REVIEW

The Planning Committee is asked to:

RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL That

- (i) The action plan be approved, and;**
- (ii) That a quarterly update on the action plan be presented to the Planning Committee.**

THE EXECUTIVE – 24 MARCH 2022

7C. NOTICE OF MOTION - CLLR A KIRBY - EASY ACCESS TO COUNCIL RECORDINGS EXE22-033

For the reasons outlined in the report, the Executive is advised that the Motion may be supported as amended:

“Easy access to Council recordings This Council resolves that all video recordings of public meetings of Council and its Committees will continue to be made available for public viewing on demand in accordance with the Council’s retention periods. The Council shall continue to keep its retention periods under review with particular regard being given to information held in respect of the Council’s long-term projects. Archive recordings of all previously public meetings of Council and Council Committees will also be made available on request wherever this is legally and technically possible. The Council shall ensure that residents are fully informed as to how they can access these recordings and that access to this information is available in a quick and simple manner.”

7D. WOKING FOR ALL STRATEGY AND DIRECTORATE SERVICE PLANS EXE22-007

The Executive is requested to:

RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL That

- (i) the Woking for all Corporate Strategy 2022-27, as attached to the report, be adopted; and
- (ii) the Directorate Plans 2022/23, as attached to the report, be adopted.

7E. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY EXE22-030

The Executive is requested to:

RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL That

- (vi) the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) report be approved.

7F. SAFEGUARDING POLICY EXE21-053

The Executive is requested to:

RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL That

- (i) the Safeguarding Policy dated April 2022, attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be implemented with a formal review every two years; and
- (ii) the Director of Housing, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, be given delegated authority to update the Policy when changes occur, as informed through countywide safeguarding networks and lead officer/member groups

The Council has the authority to determine the recommendations set out above.

Background Papers:	None.
Reporting Person:	Julie Fisher, Chief Executive Email: julie.fisher@woking.gov.uk, Extn: 3333
Contact Person:	Frank Jeffrey, Head of Democratic Services Email: frank.jeffrey@woking.gov.uk, Extn: 3012
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Ayesha Azad Email: cllrayesha.azad@woking.gov.uk

Recommendations of the Executive and Committees

Shadow Portfolio Holder: Councillor Ann-Marie Barker
Email: cllrann-marie.barker@woking.gov.uk

Date Published: 23 March 2022

REPORT ENDS

COUNCIL – 31 MARCH 2022

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Executive Summary

Each year, the Chairman of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee prepares a report outlining the activities undertaken by the Committee. This year, the Committee has reviewed a wide range of topics and has completed both scrutiny and pre-decision scrutiny of the work of the Executive and the Council as a whole. Through its Task Groups, the Committee has continued to monitor and review the core areas of the Council's activities.

The Work Programme of the Committee is regularly reviewed and updated to take account of issues affecting the Borough at the time.

The Council is now invited to receive the report.

Recommendations

The Council is requested to:

RESOLVE That the report be received.

The Council has the authority to determine the recommendation set out above.

Background Papers: None.

Reporting Person: Councillor J Sanderson, Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Email: cllrjames.sanderson@woking.gov.uk

Contact Person: Councillor J Sanderson, Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Email: cllrjames.sanderson@woking.gov.uk

Date Published: 23 March 2022

REPORT ENDS

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Executive Summary

Each year, the Chairman of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee prepares a report outlining the activities undertaken by the Committee. This year, the Committee has reviewed a wide range of topics and has primarily completed both scrutiny and pre-decision scrutiny of the work of the Executive and the Council as a whole. The three long-standing Task Groups of the Committee – the Economic Development, Finance and Housing Task Groups – have continued to monitor and review these three core areas of the Council's activities. A further fourth Task Group – The HIF Housing Outputs Task Group which was established in January 2022, will continue to see its work through to conclusion in the 2022/2023 municipal year.

The Work Programme of the Committee is regularly reviewed and updated to take account of issues affecting the Borough at the time.

The Committee is now invited to agree the draft report for submission to the next meeting of Council, on 31 March 2022.

Recommendations

The Committee is requested to:

RESOLVE That the report be submitted to the next meeting of Council subject to any comments made by Members of the Committee.

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

Background Papers: None.

Reporting Person: Councillor James Sanderson, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Email: cllrjames.sanderson@woking.gov.uk

Contact Person: Councillor James Sanderson, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Email: cllrjames.sanderson@woking.gov.uk

Date Published: 23 March 2022

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This is the 16th Annual Report made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to the Council in accordance with its constitutional provision. The report sets out the work undertaken by the Committee and its task groups over the last year.

2.0 Summary of Work Undertaken

2.1 This year the Committee has made changes to enhance its governance and procedures following the implementations of recommendations from Dr Gifty Edila's report, the Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge review and the guidance from the MHCLG. It has tackled significant topics including scrutiny of the Housing Infrastructure Fund project, the Council's financial position following an independent report commissioned from EY and ongoing monitoring of performance especially in respect of waste management services. The Committee has made important recommendations in respect of these and other key topics in order to further the governance and transparency of the decision-making and performance of the Council.

2.2 Construction Site Noise Limits

2.3 The Committee received a report coming out of a Notice of Motion from Councillor Liam Lyons on Construction Site Noise Limits. After discussing the current process and the number of complaints that had been raised in the last 12 months the Committee came up with the following recommendations:

- Where a Prior Consent Notice has been submitted requesting noisy works outside of usual hours, Ward councillors are consulted, to the extent this is practically possible, before a decision is made.
- A quarterly report is prepared and submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee providing further details of noise complaints received.
- Improve the communication to local residents for upcoming noisy works by the use of the council website and social media and ensure consistency of the use of direct communication to local residents such as letters and door knocks

2.4 Health and Wellbeing Strategy

2.5 The Committee received a report from Julie Meme. The process for developing the Health and Wellbeing Strategy was discussed including the consultations undertaken, how the priorities had been identified and how, going forward, the impact would be measured and the achievements tracked. The five priority areas were mental health, isolation and loneliness, obesity, independent living, and the wellbeing of carers.

2.6 The importance of communicating the services available through the Council to all residents was emphasised, noting that some communities were hard to reach and difficult to engage with, particularly on those matters of health which still had a stigma attached to them. Ongoing public consultation and involvement would be arranged as the Strategy evolved, noting that Covid had limited the amount of public consultation in the drafting of the strategy.

2.7 The important role of the two Council Support Officers placed at St Peter's Hospital was emphasised as well as the importance of the educational aspects to tackling issues such as obesity, so that information is provided in an understandable way in a variety of different mediums. The particular impact on young people and their mental health was also raised and it was proposed that Officers could explore close working with groups such as Outline and the NW Surrey Short Stay School and also working with the Youth Council to explore options to support young people struggling with their mental health. .

2.8 Housing Services Review 2021

2.9 The Committee received an update on the Housing Services Review which had been undertaken over the past year. Following completion of the review, a new Housing Strategy had been prepared before being adopted by Council in July 2021 following a public consultation. The Housing Strategy set out the Council's vision for the period 2021 to 2026, covering the scope of the Authority's Housing Services and complementing other policies of the Council.

The priorities identified were:

- To provide well designed, high quality homes that were affordable and met local needs;
- To prevent homelessness and help those in housing need;
- To help people to achieve independence and wellbeing;
- To deliver an improved housing service to tenants and leaseholders;
- To enhance choice, standards and quality within the private rented sector.

2.10 The following items were discussed by the Committee:

- That the responses received from the public consultation had been positive, significantly higher than had been expected.
- The feedback received through the consultation exercise had led to subsequent changes to a number of the themes within the Policy, notably around prioritising social rents and further details around sustainability measures, as well as drawing out smarter objectives.
- The number of empty properties was discussed and details were requested of the number of empty properties for which double council tax was being paid, if available. It was noted that the Council was working to reduce the number of empty properties with partner organisations including Thameswey Housing, recognising that there were often complex reasons for a property being left empty which took a significant amount of time to address.

2.11 Progress on the viability assessment recommendation, which proposed a S106 agreement where a viability case results in fewer affordable homes in order to provide the option for the actual costs and values to be completed, was queried. Officers confirmed that S106 agreements were sought in such circumstances, noting that each agreement was subject to negotiations.

2.12 Overview and Scrutiny Guidance by the MHCLG

2.13 A number of recommendations were agreed by the Committee in respect of a review of the Council's arrangements in light of the guidance issued by the then Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in 2019 and identified a wide range of recommendations for the Committee as a means of strengthening the Council's overview and scrutiny work.

2.14 These included a formal opportunity for discussion between the Chairman of the Committee and the Leader of the Council be established, a draft Executive / Overview and Scrutiny Committee protocol be drawn up for agreement by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Executive, adoption of management arrangements for the release of, reporting on and audit of, the Scrutiny budget, developing a communications plan be established on the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and to look at the topic of the scrutiny of risk and commercialisation published by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny.

2.15 The Elections Bill 2021

2.16 The Committee considered a report which set out the proposals contained in the recently published Elections Bill. Included within the Bill were a number of high profile recommendations, including the introduction of ID to vote in polling stations. Woking Borough Council had participated in the Government's Voter Identification pilot in recent years, the findings of which had clearly informed some of the proposals in the new Bill. The Bill, if approved, would impact on the residents of the Borough, particularly in respect of the introduction of voter ID for polling stations, though Woking's participation in the pilot exercise in previous years would make the transition easier than would be the case in other Boroughs and Districts.

2.17 Review of Rutland and Thamesway Group

2.18 The Committee received a report on the Rutland and the Thamesway Group from Louise Strongitharm in October 2021. The key items noted by the Committee were that the tax and company structures would be assessed to feed into a review about what the Council required going forward, primarily founded on the view that the Council may not need the number of companies that it had currently. The cost of the independent financial advice had been covered by Thamesway. It was quite likely that the number of Companies would be reduced after the independent review. The Thamesway Business Plans were being submitted to Council in December 2021, with the recommendation to roll them forward another year so the Corporate Strategy process could be completed and business plans aligned for 2023 with the Corporate Strategy's priorities.

2.19 Celebrate Woking Review and Forward Plan

2.20 The Committee received a report on this item from Riette Thomas. The calendar of events for 2022 was discussed with the purpose of strengthening community spirit, through promoting a positive image of Woking as a place of pride for residents, businesses and visitors, increasing participation from within the community, maximising opportunities for economic development and to leave a legacy. The centrepiece of Woking's programme of events for 2022 would be the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations such as the creation of a space in the town centre, a 12 week event programme and the screening of sports events over the summer period.

2.21 Specific items raised by the Committee included the possibility to mark the 2022 Football World Cup which is taking place between November and December 2022, consideration of a time capsule for the town as part of the celebration, the plans for the villages in Woking, the involvement of local choirs, dance schools, operatic and dramatic societies and whether it is possible to have a livestream in the town centre so people can see what is going on over the Jubilee weekend. Other ideas raised were the potential for a Platinum Queen and Platinum King as a competition and how younger age groups would be involved and other uniformed services such as the Police and Fire Brigade. The best way for local residents to find out about what is going on and how to get involved was discussed. Social media would be used to promote these upcoming events and to keep information coming out.

2.22 Freedom Leisure Performance Review

2.23 The Performance Review of Freedom Leisure was presented by Cllr Kemp to the Committee and the following points were raised and discussed:

- Historically Freedom Leisure has contributed £680,000 in management fees to the Council but that due to the pandemic the service was only open for 20% of the normal operating times and services were limited. The Council had to subsidise the service and the normal

Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

management fee could not be paid and the contract was operated on an open book basis, as per Sport England's guidance.

- Noting the opening of the Eastwood Leisure Centre with more than 700 members being registered so far. It was anticipated that the Council will stop supporting the contract financially in the new year and it is estimated that the Eastwood Leisure Centre will break even in 2-3 years. The membership of the Eastwood Centre was discussed and it was confirmed that membership was still rising and that young people were frequently using the centre.
- Proposed improvements to the phone service was raised. Freedom Leisure are working to develop a mobile phone application to improve the process.
- Clarification was given regarding the support being given to Freedom Leisure which involved receiving support payments, paid one month in arrears based on actual operating costs. The contract was always run with a marginal profit margin and due to low attendances the contract is not currently viable but that given the trends in the sector it is expected that the contract will return to a break-even point early in 2022.
- The areas of the pool system had not been refurbished but they would be monitored and repaired as the need arises. Providing healthier food options at the leisure centre was also raised. The safety of the inflatables was queried and what governance would be put in place on health and safety around the use of inflatables.

2.24 Treasury Management Mid-Year Review 2021/22

2.25 This review was presented by Leigh Clarke. The following points were discussed by the Committee:

- Noting the mix of short term and long term debt financing and that the Council has an ongoing need for borrowing. There is an ongoing assessment whether to continue with long-term loans or take some as short-term as there is a need for balance in treasury management activity. The decision and process to take out long-term as compared to short-term loans was clarified which are influenced by interest rate projections. This year the borrowing strategy has been focussed on mitigating interest rate risk and not having a significant amount of short-term borrowing exposing the Council to the movements on long-term rates.
- Highlighting the difference between the actual and approved borrowing limits in that the approved limits includes all the Council needs to borrow for planned projects and gives flexibility to take borrowing at a time when the rates are favourable.
- It was discussed whether the short-term borrowing could be raised higher and the long-term limit lowered to benefit the Council. However it was noted that while the Council has taken advantage of lower short term rates last year the risk of taking out short-term borrowing is the possibility of missing out on favourable long-term rates. The approach for long term borrowing is to take 50 year annuity loans to provide stability in terms of the Council's financing costs. The 50 year period matches the nature of the investments.

2.26 Financial Review

2.27 This review came out of the Notice of Motion from the Council meeting on 29 July 2021 requesting an independent comprehensive review of the Council's assets and liabilities. EY conducted this review and they presented their report at the January 2022 meeting of the Committee. The EY report provided perspective on the Council's financial position at the end of the last financial year and the report endeavoured to provide a comprehensive and objective summary with possible observations on how these could be interpreted.

2.28 There was a thorough and searching discussion between Committee Members and the EY representatives which brought out some key themes and topics arising out of the comprehensive review. These included the overall picture the report presented of the Council's financial position, the impact of COVID-19, the valuation of assets and the approach taken to different classes of assets, the Council's exposure to risk, the liquidity of Council assets, the Council's exposure to risks in retail and commercial sector and any other risks that the Council could be exposed to but not looked into.

2.29 As a result of the Committee's discussion, there were a number of key points highlighted:

- Ensuring that the Council has the appropriate skills and capability to manage the risks arising from its investments and commercial interests
- Monitoring the economic outlook as applicable to the Council
- Being aware of legislation and regulatory risk
- Further analysis of the operating cashflows for each of the Council's investments and commercial interests.

These recommendations were taken forward as part of the consideration of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy in February and March 2022.

2.30 Joint Waste Management Performance Review

2.31 The Committee received a presentation from Sarah Beck and Jo Chauhan from Joint Waste Solutions. It covered several areas such as the continued COVID-19 response, an update on the Garden Waste collections, information on driver recruitment and a waste and recycling update.

2.32 There was an extensive discussion on the garden waste collections including the impact of the shortage of HGV drivers and other Covid related disruptions in order to establish the underlying causes for the disruption to this service over the past year. It was noted that a monthly service would be restored from April onwards.

2.33 The process of handling missed bins was also discussed in some detail including identifying the root causes of recurrent issues such as the movement of crews to unfamiliar areas and the use of agency staff and how this process could be further improved.

2.34 Other issues discussed were the plans for carton recycling, the process for extending subscriptions given the missed collections and how the collection service from flats could be improved.

2.35 Dr Gifty Edila's Report – Update on Recommendations

2.36 An update was given to the January meeting of the Committee of the actions in respect of the recommendations from Dr Gifty Edila's Report. Attention was drawn to the improved support being provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee including the employment of a part time scrutiny officer.

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2.37 Also discussed was the update of the recommendations of the Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge review and one item highlighted was the Peer Review of the Planning Service.

2.38 Lessons Learnt Through the Covid-19 Response

2.39 The Committee were presented this report by Emma Bourne and Andy Calfe on behalf of Geoff Mcmanus. Information was provided to Members about the various initiatives and actions that were carried out as a result of the pandemic including the establishment of the Borough Emergency Control Centre and the dedicated support to residents who were deemed as vulnerable.

2.40 The key points raised by Committee Members focussed on the Council's ability to meet the challenges of any future emergencies, including engagement with residents, established relationships with partners and the importance of stocks of personal protective equipment (PPE). The Committee was advised that the Council has strategies in place to ensure that the needs of the Borough can be met during an emergency of this scale and that the Council could respond swiftly to any sudden changes.

2.41 Thanks was extended by Members to the work of Woking Borough Council staff and also the many volunteers during this unprecedented time period.

2.42 Woking Borough Council's Support of Local Businesses During Covid-19

2.43 Chris Norrington presented this report which drew highlighted some of the measures Woking Borough Council took in order to support local business during the Covid-19 pandemic. This included the quick distribution of grants and how this in turn had impacted the relatively low number of businesses which closed in Woking and a significant number of new businesses opening up, with around half being food-related.

2.44 Work had been done to help support businesses in understanding how to manage cashflows and in particular too help support the hospitality sector, which had particularly struggled during this period, through actions such as the creation of the Woking Hospitality Alliance. Additional actions taken included hosting webinars with business experts and outlined how efforts were made to ensure that businesses in Woking were given a good chance of surviving and mitigating the impact of the pandemic.

2.45 The points raised by the Committee included what action was being taken to address grant fraud, noting that due diligence action was being done, and that there was a discretionary grant available which was to help address the challenges some businesses faced in meeting the grant criteria. 'MyTown Woking' was discussed and it was noted that there were close to 50 businesses on the platform however challenges continue around encouraging residents to use this platform so that local businesses benefit. The Digital Centre of Excellence was discussed and that the search for a partner for this project was still ongoing.

2.46 Enterprise M3

2.47 Stephen Martin from Enterprise M3 presented to the Committee a comprehensive overview of the work Enterprise M3 was carrying out in and around Woking. The investments that the organisation had made in the area, such as the Woking Town Centre Transport Infrastructure Package and the Woking Sustainable Transport Package were highlighted as well as some of the measures taken to support businesses including the provision of guidance, support and funding during the pandemic, the investment in loans and equity for high growth SMEs and the new net zero business support service. There is a focus on the high potential sectors which are space, animal health and gaming and with a looking forward view being provided, particularly around future funding and the Levelling Up White Paper review.

Additional points that were raised by the Committee included the measures to support the transition to low carbon, supporting less affluent areas, involvement of SMEs in the governance of the LEP, its involvement with schools and colleges and how the LEP could work more closely with Woking Council and specifically in respect of the digital incubator.

2.48 Housing Infrastructure Fund

2.49 A scrutiny review of the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) scheme was agreed by the Committee. The focus of this review was intended to provide effective constructive critical friend challenge, focussing on:

- the decisions the project was planning to make;
- how these were planned to be implemented;
- amplifying the voices and concerns of communities;
- improving outcomes; and,
- contributing to the development of a vision for the project and how this connected with related Council strategy and other change activity.

2.50 An initial review was undertaken by Internal Audit to:

- provide assurance that all the risks in respect of the scheme had been identified and that there was sufficient mitigation in place to manage the risks;
- provide assurance that due processes in decision making and project management had been applied and assess how the demands and potential conflicts of multiple major projects occurring concurrently were managed; and
- identify the wider lessons from a project of this scale with very significant external dependencies.

2.51 The internal audit report was reviewed by the Committee which noted the recommendations that would be actioned and taken forward. Some risks were identified which were not in the risk register and given that the HIF Oversight Panel does not look at the housing targets, it was agreed that this is an area that the Committee could scrutinise further, noting that there were potential risks such as a fundamental default on the funding from Homes England and also the risk of not acquiring all the property on the Triangle. There was an identified need for an oversight at a high level to monitor what should be achieved within the timescale and finance parameters, noting that the original timescale targets had not been achieved.

2.52 It was therefore agreed to set up a task group to be formed from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise in more detail the housing outputs element of the Housing Infrastructure Fund. A report from this task group is included in Appendix 2.

2.53 Governance

2.54 Throughout the year Democratic Services provided briefing papers as part of the ongoing training of members to enable us to better understand the processes of scrutiny. In addition to the usual briefing papers the Committee received two additional papers which were the Guide to Scrutiny of Risk and Commercialisation which was published by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny and the Overview and Scrutiny Guidance which was published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Officers also developed a Protocol to manage the relationship between the Executive and Overview and Scrutiny and also allocated a budget of £20,000 to the Committee.

2.55 Freedom of Information

2.56 Joanne McIntosh presented the report on Freedom of Information requests for the period. This report highlighted that the number of Freedom of Information requests received for January –

December 2021 was 632, down from 690 in the previous year. It was noted that whilst there had been a high number of FOI's which had exceeded the statutory timescale the overall number of these was lower than in 2020. Reasons for the delays in completing the requests had largely been attributed to the re-deployment of Officers to assist other service areas during the pandemic.

2.57 Complaints

2.58 Joanne McIntosh presented the report on complaints for the period of 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2021, including within this report alongside Council complaints data was data from New Vision Homes and Joint Waste Solutions. The Council received 93 complaints this year, up from 64 the previous year. It was highlighted that some of the complaints stem from the period where there had been an impact on staffing as a result of Covid-19. A request was made for:

- i. The simplification of the Joint Waste Solutions complaints data to allow for the analysis of trends
- ii. A Comparison between this year and last year for the complaints data of New Vision Homes

2.59 Tackling Climate Change Locally

2.60 The Committee received a comprehensive report written by Lara Beatie, Senior Policy Officer, and a presentation at the Committee which was delivered by Tracey Haskins, Green Infrastructure Manager. The presentation and report covered a wide-range of topics including actions which have taken place since March 2019 such as the work which had been done on transport, including the electric vehicle chargepoint pilot, Woking ranking 10th out of all the Country's district councils on a league table compiled by Climate Emergency UK which ranks the effectiveness of a council's climate emergency plans and living green walls. The presentation gave some insight into future plans and of particular note is the Climate Change Strategy Review and Continuing engagement through the Planet Woking programme and other partnership events.

2.61 The Committee raised several points during the discussions that took place such as having more details about engagement on social media, the role of renewable energy in the Council's plans and tree planting. It was agreed that the Members would be provided with further information outside of the meeting to answer any queries which could not be addressed on the night.

2.62 The Committee was unanimous in their thanks to Lara and Tracey for the work they had carried out and thanks was extended to both Councillor Howard and Councillor Davis for their roles in driving forward the work on climate change.

2.63 Performance and Financial Monitoring Information Review

2.64 Adam Walther, Head of Transformation and Digital, presented this item to the Committee and highlighted the history of the item and how it originated out of the recommendations set out in Dr Gifty Edila's report. It was noted that the review will encompass the Performance and Financial Monitoring Information ('Green Book') and other performance monitoring overall, including governance, decision making and the use of technology to improve usability and transparency.

2.65 Members were presented with a timeline of how the work will progress, with a particular highlight being the planned engagement with Members following the May 2022 election. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee are to expect an interim report at the July meeting to

comment on, with the work expected to conclude in September when a final report will go to the Executive recommending changes.

2.66 Family Centres – Service Delivery Plan

2.67 Nicola Norman, Family Centres Manager, gave a comprehensive presentation on the provision of Family Centres and the Family Support Programme in Woking detailing the support given to vulnerable families. The impact of Covid was highlighted especially in regards to childrens' mental health, domestic abuse and social isolation. Details were also given of how the Family Services team adapted to the challenges of working through the pandemic and how their working practices have changed on a permanent basis. The importance of working with key partners such as Woking Mind and Mindworks was also emphasised. Progress has been made in key areas significantly improving the outcomes for vulnerable families.

2.68 Key points raised in the Committee's discussion included how to identify vulnerable families that require help, the effect on very young children of the various lockdowns in respect of their social skills and interactions, the increased assistance required to tackle mental health and how the Family Services team work with a mixture of an in-person and virtual meetings. The Committee very much welcomed the improved outcomes for families supported by the Family Centres.

2.69 Safer Woking Partnership – Community Safety Plan

2.70 Camilla Edmiston, Community Services Manager, presented the draft Safer Woking Partnership Plan for 2022-25 highlighting the five key priority areas of Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime, Drugs and Alcohol, Reducing Reoffending and Preventing Violent Extremism. Key themes emphasised were the increased instances of fraud and domestic abuse since the pandemic, the reduced tolerance to anti-social behaviour given more home working and the impact of organised crime especially in respect of drugs. The local police inspector Kit Moc was also in attendance.

2.71 There was a wide ranging discussion by the Committee with a number of key issues highlighted such as how to alert people to take sensible precautions but without increasing the fear of crime unnecessarily, how to tackle re-offending rates, the high public profile of anti-social behaviour and drug-taking, the perceived lack of police presence on the streets and the difficulties in communicating with the public when crimes are reported e.g. in respect of drug hotspots in order not to prejudice ongoing police investigations. The role of local ward councillors in engaging with the public and managing expectations as to what is possible to tackle and the likely timescales was also emphasised. The Committee requested that the police take a look at whether it is possible to provide more ongoing communication to the public when crimes are reported without prejudicing investigations. The Committee also welcomed the offer from Inspector Moc for walkabouts between local neighbourhood officers and members of the public in order to increase engagement with the local community. The Safer Woking Partnership Plan was endorsed with thanks given to Camila Edmiston and team and also to Inspector Moc and the local police.

3.0 Membership

3.1 The Constitution permits membership of 9 councillors. The membership this year has been: Councillor J Sanderson (Chairman), Councillor S Hussain (Vice-Chairman), Councillor J Brown, Councillor S Dorsett, Councillor R Mohammed, Councillor M I Raja, Councillor R Leach, Councillor A Kirby and Councillor E Nicholson.

3.2 Attendance at meetings this year has generally been good and there was significant participation by Committee members in setting subjects for the agenda through the year. The attendance record for the Members of the Committee is set out at Appendix 1.

4.0 Task Groups

4.1 Scrutiny of the Council's activities often takes place in task groups. There are currently four task groups which come under the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- Economic Development Task Group (Chairman Councillor D Roberts)
- Finance Task Group, (Chairman Councillor J Sanderson)
- Housing Task Group (Chairman Councillor A Barker)
- HIF Housing Outputs Task Group (Chairman Councillor A Kirby)

4.2 Appendix 2 contains summary reports by the respective Chairs on the activities and objectives of each Task Group for the year.

5.0 Further Areas of Scrutiny

5.1 The main subjects are shown in 2.1 above. In addition, the Committee monitors financial and other indicators included in the Performance and Financial Monitoring Information ("Green book") which is a monthly set of management information and also looks at the treasury mid-year review. The work programme published in the agenda for the Committee meeting on 21 March 2022 gives a view looking forward at the work of the Committee during the next municipal year. There are some items in place for the new Committee to deliberate on, such as the Communications Plan and the possibility of modifying the format of the Complaints item so that the Committee receives this report twice a year, as it had done historically. It has been left to the next Chairman and Vice-Chairman to take these considerations further.

6.0 Acknowledgements

6.1 As Chair I would like to thank all Members of the Committee for their participation and contributions through the year and particularly the Vice Chair, Cllr Saj Hussain, who ably supported the Chair.

6.2 The contributions from the Task Groups is a vital part of the Committee's work. The three standing Task Groups; Housing, Economic Development and Finance continue their important work of scrutinising these areas in more detail. I would also like to thank Members who have participated in the new Task Group on HIF Housing Outputs. This has been a key part of our scrutiny work this year.

6.3 Many thanks to the outstanding support from Officers throughout the year, in particular the new Scrutiny Officer Adam Ahmed, Giorgio Framalitto, Frank Jeffrey, Kuldip Channa, Gareth John and Joanne McIntosh

6.4 The Committee would like to thank the guests who have attended the meetings through the year and enabled a more in-depth approach to the topics covered. They provided significant information and insight for further scrutiny.

6.5 Also thanks to those Portfolio Holders who attended Committee meetings to support and to add insights, in particular Cllr Kevin Davis who attended several meetings throughout the year.

7.0 Conclusions

7.1 This Committee has continued to make a significant contribution to the governance of the Council and providing robust scrutiny and challenge which will result in change to Council processes. The increased governance and support of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee itself which was put in place this year is very welcome and enables the Committee a greater

REPORT ENDS

Attendance at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2021/22

Date	Committee Members in Attendance	
24 May 2021	Cllr J Sanderson (Ch) Cllr S Hussain (V-Ch) Cllr A Kirby Cllr R Mohammed Cllr E Nicholson	Cllr S Dorsett Cllr R Leach Cllr J Brown Cllr M I Raja
07 June 2021	Cllr J Sanderson (Ch) Cllr S Hussain (V-Ch) Cllr A Kirby Cllr R Mohammed Cllr E Nicholson	Cllr S Dorsett Cllr R Leach Cllr J Brown Cllr M I Raja
12 July 2021	Cllr J Sanderson (Ch) Cllr S Hussain (V-Ch) Cllr A Kirby Cllr R Mohammed Cllr E Nicholson	Cllr S Dorsett Cllr R Leach Cllr J Brown Cllr M I Raja
13 September 2021	Cllr J Sanderson (Ch) Cllr S Hussain (V-Ch) Cllr A Kirby	Cllr S Dorsett Cllr J Brown Cllr M I Raja
18 October 2021	Cllr J Sanderson (Ch) Cllr S Hussain (V-Ch) Cllr A Kirby Cllr R Mohammed Cllr E Nicholson	Cllr S Dorsett Cllr R Leach Cllr J Brown Cllr M I Raja
22 November 2021	Cllr J Sanderson (Ch) Cllr S Hussain (V-Ch) Cllr A Kirby Cllr E Nicholson	Cllr S Dorsett Cllr R Leach Cllr J Brown Cllr M I Raja
24 January 2022	Cllr J Sanderson (Ch) Cllr S Hussain (V-Ch) Cllr A Kirby Cllr E Nicholson	Cllr S Dorsett Cllr R Leach Cllr J Brown Cllr M I Raja
21 February 2022	Cllr J Sanderson (Ch) Cllr S Hussain (V-Ch) Cllr A Kirby Cllr E Nicholson Cllr M I Raja	Cllr S Dorsett Cllr R Leach Cllr R Mohammed Cllr J Brown
21 March 2022	Cllr J Sanderson (Ch) Cllr S Hussain (V-Ch) Cllr A Kirby Cllr E Nicholson Cllr M I Raja	Cllr S Dorsett Cllr R Leach Cllr R Mohammed Cllr J Brown

Reports of the Task Groups

Housing Task Group

Chairman – Cllr Ann-Marie Barker

Purpose	Membership
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, Barker (Ch), Bridgeman, Dorsett, Harlow, Hughes, Kirby and Whitehand (V-Ch)

Annual Summary of the Housing Task Group

Housing Strategy

The new Housing Strategy came to the first meeting of the task group. The group noted the work of all those who had contributed to the strategy and the good level of public contribution on the strategy.

Housing Services In-House

Throughout the year the task group had regular updates on progress to bring housing services back under Council control following the conclusion of the New Vision Homes contract. Content and process of the tenders for various aspects of the services provided by NVH were reviewed. Looking ahead the new service seeks to deliver an improved process, greater responsiveness, better timing of repairs and a higher proportion of first time fixes.

New Vision Homes

A number of staff have left NVH as the contract end nears but the Council is keen to retain key staff and a full TUPE programme is in place to provide job security.

Affordable Housing

A number of small schemes were delivered during the year and several others are in train with completion this year or next. The group were pleased to see the slow but steady stream of affordable delivery and the efforts of officers to meet targets for affordable homes.

Empty Homes

The group welcomed a new impetus to bring empty homes back into use after this initiative had been affected by Covid.

Housing Assistance

An updated Housing Assistance scheme was reviewed prior to going to Executive. The ability for a wide range of professionals to agree an assistance programme and the extension of the scheme to support mental health was particularly appreciated.

First Homes

First Homes is a new government scheme which is intended to replace shared ownership. It offers a discount of up to 30% on home purchases, on properties up to a value of £250k. The scheme is particularly aimed at first time buyers, key workers and those who have served in the armed forces. As this scheme takes priority over others there is concern that it may impact other affordable provision. The cost of homes in the borough means a limited number of properties will be eligible for the scheme.

Selective Licensing

There have been no further developments on the Selective Licensing scheme during the year. Decisions have yet to be made on any extension of the scheme.

Moving Forward

In the year ahead it will be important for the group to carefully track progress of housing services as they are run in-house. It will need to ensure all aspects of the service deliver for residents and that there is an effective complaints process in place. The group should continue to review the delivery of affordable homes, consider the success of selective licensing and whether the scheme should be extended and track First Homes as this scheme comes on stream.

Economic Development Task Group

Chairman – Cllr Dale Roberts

Purpose	Membership
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 (V-Ch), Barker, Davis, Johnson, Mohammed, Roberts (Ch) and Whitehand.

Annual Summary of the Economic Development Task Group

Introduction

The Economic Development Task Group met on the 25 August, and 4th November and will meet once more, on the 23rd March, before the end of the municipal year.

A new chair, cllr Roberts and vice-chair, cllr Ali were appointed at the first meeting and the group reviewed a draft of the *Economic Development Action Plan* focused on activity that would enable local, post-pandemic economic recovery and capitalise on emerging opportunities. The plan aligns with the *Woking Town Centre Masterplan*, the *Five-Year Plan* and the *Digital Strategy* and is an interim action plan covering the period to the end of 2023.

The plan requires internal support from officers in Digital and Transformation, Estates Management, Leisure Services, the Masterplan Project Team, Integrated Transport and the Business Liaison Team. It also requires support from borough partners including Woking Chamber of Commerce, Jobcentre Plus, EM3, training providers and commercial agents and landowners.

Activity is focused on the following priorities.

1. **Focus on business.** Retaining and supporting Woking's existing businesses and attracting new businesses

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2. **Build on business advantages and skilled people.** Support for local employers to recruit and retain local talent, promoting careers in the local economy and supporting local employment.
3. **Future proofing town and village centres.** Promoting the town as a centre for living, leisure, retail, commerce, and culture. Also supporting villages as distinct communities for commerce, retail, and services.
4. **Making our place the place to be.** Making Woking a desirable place to live with a balanced focus on health, wellbeing, environment, physical and digital infrastructure.
5. **Destination Woking.** Building a unique identity for Woking that attracts investment, and visitors and encourages residents and businesses to engage with the borough and its economy.

The plan was approved in September 2021 and an update on activity follows.

Focus on Business

Priority 1 actions are designed to sustain and grow Woking's businesses. These include continuing the provision of free advice through *Start Up Woking*, continuing with the *Woking Works* business directory, and the provision of webinars and workshops including guidance for hybrid working and how to use the Google My Business platform. The borough also hosted Tedx Woking in May.

As pandemic restrictions lift, the opportunity to run in-person events is returning. The borough's hosting of the *Winter Warmer* with Woking and Surrey Chambers of Commerce was impacted by last-minute pandemic restrictions related to the omicron variant but *Woking Means Business* was able to go ahead in October 2021 located at the Woking Leisure Centre.

Since April 2021, officers in the BLT have had over 600 engagements with local businesses predominantly with those impacted by pandemic restriction such as retail and hospitality including updates on grant or support schemes. The Council Leadership Team (CLT) and BLT are also engaged with key employers including one-to-one meetings with the Council's CEO.

Significantly, officers are also exploring a Green Tech business incubator and discussions are well-progressed with a candidate provider to run it within the town centre providing support to green technology businesses.

Build on Business Advantage, People and Skills

Support has continued for Woking Works job board including promoting local recruitment events for Hilton and Mountjoy. BLT have already met with the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to make introduce M&S, Hilton, Island House, and Black and Irons to promote vacancies. Discussions have also been held with Brooklands College and DWP to explore offering training for the unemployed with ambitions in the hospitality sector.

Woking Works also partnered with Woking Mind to offer mental health support for local employees returning to the office.

Future Proofing

Woking Shopping Summer Zone activities attracted attention between June and September resulted in increased footfall and anecdotal feedback has been extremely positive. The opening of Victoria Place has been delayed until later in 2022. The Council and various partner marketing teams are coordinating their preparations.

Officers continue to engage with village businesses and particularly new businesses. There are new lettings along Oyster Lane in Byfleet, Boundary Business Centre in Maybury, and Marshall Parade,

Pyrford. Several relocations have taken place within the Sheerwater business parks, a new Sicialian café opened on Station Approach, West Byfleet. Horsell remains busy, and St Johns reports mixed views on trading levels.

Woking, the place to be

The Woking Community Memorial Tree project was approved in November 2021. Trees and landscaping were completed in the autumn in the new urban open space that forms part of Victoria Square. Urban greening has been completed in the town centre, with a second living wall at Dukes Court completed in the summer. Thameswey have installed a photovoltaic array and sedum green roof system at Elizabeth House.

Action Surrey, part of the Thameswey Group, was successful in a consortium bid on behalf of Surrey districts and Boroughs under the BEIS Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Scheme. It was awarded £6.2m under Phase 1A of the funding, and a further £3m under Phase 1B. The project, Green Jump Surrey, tackles the energy efficiency of low income, fuel poor households across the county.

The Council has installed car charging points at Dukes, Sportsbox and the new Eastwood Leisure Centre. SCC Highways has submitted a 'mini Holland' cycle route scheme application to the Department of Transport, linking the Town Centre to Goldsworth Park under the Government's Tranche 3 Active Travel fund.

Destination Woking

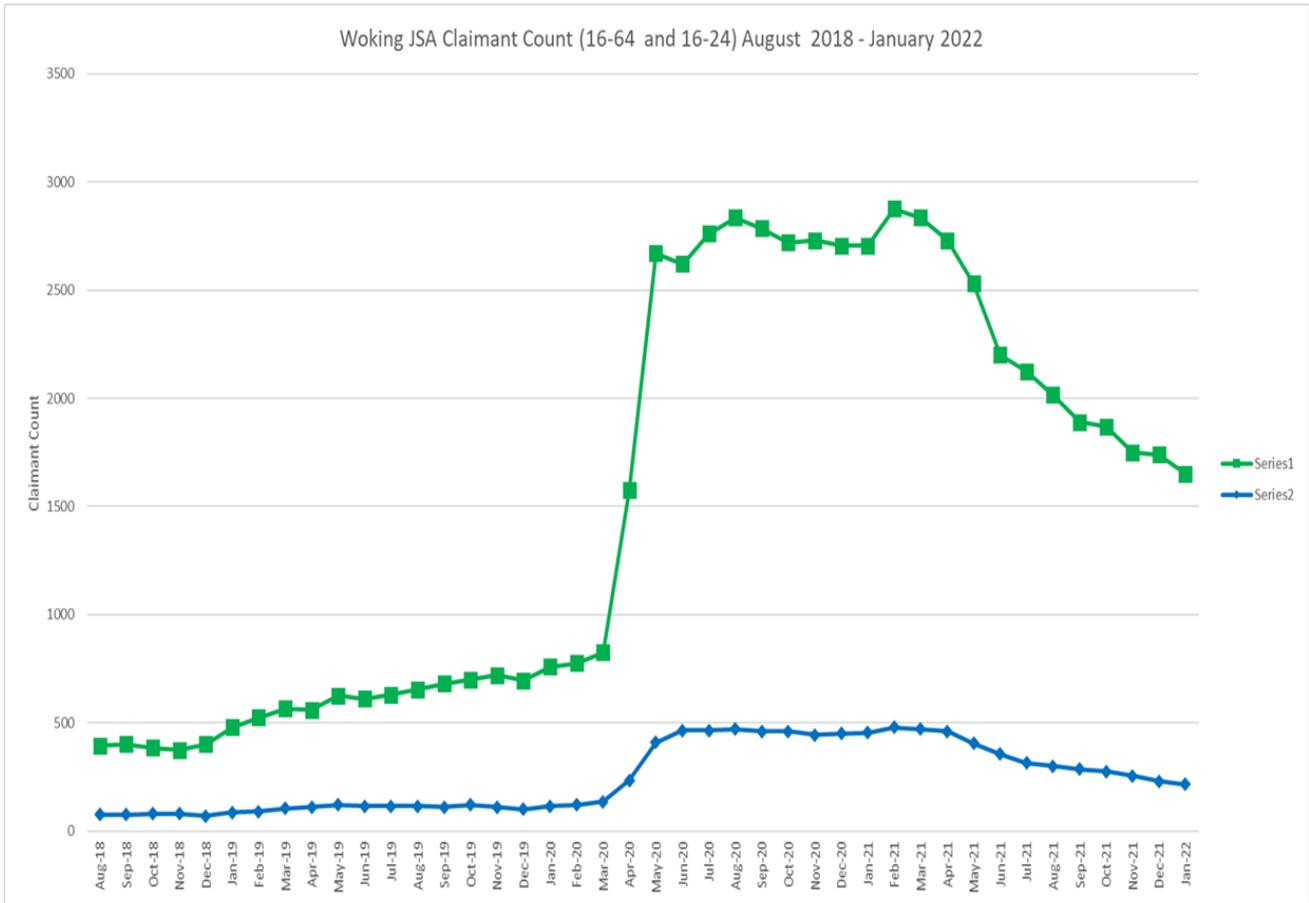
Priority 5 – Destination Woking - is scheduled to start in April 2022, with an implementation start date of September 2022.

Key Outcomes

JSA Claimant Count

March to August 2021, the JSA claimant count levels fell from the highs of the 2020 pandemic decreasing through to January 2022. However, the number is still higher than 2018-19 pre-pandemic.

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Car Park Footfall

Since March 2021, car parking footfall (Shoppers, Brewery Road and Victoria Way) has started to return to pre-pandemic levels of March 2020.

Month	2020/ Footfall	2021	2021/ Footfall	2022	Variance
Mar	62491		36577		-41%
Apr	36410		58526		61%
May	47678		54754		15%
Jun	16804		51272		205%
Jul	16103		71657		345%
Aug	69148		65313		-6%
Sep	64656		71630		11%
Oct	52893		86472		63%
Nov	36364		74658		105%
Dec	56992		111973		96%

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Jan	17833	78707	341%
Feb	16689	87453	424%

The Finance Task Group

Chairman – Cllr James Sanderson

Purpose	Membership
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 Azad, Aziz, Davis (V-Ch), Johnson, Kirby, Sanderson (Ch) and Whitehand.

Annual Summary of the Finance Task Group

The task group has discussed and reviewed a number of key items through the year in the context of the increased focus on the Council's finances given the impact of the pandemic and the significant projects being undertaken.

- The ongoing impact of the pandemic on the Council's finances in particular the collection of commercial rents, car parking income and the overall financial position was a key theme of the Task Group's focus this year and it received regular updates through the year.
- The continued delay in the completion of the audit of the prior year (2019/20) accounts of Woking Council was highlighted and dissatisfaction expressed of the current situation. The 2020/21 accounts were reviewed and the adjustment to the fair value of commercial properties of £43m and higher pension liabilities were highlighted.
- The General Fund, Investment Programme and Medium Term Financial Strategy papers were reviewed in advance of their approval by the Executive and Full Council. The progress of the Fit for the Future programme and an update of the savings targets over the next 3 years were noted. An improved reserves position was welcomed but there is still a gap between income and expenditure that would require the use of reserves. A lower Covid provision for 2022/23 being required for car parking income and commercial rents was also noted.
- Additional points noted as part of this review were that the Government Funding settlement was only for one year and similar to last year and there is a potential change to Minimum Revenue Provision rules which could impact current and future borrowing of Woking Council.
- The Comprehensive Statement prepared by EY was discussed by the Task Group following the review by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the issue of cashflows for the operating companies was highlighted.
- Review of Fees and Charges was covered by the Task Group noting there was a significant proportion of the proposed increases related to car parking and there were inherent uncertainties post pandemic. Also noted was the encouragement of electric vehicles by having no current charge in place.
- There has been an ongoing review of the Victoria Square project specifically in respect of the delays in this project. An updated financial model will be reviewed by the Task Group once

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available. There is also a review of the Governance and Strategic options of this project being conducted by EY.

The Task Group also covered other standing items such as:

- Review of the Performance and Financial Monitoring (Green Book) reports with major items highlighted.
- Report of Irrecoverable Debts which is reviewed each quarter and no major issues were noted.
- Bi-annual review of Treasury Management noting the Council benefiting from low interest rates from short term borrowing earlier in the year that has been switched to long term loans as the year has progressed.
- The review of commercial rents was particularly relevant given the effect of the pandemic. It has been in line with the revised forecast for the non-recoverability of rents included in the Covid provision.

HIF Housing Outputs Task Group

Chairman – Cllr Adam Kiirby

Purpose	Membership
The HIF Housing Outputs Task Group had been established following the decision to set-up a task group to look at the housing element of the Housing Infrastructure Fund.	Cllrs Aziz, Forster, Harlow, Johnson, Kirby (Ch), Mohammed, Whitehand (V-Ch).

Annual Summary of the HIF Housing Outputs Task Group

Introduction

As of 14th March 2022 the group had already met twice – on 2nd February and 1st March. The group is due to meet for a final time this municipal year on 17 March 2022 and following this meeting an interim Chairman's report will be brought to the last meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the municipal year, to take place on 21st March 2022. Given the short timeframe in the latter part of this effective municipal year, both officers and members have worked hard to fit in these three meetings into less than two calendar months – alongside considerable work in between these formal meetings of the group.

Outcomes of 2 February Meeting

The group's interim objectives has been to list and assess relevant risks, link these areas of investigation to other relevant WBC activities and mitigations, and provide an interim report.

In the first meeting members received an initial briefing on the legal framework of the HIF agreement, setting out areas for further investigation into the legal aspects of housing delivery under HIF. Members also received an initial briefing of the headline approximate financial numbers of the HIF agreement, including the £95m grant total from Homes England, £10m agreed contribution by Network Rail, and around £10m in initially planned borrowing by WBC to support housing elements of the scheme.

Members agreed to cover a further range of relevant sub-topics to help understand HIF housing outputs and any risks to these:

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- Planning implications and linkages/independence from HIF
- Housing strategy and affordable housing elements
- Development viability and site design
- A legal briefing in further detail
- Financial implications of different housing delivery and legal outcomes

Officers were also tasked with supporting the group and Chairman with an interim 'SWOT' analysis, briefing from Homes England, and an initial consideration of a comparative study with other local authorities making the most of the HIF funding.

Outcomes of 1 March Meeting

Our second meeting to date focused on a briefing from Jonathan Medlin, representing Homes England which runs the central-government instituted Housing Infrastructure Fund, from the bidding stage until completions. Jon has been a major point of contact for WBC during the ongoing work to envisage and now to deliver the HIF housing outputs.

As the main focus of this meeting, the group has now been briefed on the perspective of Homes England on Woking's HIF housing outputs, but also on how Homes England treats any such scheme – and on this organisation's metrics of success and a good partnership relationship. This discussion enabled an initial comparison of Woking's HIF housing elements with other schemes nationally, including its similarities and many differences. The group has also now explored the relationship between HIF and planning – separate issues though highly interlinked – and the implications of HIF housing outputs for the borough's other sites and broader housing targets.

Members have also now been able to query the timeline of the HIF housing outputs as originally conceived and taking an initial look at how that has evolved since. Members were able to link initial examples of 'default' under the scheme and options for mitigating this risk, as well as the implications of those mitigations (e.g. changes to timeframe).

The group has also been able to further clarify its understanding of the difference between WBC-owned and unowned sites, alongside the legal differences in terms of HIF housing outputs.

Outcomes of 17 March Meeting

The group's final meeting of the year focused on summing up work conducted by members and officers to date, in relation to the Terms of Reference, and ahead of the Chairman's oral update to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The group discussed their thoughts on the Homes England presentation, and it was noted that a good focus for the group should be on the risk to the Council on 'owned' sites, given that with regards to the non-owned sites the Council had to work to their 'best endeavours'. A further point of discussion was regarding a comparative study and whilst it was highlighted that Woking was unique with its HIF project a task for officers to complete in time for the June meeting would be to look into other HIF sites and analyse their processes, challenges, risks and learnings which could be taken away and applied to the Woking project.

The group considered the implications of a 'SWOT' analysis completed by officers outlining in list form the major Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats posed by HIF Housing Outputs. The group had a useful discussion on various elements of the SWOT analysis, with particular attention being drawn to the Masterplan, the planning process and the types of properties being developed.

A discussion took place on affordable housing in relation to the HIF project and the group focused their discussion on themes ranging from planning permission relating to the affordable housing sites,

Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

the percentage of affordable housing on owned sites and observations on the affordable element in general such as the reduction in size of 'the Triangle site'.

The task group agreed that the next meeting should be held on the 15 June 2022 and a full interim report is likely to be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 6 June 2022.

COUNCIL – 31 MARCH 2022

ANNUAL REPORT BY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Executive Summary

Each year, Woking Borough Council appoints elected Councillors to outside bodies as representatives for the Council. The appointments were reviewed by a Member Task Group in 2014 which presented a series of recommendations to the Executive for determination by Council. In June 2014, the Council adopted the recommendations which had the effect of reducing the overall number of appointments made. This was in line with the Council's objective of rationalising all positions held by Councillors by 2016, to take into account the change in the size of the Council from 36 Councillors to 30 Councillors.

The Council also adopted a formal reporting process for those Councillors appointed to Outside Bodies, with an annual report to be presented to Council. This paper sets out the reports provided by the Council's representatives for the 2021/22 Municipal Year.

Recommendations

The Council is requested to:

RESOLVE That the report be noted.

The Council has the authority to determine the recommendation set out above.

Background Papers:	None.
Reporting Person:	Julie Fisher, Chief Executive Email: julie.fisher@woking.gov.uk, Extn: 3301
Contact Person:	Frank Jeffrey, Head of Democratic Services Email: frank.jeffrey@woking.gov.uk, Extn: 3012
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Ayesha Azad Email: cllrayesha.azad@woking.gov.uk
Shadow Portfolio Holder:	Councillor A-M Barker Email: cllrann-marie.barker@woking.gov.uk
Date Published:	23 March 2022

Annual Report by Council Representatives on Outside Bodies

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 In 2014 the Council reviewed its scheme of appointments to outside bodies, following a question from Councillor Cross at Council in December 2013. A Member Task Group was established to undertake the review.
- 1.2 A report by the Task Group was considered by the Executive on 1 May 2014 before being determined by Council at its meeting on 9 June 2014. The recommendations were supported by the Council and a series of changes were adopted.
- 1.3 Details of the appointments for 2021/22 are set out in Appendix 1 to this report.

2.0 The Reports

- 2.1 In February 2022 the Members appointed to Outside Bodies were asked to complete a report on the activities of the Body to which they had been appointed. A template was provided to assist the Councillors. The following reports have been received and are attached at Appendix 2 onwards:
 - Appendix 2 – Police and Crime Commissioner Panel
 - Appendix 3 – Basingstoke Canal Joint Management Committee
 - Appendix 4 – Fair Oaks Airport Consultative Committee
 - Appendix 5 – Woking Access Group
 - Appendix 6 – Ashford and St Peters
 - Appendix 7 – Woking People of Faith
 - Appendix 8 – Woking Palace Consultative Committee
 - Appendix 9 – Woking Community Transport
- 2.2 In considering the reports, it should be noted that the comments have been made by the Councillors appointed to the Outside Bodies and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Council.

3.0 Corporate Strategy

- 3.1 The Council's Corporate Plan identifies the ambition to achieve a healthy, inclusive and engaged community ("People"). The representation of Elected Members on a range of community organisations contributes towards this ambition, enabling direct engagement and representation.

4.0 Implications

Finance and Risk

- 4.1 There are no finance or risk implications arising from this report.

Equalities and Human Resources

- 4.2 There are no equalities or human resource implications arising from this report.

Annual Report by Council Representatives on Outside Bodies

Legal

4.3 Legal Services have reviewed this report and have not raised any issues.

5.0 Engagement and Consultation

5.1 The reports that form Appendix 2 onwards were drawn up by the Elected Member representatives on the outside bodies. The reports may have been completed with the assistance of other Members or the body to which the Council has been appointed.

REPORT ENDS

Appointments to Outside Bodies 2021/22

Ad Hoc Authorities and Committees

Ashford & St Peters Hospital NHS Trust

Councillor Deborah Hughes (Retires May 2022)

Basingstoke Canal Joint Management Committee

Councillor Kevin Davis
(Sub: Councillor Steve Dorsett)

Councillor Rob Leach
(Sub: Councillor Ken Howard)

Corporate Trustee – Woking Palace

Councillor Steve Dorsett

Countryside Partnership Board

Councillor Kevin Davis
(Sub: Councillor Ken Howard)

Fairoaks Airport Consultative Committee

Councillor Ken Howard
(Sub: Councillor Steve Dorsett)

Farnborough Airport

Councillor Ann-Marie Barker

Maybury Centre

Councillor Rashid Mohammed (2022)

Councillor M Ilyas Raja (2023)

National Parking Adjudications Service Joint Committee

Councillor Steve Dorsett
(Sub: Councillor Ken Howard)

Police and Crime Panel

(One representative appointed annually)

Councillor Will Forster

Shopmobility

Councillor Will Forster
(Sub: Councillor Saj Hussain)

South East Employers

Councillor Colin Kemp
(Sub: Councillor Ann-Marie Barker)

Annual Report by Council Representatives on Outside Bodies

Sport Woking (formally Woking Sports Council)

Councillor Colin Kemp

Councillor Ian Johnson

Surrey County Playing Field Association

Councillor Colin Kemp

Sutton Green Village Hall Management Committee

Councillor Simon Ashall

Councillor Will Forster

Woking Access Group

Councillor Saj Hussain

Councillor Rob Leach

Woking Community Transport

Councillor Josh Brown

Councillor Deborah Hughes

Woking People of Faith Forum

Councillor Louise Morales (Retires 2026)

Woking Youth Council

Councillor Josh Brown

Councillor Rob Leach

Councillor Tahir Aziz (Substitute)

Ex-Officio Appointments

Ex-Officio Appointments	
Allotments Consultation Group	Councillor Saj Hussain
Armed Forces Champion	Councillor Will Forster Councillor Amanda Boote
Goldsworth Park Lake & Recreation Ground Users Group	Councillor Ann-Marie Barker Councillor Chitra Rana Councillor James Sanderson
Joint Cttee for Oversight of Delivery of Surrey Public Authority Services	Councillor Ayesha Azad
Lakeview Working Group	Councillor Ann-Marie Barker Councillor Chitra Rana Councillor James Sanderson
Ostensible Authority Standing Panel	Councillor Ayesha Azad Councillor Simon Ashall Councillor Colin Kemp

Annual Report by Council Representatives on Outside Bodies

Surrey Climate Change Partnership Members Group	Councillor Kevin Davis
Surrey Waste Partnership	Councillor Kevin Davis
Surrey Waste Partnership – Joint Waste Collection Services Cttee	Councillor Kevin Davis
Thames Basin Heaths Joint Strategic Partnership	Councillor Gary Elson
Transport for Woking Board	Councillor Colin Kemp
Woking Chamber of Commerce	Councillor Kevin Davis
Woking Palace Consultative Panel	Councillor Gary Elson Councillor Will Forster Councillor Deborah Hughes Councillor Louise Morales

Outside Body:	Surrey Police and Crime Panel
Councillor(s):	Will Forster
Date Completed:	15 th March 2022
Meetings Attended:	30 th June 2021, 15 th September 2021, 27 th October 2021, 24 th November 2021 and 4 th February 2022.
Description of Outside Body:	The Surrey Police and Crime Panel (the Panel) regularly meets to scrutinise the Police and Crime Commissioner (Commissioner or PCC). The Panel is made up of representatives from each of the 12 local authorities in Surrey, as well as two independent members. The Panel does not directly scrutinise the Police, just the Commissioner.
Update on Recent Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deputy Commissioner Following the Police and Crime Commissioner election, the PCC appointed a Deputy PCC. The Deputy PCC attended a confirmation hearing with the Panel and answered questions from Panel members on their suitability for the role. Following this hearing, the Panel wrote to the Commissioner recommending against the appointment of the proposed Deputy, however the PCC decided to press ahead with the appointment. - Moving headquarters Late last year, the Commissioner and Police announced they have dropped plans to move the Police's Headquarters from Mount Browne in Guildford to Leatherhead. The Police are now looking at redeveloping Mount Browne and will seek to sell the Leatherhead site. This has a particular impact on Woking, as Woking Police Station will now close later than originally planned. - Budget In February, the Panel approved the PCC's Council Tax rise of 3.5%. However, the Panel asked the Commissioner to change course on using some of the Council Tax increase and drawing on reserves to expand their own office's budget by 17% to £3.3 million a year. - Police numbers, solving crime and call delays

Annual Report by Council Representatives on Outside Bodies

	<p>Throughout the last year, the Panel has expressed its concern about the level of Police numbers, delays at getting through to 101 and crime statistics.</p> <p>Surrey Police are having to make do with 50 fewer frontline staff than they need to address performance issues.</p> <p>The stats of a positive outcome for vulnerable people who are victim of crime is extremely low, and at the time of writing there is a 5-minute average waiting time for 101 callers.</p>
Future Activities:	<p>The Panel will be scrutinising the 'Building the Future' programme, both looking back at the now aborted move to Leatherhead and the future redevelopment of Mount Browne at Guildford.</p> <p>At its next meeting in April, the Panel will also review the Police and Crime Plan, look at police complaints reform and police recruitment and workforce planning.</p>
Matters of Note or Concern:	<p>Police performance, property issues and the PCC listening to the Panel.</p>

REPORT ENDS

Annual Report by Council Representatives on Outside Bodies

Appendix 3

Outside Body:	Basingstoke Canal Joint Management Committee
Councillor(s):	Kevin Davis & Rob Leach
Date Completed:	08/03/22
Meetings Attended:	26/11/21 (only one this year as the other scheduled meeting was cancelled due to not all people required being appointed).
Description of Outside Body:	<p>The Basingstoke Canal Joint Management Committee (JMC) meets twice a year and has the following terms of reference:</p> <p>The Committee will exercise the functions of the Cabinet in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The oversight of the completion of the restoration of the Basingstoke Canal; ○ The management and maintenance of the Basingstoke Canal as an environmental navigational and recreational asset in accordance with the policy and budgetary framework set for the Committee; and ○ The balancing of the interests of all users of the Basingstoke Canal and conservation of the natural environment. <p>The Committee membership consists of eight County Councillors (four from Surrey and four from Hampshire), who represent divisions which include the Basingstoke Canal in their area. There are also Borough and District Councillors and representatives from special interest groups on the Committee.</p>
Update on Recent Activities	<p>The annual risk register was approved.</p> <p>The County Councils' Capital Programme to date has significantly reduced the backlog of asset maintenance on the Canal. Continued inspection and cyclical maintenance should reduce the risk of unforeseen failures. The forward capital programme sets out the completion of two major backlog items in Hampshire and a moving towards a more cyclical maintenance phase in Surrey.</p> <p>Much tree work has gone on focussing on ensuring trees are safe. Contractors have been engaged to deal with issues discovered during inspections.</p> <p>There have been some staffing issues and currently there are vacancies for rangers on the canal. The canal is unable to operate without sufficient rangers.</p>

Annual Report by Council Representatives on Outside Bodies

	BCS has formally kicked off the fundraising to replace the Woking trip boat Kitty
Future Activities:	Continue to keep the canal navigable. Continue the cyclical maintenance. Make the canal safe to use for all forms of traffic. Keep looking for ways to improve the financial viability.
Matters of Note or Concern:	Budget is tight and there is little room for unplanned urgent maintenance works.

REPORT ENDS

Annual Report by Council Representatives on Outside Bodies

Appendix 4

Outside Body:	Fairoaks Airport Consultative Committee
Councillor(s):	Ken Howard
Date Completed:	10/03/2022
Meetings Attended:	4 meetings since May 2021 (Aug 21 meeting attended by deputy).
Description of Outside Body:	A committee comprised of airport management and local stakeholders for the examination of any factors that may affect the operation of the airport, airport activities that may affect the local or wider community and received complaints.
Update on Recent Activities	<p>There have been few complaints, the vast majority being generated by one person. Those that have been received have concerned persistent noise and low overflying. All complaints have been answered and investigated where necessary. Some low flying complaints appear to have been sparked by the complainer's misunderstanding of aircraft tracking data available on the WWW.</p> <p>With regard to the proposed "Garden Village". The latest version of the proposed Draft Local Plan for Surrey Heath does not include plans for the development so, if the Local Plan is accepted, then one can assume that the "Garden Village" project will not go ahead.</p> <p>The committee have been advised that there is still further work to be done to address the accommodation needs of Travellers. This work will inform the draft Local Plan.</p>
Future Activities:	<p>The site of the airport is in dual ownership with separate landlords owning the buildings and the runway and taxiways.</p> <p>The Building's owner has refused to renew the leases for the hangar, the fire crew station and the control tower. The hangar has been leased to another company and a question was raised as to whether or not that is a legal change of use.</p> <p>The Airport has purchased a mobile control Tower and a building for the Fire service and these are installed with a temporary power supply at the other end of the runway which is, apparently a better location, enabling the continued operation of the airport.</p>
Matters of Note or Concern:	

REPORT ENDS

Annual Report by Council Representatives on Outside Bodies

Appendix 5

Outside Body:	Woking Access Group
Councillor(s):	Rob Leach & Saj Hussain (as County Councillor)
Date Completed:	09/03/22
Meetings Attended:	8/6/21, 15/9/21, 9/3/22 (all held on Zoom)
Description of Outside Body:	<p>Woking Access Forum is an organisation that supports Woking Borough Council, Surrey County Council, the NHS (Surrey Heartlands) and the voluntary sector to resolve any access issues. It works towards an inclusive, accessible environment, enabling disabled and non-disabled people to participate equally and lead the style of life which they choose.</p>
Update on Recent Activities	<p>Regular updates on Victoria Square development were given, highlighting provision for those with a disability including the Hilton Hotel design.</p> <p>New town centre blue badge parking arrangements were kept under review.</p> <p>The Guildford Road bridge development and its impact on those with a disability was regularly discussed.</p> <p>The new Eastwood Sports Centre in Sheerwater was visited ensuring its suitability for those with a disability.</p> <p>Bus services were discussed, including bus shelters, lack of links to Ashford hospital and the loss of routes.</p>
Future Activities:	<p>Ongoing oversight of the town centre and Guildford Road developments with a view to ensuring ease of access and use by those with a disability, including during construction period.</p> <p>The new Thameswey housing rules regarding support & assistance dogs as well as borough taxi licensing rules on their being carried will need to be re-examined.</p> <p>A disability audit will be carried out on Horsell Common wetlands.</p> <p>Disabled access to Brookwood station still requires funding.</p>

REPORT ENDS

Annual Report by Council Representatives on Outside Bodies

Appendix 6

Outside Body:	Ashford and St Peters Council nominated Governor
Councillor(s):	Deborah Hughes
Date Completed:	11.3.22
Meetings Attended this municipal year.	<p>121 with Chairman</p> <p>Council of Governors pre meets</p> <p>Council of Governors meetings</p> <p>Council of Governors agenda setting</p> <p>Extraordinary Council of Governors meetings</p> <p>Informal meetings with the CEO and Chair</p> <p>Governor and NED meetings</p> <p>Open evening for new Governors</p> <p>Consultation on reviewed strategy</p> <p>Remuneration committee</p> <p>Panel for appointment of external auditors</p>
Description of Outside Body:	<p>ASPH is the local acute hospital trust which serves the Borough.</p> <p>The Council representative is an appointed Governor on the Council of Governors</p>
Update on Recent Activities	<p>Attendance at the meetings above. The role of the Governor is broad and can involve a lot more than those listed above.</p> <p>One of the most important areas for a Council representative is to promote understanding and integration within our complementary services. This ties in very well with the WBC Health and Well Being Task Group work.</p> <p>The understanding of the role of local government in health and wellbeing has improved tremendously, particularly with the signing of the Surrey Heartlands partnership agreement.</p> <p>After a gap of a few years, the ASPH key officers presented to WBC members and took questions, particularly around the strategic direction of the Trust. The 3 ASPH member representatives were also invited and other governors attended in support.</p> <p>The meetings have continued to be on Teams over this year and this has been frustrating for Governors as we have not been able to conduct any ward visits etc or meet in person.</p>

Annual Report by Council Representatives on Outside Bodies

	<p>The new car park has opened to the front of St Peters and a staff health and wellbeing hub has also been opened.</p> <p>A new CEO has been appointed after the departure of Suzanne Rankin. Julie Smith will commence her role on the 3rd of May. In the interim the medical director Dr David Fluck is managing the role.</p>
Future Activities:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The hospital continues to work with Lord Mawson on embedding the principles of Well North and becoming an Anchor Institution, thereby being more community facing.2. There is discussion ongoing regarding enhancing Ashford further as an elective surgical centre for the Heartlands. Thereby future proofing access in the event of pandemics etc.3. Increased provision on diagnostics to WCH. Understand this is to include audiology, ophthalmology and dexa scans. Increased out-patient clinic provision. ASPH are keen to work with WBC on integrating health within the community and access to suitable locations is welcomed.4. Confirmation of the revised strategy5. Go live on the new Electronic Patient Record system is due in May. This in in conjunction with Royal Surrey and will streamline access to patient information across a range of stakeholders (hopefully even for WBC H&WB teams in future). This has been a major project especially to conduct in the continued covid times.
Matters of Note or Concern:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Corona virus continues to have an impact on clinical provision and on the waiting lists. But having Ashford as a non-covid site has meant that many services have been able to continue and work on tackling the waiting lists is progressing even utilising weekends.2. Staffing continues to be a challenge both in recruitment and sickness. This is common to all the NHS at the moment.3. There is still no answer to the issue of resident access to Ashford from Woking. This is a particular issue for those who are less mobile and those going to Ophthalmology who are not permitted to drive post their appointment. WCT will transport residents who are members, but this may well impact adversely on their ability to provide other services locally.

REPORT ENDS

Annual Report by Council Representatives on Outside Bodies

Appendix 7

Outside Body:	Woking People of Faith
Councillor(s):	Cllr Louise Morales
Date Completed:	11/3/2022
Meetings Attended:	8
Description of Outside Body:	<p>An umbrella group that seeks to enhance understanding, tolerance and education about the similarities, differences and diversity between the many different faith groups in Woking by hosting a wide variety of events to enable people of very differing backgrounds to meet and get to know others who may be from an entirely different faith.</p> <p>Their aims are to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> promote good relations between people of different faiths; promote knowledge, mutual understanding and respect of the beliefs and practices of different faiths. advance the education and understanding of different beliefs including an awareness of their distinctive features and their common ground; celebrate the important contribution that religious faith makes to the lives of the local community; seek to secure a more prominent role for faith organisations in their communities; <p>There are 29 separate member organisations covering the entire range of mainstream religions found within Woking including Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, Quaker, Christian, Buddhist, Baha'l</p>
Update on Recent Activities	<p>There was an active program of outdoor activities to engage people of different religions to work together including an interfaith football tournament, interfaith Cricket tournament, Horsell Common Work parties and a full schedule of other activities. Due to Covid19 most events were online this last year from regular debates, peace week and refugee week events, virtual tours of different religious buildings, "Faith in action" talks by different faith leaders as well as lighter events like online bake-alongs featuring food from around the world of the different faiths represented in the group. There is an education program covering the many different faiths in the group in order to help schools who may be looking for speakers of different faiths to help diversify religious input for various parts of the national curriculum religious education programs.</p>

Annual Report by Council Representatives on Outside Bodies

	<p>The group maintains an active website https://wpof.org.uk/ and facebook page with weekly thought for the week from many different faiths. https://wpof.org.uk/post/ The recent post on “Refugees” by a retired WBC Councillor is much recommended and a fine example of the great work in breaking down barriers caused by the diversity found within the borough.</p>
Future Activities:	<p>This year the outdoor events will continue as before (Including interfaith football & Cricket tournaments and environmental work parties) but in person events will return including an annual peace week event, interfaith week event, Faith in Harmony, a music event showcasing the differing styles of music found in different faiths.</p> <p>Visits to different faith institutions including the Buddhist Temple and Orthodox ministry in Brookwood are being organised.</p> <p>Future activities beyond that may be curtailed by restrictions on finances</p>
Matters of Note or Concern:	<p>Significant reduction in the annual grant from WBC from £15000 to only £1000 may mean that many of the in person events that require hire of halls, football referees or cricket pitches etc may not be sustainable and the huge variety of events that attract a wide range of people of different ages and religions to work together in harmony may be significantly reduced in future years.</p> <p>The social cohesion and interfaith benefits of this group spread way beyond just those people who attend events but by taking openness and understanding back to their own faith groups, the whole of Woking benefits from reduced interfaith tensions and makes the borough a far better place to live. In my opinion it is essential that some form of support is continued in future years.</p>

REPORT ENDS

Annual Report by Council Representatives on Outside Bodies

Appendix 8

Outside Body:	Woking Palace Consultative Committee
Councillor(s):	Cllr Louise Morales, Cllr Deborah Hughes, Cllr Gary Elson, Cllr Will Forster
Date Completed:	11.3.2022
Meetings Attended:	2 (There are only 2 meetings per year)
Description of Outside Body:	<p>This body is a working group to ensure coordination and communication between the various interested parties involved with the Old Woking Palace, A Scheduled monument owned by WBC.</p> <p>Participants include:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Councillors + 2 others Woking BC asset management team Friends of Woking Palace Surrey Archaeological Society, Woking History Society <p>Also invited but not attended this year are:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Lightbox Surrey Wildlife Trust Woking village society Immediate Neighbouring property owner
Update on Recent Activities	<p>Planned works include regular maintenance of the site –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weed control & strimming of meadow area. Regular pollarding of willows around moat and coppicing of hazel in the coppice. Repairs to the capping where weather and vandalism had damaged walls. Replacing soil washed away by recent weather events. Updated condition survey. Cataloguing & digitally recording finds and legal transfer to Woking Lightbox. <p>The Site allocations DPD inspector didn't allow the land surrounding the site to be designated as a country park so this project will not happen and access will remain at 3 weekends a year for the immediate and medium term future.</p>

Annual Report by Council Representatives on Outside Bodies

	<p>The friends maintain a website of information about the history as well as their future and past events http://www.woking-palace.org/</p>
Future Activities:	<p>There is a full programme of open days planned this year to ensure that the palace is seen by the maximum number of local residents</p> <p>Routine maintenance of the palace and surrounding site will continue. The twice annual meetings will continue to ensure that all interested parties work well together in future and the Council owned asset is maintained as is our statutory responsibility.</p>
Matters of Note or Concern:	<p>There is a possibility that Historic England may put the palace on its Heritage at risk register due to continuous decline in the condition of the site due to regular vandalism.</p> <p>This has been an ongoing issue since the palace was taken over by WBC and no immediate solution is apparent. Police have been informed of each event and are now patrolling occasionally.</p>

REPORT ENDS

Outside Body:	Woking Community Transport
Councillor(s):	Josh Brown and Deborah Hughes
Date Completed:	15 March 2022
Meetings Attended:	There were 4 meetings this year including the combined one with the AGM. Councillor representation was present at every meeting
Description of Outside Body:	<p>Woking Community Transport (WCT) is a registered charity based now at the Red House in Brookwood. It has a diverse membership which increases year on year. A frequent revalidation of members has been conducted according to GDPR and 3,476 people are on the active membership; primarily older people for its Council sponsored Dial a Ride (DAR) service. The number of journeys undertaken for Woking residents on the DAR service is anticipated to be returning to more normal levels by the end of March.</p> <p>WCT provides several services in addition to the Council support DAR and Town Centre Buggy;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Centre Buggy • Group Hire • Contracts with SCC, for Home to school; Social Care; and the Library • Contracts with NW Surrey CCG for patient transport services to the Bedser Hub, the Woking and Ashford hub, clinic transport to Staines HC • St Peter's discharge service • Grassroots project • Non-emergency patient transport (NEPT) <p>They have a robust and proactive business model. The accounts and activity are discussed at all Councillor attended meetings. A three year financial forecast has been presented and the Board are planning to revise their Business Plan which needs updating.</p>
Update on Recent Activities	<p>WCT were successful in their WBC grant application this year which provides essential support to the DAR service and to the town centre buggy, requesting yet again a reduced level of support. In future years they anticipate that this will move to a Service Level Agreement model with the Council.</p> <p><u>Green agenda:</u></p> <p>They have been proactive in sourcing electric vehicles for their fleet and have aspirations to move to an all-electric service in</p>

Annual Report by Council Representatives on Outside Bodies

	<p>future. However these vehicles are significantly more expensive than the conventional models. Success in securing SCC part funded vehicles mean that 15 are expected in the near future, with two due this summer. In anticipation of these vehicles WCT had deferred purchase of vehicles and have some catching up to do.</p> <p>Electric charging points have been fitted at Moorcroft and are in regular use for the existing EV stock. A business case for the provision of EV points at the Red House is complete and tenders being received.</p> <p>Specsavers continue to sponsor the town centre buggy.</p> <p><u>Update on their move to a permanent location.</u></p> <p>Concern over the long delays in this relocation prompted a meeting in November with key Council Officers and WCT Board representatives facilitated by the Council member observers. This was a productive meeting, clarified many points and provided a timeline to move forwards.</p> <p>Plans to move to the Robin Hood pub site have moved on and now space is anticipated at Boundary Road. The plans for this are due to come to the Planning committee this month. There are still a variety of issues to be overcome, but WCT hope to purchase the site which will also include the garage which will move from Mabel Road to provide prompt repairs as required.</p> <p>There remains high pressure on space to park the Bustler vehicles in the interim. WCT have commenced parking at the Adult Education Centre in Westfield at an annual fee.</p>
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Conclusions:	<p>The issue of a permanent home for this service is of paramount importance and a swift resolution is needed.</p> <p>The Councillor observers are confident that the Council's grant funding of WCT is well spent and constitutes good value for money. WCT has succeeded in increasing revenue by robust and efficient management. The business is run by a competent team who are dedicated to the professional delivery of this service on behalf of Woking residents. The attendance by users at the AGM and comments provided demonstrate an exceptionally high approval rating of the service. We have a thriving community transport service of which, even in difficult times, Woking can be justly proud.</p>
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REPORT ENDS

COUNCIL – 31 MARCH 2022

ANNUAL REPORT ON MEMBER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Executive Summary

Each year the Council puts in place an extensive programme to support the learning and development of Elected Members. This report seeks to give a comprehensive picture of the activities of the past year, as well as looking forward to the coming Municipal Year.

In addition, the Policy for Member learning and development is reviewed annually by the Lead Members responsible for promoting learning and development amongst Councillors, and is now before the Council for approval.

Recommendations

The Council is requested to:

RESOLVE That

- (i) the Elected Member learning and development activities of 2021-22 be noted; and
- (ii) the Policy for Elected Member Learning and Development, as set out in Appendix 2 to this report, be noted.

The Council has the authority to determine the recommendations set out above.

Background Papers:	None.
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Annual Report on Member Learning and Development

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report seeks to bring together all the different elements in a comprehensive review of the past year, with a view to informing the programme for the coming year.

2.0 The Lead Members

- 2.1 Through Selection Panel in May 2021 a Lead Member for elected Member learning and development was appointed by the Conservative, Liberal Democrat and Labour Groups. The Lead Members for 2021/22 are Councillor Elson, Councillor Leach and Councillor Raja. Councillor Elson acts as Lead Member for Woking Borough Council on Elected Member learning and development.
- 2.2 A protocol for the Lead Member has been previously adopted by the Council to set out the roles and responsibilities of those Members appointed to the position. A copy of the protocol is attached at Appendix 1.

3.0 The Council's Learning and Development Policy

- 3.1 The Council's Learning and Development Policy for elected Members was comprehensively reviewed in 2015 by the Member Development Panel, before being agreed at Council. At the time, it was agreed that the Policy would be presented to Council annually in order to ensure that it remains relevant and continues to underpin the Council's approach to Member learning and development.
- 3.2 In their discussions on the policy, the Member Development Group highlighted the need to raise and maintain awareness of the policy. Towards this end, the policy has been integrated in induction sessions for new Councillors and forms part of the new Members' pack.
- 3.3 A copy of the updated Policy is attached at Appendix 2 to this report; no substantial changes are proposed.

4.0 The Charter for Member Learning and Development

- 4.1 Woking Borough Council has participated in the Charter for Member Learning and Development through South East Employers (SEE) for many years, first gaining the Charter status which ensures the Authority adopts a robust, structured framework designed to help enhance and hone member development in 2008. SEE is one of the nine regional employers' organisations which represent the interests of local authorities and public sector bodies in England. As the regional employers' organisation for the South East, SEE is independent and not-for-profit.
- 4.2 The Council was due to be reassessed at the end of 2021/early 2022 to retain the Charter status for a further three years. However, the assessment requires a significant level of resource, both in terms of officer time and financial cost. It was in light of this that the Council took the decision not to proceed with the assessment. The Lead Members for elected Member learning and development were advised of the decision.
- 4.3 It should be emphasised that the Council will continue to apply the principles of the Charter to its annual programme, and that the relationship with SEE will be maintained through the training opportunities the organisation provides.

5.0 Member Learning and Development Programme 2021/22

- 5.1 Each year a programme of training events, briefings and engagement sessions is arranged for Borough Councillors and typically involves Council Officers, external trainers and other

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agencies and bodies, such as Surrey Police, NHS Surrey and Surrey County Council. This section summarises the events held over the past Municipal Year.

- 5.2 The majority of these events were led by Council Officers, and were thus free of cost to the Council. Outside trainers are used for special events. Funds are also kept in reserve for events such as conferences, seminars and longer training courses Councillors may wish to attend.

Event	Date	Attendees
Member Induction (Session 1)	12.5.21	5
Member Induction (Session 2)	13.5.21	5
Planning Induction	25.5.21	10
Code of Conduct/Probity in Planning	1.6.21	15
Health & Safety	1.6.21	11
Licensing	9.6.21	9
Equality and diversity	24.6.21	14
Overview and Scrutiny training	28.6.21	12
Chair and Vice-Chair	1.7.21	7
Briefing – Residents Panel	6.7.21	16
Finance	14.7.21	15
Victoria Square Tour	1.9.21	9
Woking's Trees	15.9.21	11
Briefing - Sheerwater Regeneration	20.9.21	17
Community Safety / Policing	13.10.21	23
Health and Wellbeing	20.10.21	5
Standards and Audit Workshop	21.10.21	8
Hale End Court Site Visit	25.10.21	2
Waterman House Site Visit	26.10.21	3
Buzz Theatre Site Visit	27.10.21	4
Briefing – Thameswey Group	17.11.21	24
LGA – Councillor Personal Safety	16.2.22	2
Waste Prevention and Recycling in Surrey	7.3.22	1
A Focus on Food Waste	8.3.22	1
LGA Licensing Conference	8-9.2.22	1
Briefing – County Lines	7-8.3.22	2
Social Media	13.4.22	-

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Annual Budget

- 5.3 The expenditure on Member Development in the year 2021/22 to-date is summarised below. The annual budget is £7,500.

Event	Cost (excluding VAT)
Member Training: Code of Conduct / Probity in Planning	£720
Member Training: Health & Safety	£1,500
Member Training: Licensing Cttee Induction	£1,200
Member Training: Equality and Diversity	£780
Member Training: OSC	£750
OSC Chair & Vice-Chair	£500
Social Media	£800
Total Costs	£6,250

6.0 Member Learning and Development Programme 2022/23

- 6.1 The programme for the coming Municipal Year is being developed and currently includes the following:

Event	Date
Member Induction - CLT and Member Services	11.5.22
Member Induction – IT	12.5.22
Members Training: Planning Induction	May – June 2022
Member Training: Code of Conduct	May – June 2022
Member Training: Probity in Planning	May – June 2022
Member Training: Health and Safety	25.5.22
Member Training: Equality and Diversity	30.5.22
Member Training: Overview and Scrutiny Cttee induction	6.6.22
Member Training: Scrutiny	8.6.22
Member Training: Safeguarding	13.6.22
Member Training: Licensing Cttee Induction	14.6.22
Member Training: Finance	20.6.22
Member Training: GDPR	May – July 2022
Member Training: LGA Chair & Vice-Chair	TBC
Member Training: IT and Equipment Refresher	TBC
Member Training: Councillor Safety	TBC
Social Media	TBC

- 6.2 During the year itself, additional in-house briefings and training events will be arranged. These will include briefing sessions involving partners (for example Police, Thamesway, Surrey County Council departments, etc). As in past years, briefing sessions on current issues will be arranged as necessary.

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- 6.3 There will be a number of training sessions on core skills offered during the year.
- 6.4 Opportunities for training by outside organisations (conferences and seminars etc) will also be offered to Members regularly, usually via Group Leaders.
- 6.5 In the meantime, all Members of the Council are encouraged to submit suggestions for future training or briefing opportunities which could help them in their roles. Officers will be proactive in seeking these suggestions, communicating regularly with Members.

7.0 Mandatory Training

7.1 At its meeting in October 2017, the Council resolved to introduce a programme of mandatory training for Elected Members be introduced as part of the Council's Learning and Development Programme for Councillors from May 2018. The training for each committee was mandatory for those members sitting on it however other members were able to attend the training if it were of interest to them.

7.2 Topics included in the programme are:

- Code of Conduct
- Diversity and Equalities
- Finance Training
- Health and Safety
- Induction Training
- Licensing Training (for members of the Licensing Committee)
- Planning (for members of the Planning Committee)
- Safeguarding
- Scrutiny (for members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee)

7.3 Group Leaders will be encouraged to monitor the attendance of their Members and if necessary review their membership of Committees if they have not attended the relevant mandatory training.

8.0 Elected Member Surveys

All Member Survey

- 8.1 The Council undertakes a detailed survey of all Councillors every two years.
- 8.2 The survey was introduced as part of the Council's commitment to Member Development and its objectives under the Charter for Member Development. The survey has been developed specifically for the elected representatives of Woking Borough Council and covers two key areas: Councillors' Roles and Responsibilities; and Member Development. A survey of all Members was undertaken at the end of 2021 – seven replies were received. The results will help the Council to improve the programme of development and training on offer to Councillors.

Retiring Members

- 8.3 A questionnaire will also be sent to those Councillors who step down in May 2022. The questionnaire seeks feedback on their experiences with a view to improving arrangements and facilities for future Councillors. The questionnaire is sent out late May/early June following a Borough election.

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New Members – Six Month Questionnaire

- 8.4 A feedback form is sent to those Councillors elected to the Borough Council during the May elections to seek feedback on the induction process and the support they have received following their successful election. The information is used to improve future arrangements for newly elected Members.

9.0 Corporate Strategy

- 9.1 Woking Borough Council's Corporate Plan is a document about values and how these shape the future of the Borough. Ensuring that Elected Members have the skills and knowledge to serve the Borough to the best of their abilities is key to ensuring the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan.

10.0 Implications

Finance and Risk

- 10.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. The Council has an allocated budget (£7,500) for Member learning and development which is used to employ external trainers and enable Members to attend events away from the Borough. The budget is carefully managed to ensure that it is not overspent.
- 10.2 There are no risk management issues arising from this report. However, the importance of a comprehensive training programme in regard to risk management is emphasised.

Equalities and Human Resources

- 10.3 This report sets out the extent of the Council's programme of learning and development offered to Councillors and provides an update on the Council's Charter status, the roles and responsibilities of Councillors and the Authority's policy for Member learning and development.
- 10.4 The Council will seek to promote joint training opportunities for Members and Officers in the coming years to enable them to share experiences, develop closer working relationships and to provide new ideas and support where required.
- 10.5 There are no equalities issues arising from this report.

Legal

- 10.6 This report has been reviewed by Legal Services who have not raised any issues.

REPORT ENDS



Protocol for Cross Party Engagement in the Development of the Learning and Development Programme for Elected Members.

2022/23

In May 2015, Woking Borough Council disbanded its cross-party Panel for Member Learning and Development, noting that the elements overseen by the Panel had become embedded in the processes and services of the Council.

This Protocol has been drawn up to define the role of the Lead Member and put in place measures to ensure that a cross-party approach is maintained following the decision to disband the Panel. Expectations of the roles played by Group Leaders are also referred to in the Protocol. Officers will work with the Lead Member for Elected Member Development over the year on managing and further developing the Council's approach to Member Learning and Development.

-
- The Lead Member to work with Officers in developing and taking forward new initiatives and approaches in Member learning and development.
 - The Lead Member to lead on the annual review of the Member Learning and Development Policy and to present the Policy to Council on an annual basis.
 - The Lead Member to oversee the continuing development of the Member Learning and Development Framework, presenting the Framework to the Executive and/or Council if necessary.
 - The Lead Member to champion Member learning and development across the authority, including opposition Members.
 - Cross-party support to be sought for all elements of the Council's Learning and Development Policy.
 - The Lead Member to ensure that opportunities for learning and development are available to all elected Members, regardless of political affiliation.
 - The Lead Member to ensure that the Council ensures the equality of the Learning and Development Programme, with timing of events to take into account cultural and personal circumstances.
 - The Lead Member to champion a wide range of delivery methods to meet the learning styles of Councillors.

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- Opposition Groups to be consulted on new learning and development initiatives before their introduction.
- Group Leaders to be consulted on specific requests or proposals for training opportunities received from elected Members, the Lead Member or Officers.
- The Lead Member to review the feedback received from post event questionnaires, the Member Surveys, the surveys of newly elected Councillors and the surveys of recently retired Councillors.
- Group Leaders to promote learning and development opportunities amongst the Members of their political group.
- Group Leaders to review the learning and development needs within their political group and identify any gaps in the programme of events.
- Group Leaders to promote the Council's Learning and Development Framework and the Roles and Responsibilities of Councillors to the Members within their political group.
- The Lead Member to promote and support the 'Could You Be A Councillor' event targeting individuals interested in seeking office as a Borough Councillor.
- The Lead Member to monitor the Council's budget for the learning and development programme.
- The Lead Member to monitor Member attendance at the learning and development events, raising any concerns with the relevant Group Leaders if necessary.

Member Learning and Development

Contact Details

The Council's Learning and Development Programme is managed by the Democratic Services Officer, Telephone 01483 743012 or email member.services@woking.gov.uk



Woking Borough Council

Member Learning and Development Policy 2022/23

Reviewed March 2022

Introduction

Woking Borough Council is committed to the training, development and learning of the elected Members throughout their terms of office, from the point at which they first express an interest in standing as a Borough Councillor to their retirement from public office. Elected Members are integral to achieving the Council's aims and strategic objectives and to the delivery of high quality services.

The Council recognises that Members have different skills and expertise gained through employment and life which can all be used for the benefit of the Council and the community as a whole. As such, Woking Borough Council is keen to enable Members to access as many development opportunities as possible to make them effective in their ever changing role as a Councillor.

Member development can have a significant impact on the performance of the organisation. Well-equipped Members are able to contribute to the running of the Borough, and can deal with the challenges and changes faced by the organisation.

The Member Development Policy applies to all elected Members. It also applies to any co-opted Members, including the Independent Co-Opted Member of the Standards and Audit Committee and the Council's Independent Person. The implementation of this Policy is being led by the Lead Members for Member learning and development.

The Role of Members

The locally elected Councillor has a key role in achieving improved outcomes in the community. As Elected Members (Members) of the Council they have to perform a multi-faceted role of Community Leader, Community Representative and Community Champion.

In these roles Members have a key part to play in achieving the Council's Service and Performance Plan and in helping it make its contribution to the Community Strategy. The participation by Members in learning will help them reach their full potential and equip them to fully contribute to the delivery of the Council's objectives and key priorities.

The purpose of the Member Development programme is to provide a supportive environment to enhance the knowledge, capabilities, and experiences which individual Members identify are required to enable them to perform the Members' role.

All Members have individual responsibility to:

- Identify their own learning and development needs and to seek opportunities to improve their effectiveness and increase their potential.
- Share their knowledge and skills with the peers.
- Review and evaluate learning and development activities so as to apply increased knowledge, skills and personal qualities developed through those activities.

Group Leaders are responsible for ensuring that their Members have the necessary skills, knowledge and competencies to carry out their Council and community responsibilities. They are primarily responsible for ensuring that Members participate in the training and development activities which are necessary to enable them to do so, and to achieve the Council's aims and objectives.

The Council's Commitment to Member Development

The Council has a clear commitment to improving and sustaining the standards of Member development within the Council. In support of the development of all its elected Councillors to ensure that they are able to meet all the challenges that face them through the wide range of roles and responsibilities they hold, Woking Borough Council is committed to ensuring that:

- all Councillors have access to appropriate learning and development activities to enable them to acquire the skills and knowledge required to be an effective elected Member.
- a planned and structured approach to elected Member learning and development is taken.
- access to learning and development activities is equitable to all.
- learning and development should be linked, wherever possible, to the roles and responsibilities of Members.
- Members are supported in developing their roles as Ward Representatives and as Community Leaders.
- Members' capacity is developed to formulate and keep under review the Council's Policies and Strategies.
- a Member led strategic approach to development is adopted through the Lead Members for learning and development.

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- citizenship and a good work-life balance is promoted.
- Member learning and development activities should be adequately resourced and within available budgets.
- Members should be encouraged to identify their own development needs and participate fully in learning and development activities.
- all Members are provided with a development framework to help identify learning and development needs.

In furthering these objectives the Council will ensure that:-

- Member development will take place within a structured process, having regard to the needs of the individual and to corporate objectives;
- Members will be offered equal access to development opportunities regardless of their physical circumstances, ethnicity, race, gender, sexuality, age or religion;
- Member development will be provided and monitored in a way that is respectful to the dignity and privacy of individual Members;
- Member development opportunities will promote work/life balance, community engagement and good citizenship;
- development resources, activities and processes will give Members the knowledge, capabilities, opportunities, networks and experiences they need to fulfil their role as effectively as possible; and
- development resources, activities and processes will be regularly monitored by Members and officers to ensure effectiveness.

Mandatory Training for Elected Members

In October 2017 the Council agreed to introduce a programme of mandatory training for Elected Members, to be made available online where possible. Topics identified for the programme, together with their frequency and the target Members, are outlined below.

Training	Code of Conduct
Frequency	Once during each four year term of office.
Required	All Members.
Delivery format	In-house training session.

Training	Diversity and Equalities
Frequency	Once during each four year term of office.
Required	All Members.
Delivery format	In-house training session.

Training	Finance Training
Frequency	Once during each four year term of office.
Required	All Members.

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Delivery format	In-house training session.
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Training	General Data Protection Regulation
Frequency	Once, at the start of the Councillor's first term of office.
Required	All Members.
Delivery format	Online.

Training	Health and Safety
Frequency	Once during each four year term of office.
Required	All Members.
Delivery format	In-house and/or external training provider.

Training	Induction Training
Frequency	Once.
Required	Newly elected Members. Re-elected Members to be encouraged to attend.
Delivery format	In-house training.

Training	Licensing Training
Frequency	Annual, as part of the agenda for the first meeting of the Committee.
Required	All Members of the Licensing Committee and Portfolio Holder and Shadow Portfolio Holder for Licensing Services.
Delivery format	In-house and/ or external training provider.

Training	Planning
Frequency	Annual.
Required	All Members of the Planning Committee, Portfolio Holder and Shadow Portfolio Holder for Planning Services.
Delivery format	In-house and/or external training provider.

Training	Safeguarding
Frequency	Once during each four year term of office.
Required	All Members.
Delivery format	In-house and/or external training provider.

Training	Scrutiny
Frequency	Annual, as part of the agenda for the first meeting of the Committee.
Required	All Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
Delivery format	In-house and/or external training provider.

Policy Implementation

The Council has appointed Elected Members to take forward the Council's programme of Member learning and development. These Lead Members for Member Learning and Development are charged with the responsibility of undertaking and maintaining a self-assessment and developing and keeping under review a Learning and Development Plan for Members.

Support for the Lead Members is provided by the Council's Democratic Services Team.

The Lead Members are responsible for monitoring the Council's Member Development programme and identifying any new development opportunities. The Lead Members oversee the budgets and promote Member Development amongst the political groups. Furthermore, any feedback received on the development programme, whether from serving Councillors, newly elected Councillors or recently retired Councillors, is reported to the Lead Members, with any matters of concern or improvement highlighted. The majority of the work on Member Development is undertaken in consultation with the Lead Members by email or telephone; however, meetings would be arranged when necessary.

The responsibilities of the Lead Members include:

- Helping their peers to identify and find opportunities to meet their learning and development needs.
- Creating an environment that encourages self-development and continuous learning and the sharing of knowledge and skills amongst the Members in the political groups.
- Evaluating investment in learning and development and participation by Members.
- Monitor feedback from Members on the learning and development programmes provided by the Council.
- Regularly review the Council's Member Development Policy.

Member Development Support and Resources

Core support for the Member Development programmes of the Council is provided by the Officers within the Council's Democratic Services Team, in consultation with the Lead Members.

The Council has a dedicated Member Development Budget which covers the costs external training and development programmes, including conferences, briefings and training events. The programme of externally provided events is supported by an extensive range of events provided by Officers and Members. The full cost of all learning and development is identified and monitored by the Council's Democratic Services Team and is reported to the Lead Members.

The Democratic Services Team is responsible for:

- supporting the Lead Members for learning and development.
- preparing the annual Learning and Development Programme and report as required by the Lead Members for learning and development.
- organising, and in some cases providing, learning and development as identified in the Learning and Development Plan.

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- maintaining the Councillors role descriptions and responsibilities, the Councillors Development Framework and the Council's 'Could You be a Councillor' document.
- managing the Member Development budget.
- making the necessary arrangements for the booking of courses and other development events.
- liaising with Corporate Management Group and Business Managers to identify future development topics.