



Wokingham Town Council

Town Hall, Market Place, Wokingham, Berkshire RG40 1AS

Tel: 0118 978 3185 www.wokingham-tc.gov.uk

Town Clerk: K. Hughes

This Council Meeting is open to the Public and Press
Please notify the Officer or Chairman if you wish to record the meeting

31st January 2024

Dear Councillor

You are hereby summoned to attend the meeting of the **Planning & Transportation Committee** to be held in the **Council Chamber, Town Hall, Wokingham** at **7.30pm** on **Tuesday 6th February 2024** for the purpose of considering and resolving upon the subjects and matters set out in the Agenda below.

Yours sincerely

K Hughes
Town Clerk

Contact Officer Miles Thorne, Technical Officer
Direct line: 0118 974 0885 Email: planning@wokingham-tc.gov.uk

AGENDA

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

To receive any declaration of interests from Members on the business about to be transacted.

3 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OR PUBLIC

The Chairman to answer questions raised by members of the Council or public.

This is an opportunity for the people of Wokingham to ask questions of, and make comments to, the Town Council. Members of the public are requested to restrict their questions and comments to three minutes. Questions which are not answered at this meeting will be answered in writing to the person asking the question. To ensure an informed response, please send your questions to the Town Clerk at least three working days prior to the meeting.

4 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

To receive and confirm the Minutes of the proceedings at the meetings of this Committee held on 12th December 2023 (pages 16891 to 16898) copy attached as a true and correct record.

5 MONITORING REPORT

To receive and consider the Monitoring Report dated 31st January 2024.

6 COUNCIL'S UPDATED VISION & PRINCIPLES

To consider how this can be embedded in the work of the P&T Committee (copy attached).

7 CONSULTATION ON WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL'S LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN

To review and consider the Wokingham Borough Council Local Transport Plan. Any comments are required by 23rd February 2024

8 CONSULTATION ON WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL'S TWO HOUSING STRATEGIES ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND THE OTHER ON HOUSING FOR PRIORITY GROUPS OF YOUNG PEOPLE.

To review and consider. Comments required by 19th February 2024.

9 COMMITTEE'S BUDGET

To receive and consider a report on the Committee's budget as of 31st December 2023 (copy attached).

10 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

To receive and consider current planning applications. Details of the applications are on the Town Council's web site and will be presented at the meeting. <https://www.wokingham-tc.gov.uk/planning-applications/>

11 INFORMATION ITEMS

To receive items for information or to be referred to a future meeting.

Planning & Transportation Committee: Imogen Shepherd-Dubey (Chair), Nagi Nagella (Vice Chair), Keith Malvern, Adrian Betteridge, Warren Dixon, Andy Croy, Basit Alvi, Tony Lack and Louise Timlin

Copy to: Ms Sally Gurney

In order to comply with the Data Protection Act 1998, all persons attending this meeting are hereby notified that this meeting will be recorded. The purpose of recording proceedings is that it acts as an aide-memoir in assisting the clerk of the meeting in the compilation of minutes. The recordings are held in a secure location and deleted once it has been resolved that the minutes are a true and correct record.

In accordance with The Openness of Local Government Bodies regulations 2014, persons attending this meeting may make their own recordings of the proceedings subject to the Council's Policy on Filming, Recording & Reporting on Council and Committee Meetings (copy available on request).

12th December 2023

Minutes of the proceedings of the PLANNING & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE meeting held on this day in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Wokingham from 19:30 to 21:20

PRESENT

Councillors: Cllr Shepherd-Dubey (Chair), Cllr K Malvern, Cllr A Betteridge, Cllr W Dixon, Cllr Lack & Cllr A Croy.

IN ATTENDANCE

PT Officer.

2 members of the public

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Cllr N Nagella (Vice Chair)

Cllr L Timlin

Cllr B Alvi

MEMBERS' INTERESTS (Agenda Item 2)

Cllr Betteridge declared that he is a member of the Active Travel Group, item 6 on the Agenda is an Active Travel Group Consultation.

QUESTIONS FROM THE COUNCIL OR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (Agenda Item 3)

None

As there were members of the public who had interests in Planning Applications 231331 & 231351 it was agreed that these be brought forward.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS (Agenda Item 8)

222306 Land Adjacent to Blagrove Lane Wokingham

****REVISED PLANS**** Outline application, with all matters reserved except for access, for the proposed erection of up to 350 dwellings (Use Class C3) and care home (Use Class C2), with new accesses onto Barkham Road and Blagrove Lane, landscaping and onsite SANG, following demolition of outbuildings and agricultural buildings.

A member of the public spoke against the application. He had previously sent a detailed document on all his objections which have been made available to the Committee, however in the 3 minutes he had to present to the Committee he had to shorten this to several major points. Which were as follows.

CHAIRMANS INITIALS _____



This is an unwelcome and unacceptable development proposal that has raised a huge number of objections from residents, this is approaching 1,000 and rising.

- The proposed location is not a Strategic Development Location in the Core strategy and does not comply with policy CP11 as a development in the countryside.
- The development would see the boundary between Barkham and Wokingham removed.
- The proposals would have devastating affects on the local wildlife and ancient woodland. There would be felling of 164 trees.
- The development is not feasible in terms of local infrastructure. School capacity at maximum already and doctor surgeries at full capacity.
- The proposed junction on Barkham Road is on a dangerous bend on an already busy road where traffic will increase. There has recently been a major traffic accident at this very spot. Reading buses have stated that this is not safe for their buses using the junction.
- The closing of Blagrove Lane will cause major issues with traffic being forced through new junction at Evendons Lane and Finchampstead Road.
- Berkeley Homes sustainability and managing traffic demand are completely dependent on number 3 Bus being diverted through the new development.
- The Southern part of the proposed development is already prone to severe flooding, adding 350 houses will dramatically worsen the flooding potential.

Cllr Dixon raised a question regarding the developers claim that Wokingham has underdelivered on the 5-year land supply, the Committee debated this and believe this is in fact incorrect and that it has over delivered, and this makes that claim and reason for the development invalid.

The Committee still strongly oppose the application and feel that all previous objections remain, and that the proposal is worse as it removes a potential positive element, the Community Hub. The introduction of a care home, that is not required, does not improve the proposal.

This site does not have sustainable transport links and there is no regular bus service or roads suitable for traffic. The road infrastructure would need to be significantly improved to sustain traffic from this site. The Committee do not see a complete picture of the road development needed, such as how to reach the Finchampstead road and provide safe walking routes to school.

The current roads are already dangerous for cyclists and the local population increase if the development goes ahead will exacerbate the situation.

The Developer states that the Bus service is 3 buses an hour, this is not correct the bus timetable shows it is 1 bus hour and none after 8pm. This makes it a non-sustainable location.

CHAIRMANS INITIALS _____



The proposed closure of Blagrove Lane will divert and increase traffic into Evendons Lane and Finchampstead Road worsening an already busy road and a further burden on these road networks.

The Committee would also like to add the following to the existing objections. The previous objections are listed underneath these.

CP9 – Scale and location of development proposals

CC03 - Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping

CP10 - Improvements to the Strategic Transport Network

CP4 - Infrastructure Requirements

PREVIOUS COMMENTS FROM P&T MEETING 06/09/2023

The Committee had the following comments.

The proposal of a SANG is nonsensical as it is removing fully adequate green areas with artificial green areas

The proposed junction onto Barkham Road is unsafe.

There is not the required infrastructure and services to sustain the development.

Removal of 70 trees to build road is not welcomed.

Negative impact on biodiversity.

Inadequate bus service.

The area is a quiet countryside area, and an urban development is not welcomed.

The following objections were made.

Concerns over developer access into Lesly Sears Park and Viking Field.

CP3 - General Principles for development

b) functional, accessible, safe, secure

c) ecological, heritage, landscape, geological

d) fauna and flora

f) sense of place

CP1 – Sustainable development

1) quality of environment

CHAIRMANS INITIALS _____



7) agricultural land

9) flooding

10) attractive, safe, secure

CP6 - Managing Travel Demand

c) Improve existing infrastructure network

e) adverse effects on transport network

f) Enhance road safety

CC02 – outside of local plan

CP7 – Biodiversity

B) harm habitats

C) compromise biodiversity

The Committee discussed who will represent the Town Council when this gets called in by Wokingham Borough Council. Cllr Dixon has volunteered. The member of the public who presented to the Committee will attend too. Cllr Dixon will liaise with them prior to the meeting.

ACTION: PT OFFICER, CLLR DIXON

PLANNING & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MINUTES (Agenda Item 4)

**RESOLVED
30766**

It was proposed by the Cllr Croy and seconded by Cllr Betteridge, and it was that the minutes of the Planning & Transportation Committee meeting held on 14th November 2023 (pages 16861 to 16867) be received as a true and correct record and that they be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

ACTION: PT OFFICER

MONITORING REPORT (Agenda Item 5)

The Monitoring Report dated 6th December 2023 was received and considered.

SECURE BICYCLE STORAGE IN WOKINGHAM TOWN

The Planning officer updated the Committee on the progress of the project since the last P&T meeting.

Following the last P&T Meeting where the Committee asked for updates on the status of secure locker use, the PT Officer sent a document to the Committee which showed capacity and income. This showed that the usage can be improved, and the PT Officer will be working with SpokeSafe and our Marketing

CHAIRMANS INITIALS _____

Planning & Transportation Committee 12/12/2023

16894



Officer on ways to improve the awareness of the Secure Lockers as an option for Cyclists in Wokingham Town Centre.

The environmentally friendly paint that will be applied to the locker roofs has now been tested and works well. This will be applied when we have a few days of dry weather, and the air temperature is correct for application. It needs to be above 7 degrees Celsius and be dry for 3 days to cure correctly.

A page on our website has been created with the details of the Secure Lockers with location, price and contact details.

SpokeSafe have introduced discounted pricing via the Booking App, the lockers are £1 a day hire normally, there are now options of Weekly for £5 and Monthly for £15. The Committee thought this was a good idea.

Cllr Betteridge stated that there has been comment that there is no charge for cars at Carnival Hub, yet for the Secure Lockers there is a charge. However, it was agreed that the Lockers give added security and that bikes can still be locked the standard way at the site.

The PT Officer has asked SpokeSafe again about the release mechanism whereby the locker would be available to book once a person retrieves their bike. SpokesSafe have stated that this is on their 'Road Map' but is not a top priority as they have not been asked this from any other clients.

BUS SHELTERS

There were no new updates.

ACTION: PT OFFICER

ACTIVE TRAVEL A329 PHASE 2 CONSULTATION (Agenda Item 6)

To review and consider the Wokingham Borough Council consultation on the A329 Reading Road (Wokingham town) Phase 2 cycle and pedestrian improvements. Any comments are required by 21st December 2023

Wokingham Borough Council have provided large plans for phase 2 and these were used for the Committee to visualize the proposal for this section, the Woollahill roundabout.

There was a question asked whether we had heard anything regarding comments made on the first phase, as yet there has not been any feedback.

As Cllr Betteridge is on the Active travel Committee, he explained the reasoning behind the plans. The current situation is that this is an accident blackspot which is hazardous for cyclists and pedestrians, several solutions were considered in depth prior to the final plan. Initially a 'Dutch' style roundabout was considered whereby pedestrians and cyclists were given priority however this is not appropriate as this site has a high car traffic flow and would be unsafe.

CHAIRMANS INITIALS _____



Agenda Item 4

The proposed solution is to have 3 'toucan' crossings on each 'arm' of the roundabout to create a safer environment for pedestrians and cyclists.

There were discussions on how the proposed solution would work in practice and one main concern was the two-way cycling section where it runs alongside a lane of car traffic which is oncoming. However the Committee support the proposal.

The Committee members were reminded that they can respond as individuals to the consultation.

It was agreed by the Chair that Cllr Betteridge would draft a response to the consultation on behalf of the Committee.

As the Town Council has the plans available for public viewing (via the Info Centre) the Chair asked whether this could be made more visible by having this as a notification outside the building. The PT Officer will investigate whether this is possible.

ACTION: CLLR BETTERIDGE, PT OFFICER

LANGBOROUGH ROAD CONTROLLED PARKING ZONE CONSULTATION (Agenda Item 7)

To receive and consider the planned controlled parking proposal. Comments are required by December 12th.

The committee support this parking scheme.

ACTION: PT OFFICER

COMMITTEE'S BUDGET (Agenda Item 8)

A report on the Committee's budget as of 31st October 2023 were received and noted.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS (Agenda Item 9)

**RESOLVED
30767**

The following applications were received and considered, and it was that the Committee would make comment as shown. This includes **222306**, noted above.

232782 Land north of London Road East of A329M

Full application for the change of use of agricultural land to Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG)

The PT Officer explained that this was outside of the Wokingham Town Boundary and that the Development linked is further outside the boundary in Bracknell and comments for that had closed.

CHAIRMANS INITIALS _____

Planning & Transportation Committee 12/12/2023

16896



The Committee had no comments.

232775 St Crispins School London Road Wokingham RG40 1SS

Application for Listed Building consent for the proposed replacement of existing fenestration.

The proposals will improve the look of the school and the listed building. The Committee support this application.

232808 1-5 Broad Street Wokingham Wokingham RG40 1AX

Full application for the proposed alterations to roof/loft conversion to provide 2 no x 2 bedroom flats and replacement sash windows in rear elevation.

The Committee object to this application.

This is the third application in three months for the same location. The Committee noted that this was initially at 8 residential units, then 9 and this latest raises it to 11. This takes the development through the threshold to consider affordable housing contribution. Could this please be considered.

The Committee would also like assurance that plans are in place to keep pedestrians safe and traffic moving in this busy area during any construction.

232664 Luckley House School Luckley Road Wokingham RG40 3EU

Application for Listed Building consent for the proposed replacement of 2 no. existing roof lights and insertion of 2 no. additional roof lights.

The proposals will improve the look of the school and the listed building. The Committee support this application.

ACTION: P&T OFFICER

INFORMATION ITEMS (AGENDA ITEM 10)

The Chair stated that an application that the Committee discussed previously 223691 Lee Spring was being discussed at the next Wokingham Borough Planning meeting. There will not be a member of the Committee speaking at this meeting on behalf of Wokingham Town Council, however Cllr Dixon will be attending remotely.

Cllr Croy asked what has happened with Cllr Betteridge's question regarding whether Greenway consultations could be via the planning Committee. The PT Officer confirmed with the Town Clerk that the Greenways discussion had previously been through the Amenities Committee and as yet there hadn't been any further consultations on the Greenway passed through to us. There would be a discussion on where it was placed if this was forthcoming.

CHAIRMANS INITIALS _____



CHAIRMANS SIGNATURE_____

CHAIRMANS INITIALS _____



WOKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Monitoring Report: Planning & Transportation

Date: 31st January 2024

Date Action Agreed	Item for Action (to include any resolution number)	Person Actioning	Proposed Completion Date	Progress
29 Sep 2021	SECURE BICYCLE STORAGE IN WOKINGHAM TOWN	PT Officer	March 2024	<p>January 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The environmentally friendly paint that will be applied to the locker roofs has now been tested and works well. This will be applied when we have a few days of dry weather, and the air temperature is correct for application. It needs to be above 7 degrees Celsius and be dry for 3 days to cure correctly. Statistics on hire use have been sent out to the Committee. There was a meeting with SpokeSafe to look at ways to improve awareness and use of the Lockers. At their other sites a 'business card' has been used and proved to be a good way to promote. We have now designed and printed these cards. They will be distributed at our events, related events, to MyJourney and to Carnival hub and local businesses/shops near the location of the lockers. The idea of the card rather than flyers is that people are more likely to hold on to them as they can be placed in a purse or wallet. I will bring in some cards for Committee members to distribute at the next P&T Meeting.

WOKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Monitoring Report: Planning & Transportation

Date: 31st January 2024

20 June 2022	Bus Shelters maintenance	PT Officer, Cllr Malvern	March 2024	<div>January 2024</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none">There has been Graffiti found on the Bus Shelter ay Molly Millars Lane. The cleaning will be done by our maintenance staff.
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WOKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Monitoring Report: Planning & Transportation

Date: 31st January 2024



WTC strategy:

Wokingham Town Council embraces our past, celebrates our present and builds for our future.

Principles:

Being sustainable

Working to reduce our negative impact on our local environment and use our financial resources and physical assets as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Involving everyone

Striving to ensure the council's events, activities and democratic processes are open, accessible and welcoming to everyone in our community.

Fostering Town Pride

Protecting, enhancing and celebrating what's good about our council, our community, our town and our heritage. We will learn from our past, acknowledge where there's room for improvement, and prepare for the future.

Enriching community

Creating and supporting opportunities to bring our community together and help it to thrive.

Wokingham Town Council Vision 2023 to 2027

“Wokingham Town Council embraces our past, celebrates our present and builds for our future”.

Principles and Priorities

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NEWS RELEASE



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Date: 3 January 2024
Issued by: James Burton

Issue No: 001/24
Version: 0.1

HELP US KEEP YOU MOVING SAFELY FOR YEARS TO COME

Everyone who travels around Wokingham Borough is invited to share their views on a vision for a healthier, safer and more environmentally friendly transport network.

The council is consulting on its revised Local Transport Plan, a “big picture” strategy that sets out how all kinds of provision will be offered in future, and where it should seek funding for improvements.

It aims to create opportunities for people to walk or wheel, cycle or take the bus or train for everyday trips, supporting the Government’s goal of making these the natural choices for shorter journeys and parts of longer ones.

The plan sets out to reduce congestion on the roads for trips where driving is needed, while reducing serious road collisions and making travel safer for everyone.

It aims to increase access to parks, leisure centres, public services and workplaces while reducing harmful air pollution and noise. This supports the council’s wider aim of improving people’s physical and mental health.

Everyone can read the plan and respond at engage.wokingham.gov.uk until Friday, 23 February.

Keeping you safe and protecting the environment

The new Local Transport Plan will guide all transport decisions in Wokingham Borough, providing a starting point for developing more detailed transport plans including active and sustainable travel, plus improvements to roads and public rights of way.

Feedback from this consultation will be considered while making final changes and the plan could be adopted in late summer 2024.

Agenda Item 7

As well as ensuring access for all, the plan recognises that many people rely on cars, especially in more rural areas where public transport can't be provided without the council's financial support.

This draft, shaped by comments from two earlier surveys, includes an action plan to bring its ideas to life and tackle the challenges of a growing population, air pollution and the climate emergency.

The new Local Transport Plan is supported by documents like the council's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and Bus Service Improvement Plan, both published in spring 2023 following consultation.

Turning hopes and ideas into reality

The draft plan has three broad aims: creating healthy and safe places, reducing the environmental impact of transport and developing the economy.

Specific goals include:

- reducing serious and fatal road collisions
- enabling at least half of trips in urban areas to be active or on public transport by 2030
- improving air quality in Wokingham town centre and Twyford as soon as possible
- reducing through traffic and changing the speed limit in Wokingham town centre
- improving travel options in rural areas
- supporting more frequent bus and rail services, and improving walking and cycling links, between key destinations
- reducing the dominance of vehicles in town centres and residential areas

Possible actions, subject to consultation and external funding, include:

- continuing planned improvements to cycling and walking infrastructure and bus services
- developing a strategy for installing electric vehicle chargepoints
- trialling "school street" schemes with temporary traffic restrictions at peak times
- expanding educational measures like cycle training to help everyone, including young people, to travel more safely and confidently
- considering 20mph speed limits and increasing space for pedestrians and businesses in built-up areas, plus speed limit changes on some major roads

- developing a freight strategy to reduce the impact of heavy goods vehicles
- considering electric scooter hire schemes, which is the only way these can legally be ridden on public highways, or bike hire schemes
- targeted measures to tackle air quality issues in specific areas

A better journey, however you travel

Cllr Paul Fishwick, executive member for active travel, transport and highways, said: “Building a safer, greener and more resilient transport network requires action on many fronts including better walking, cycling, public transport and electric vehicle facilities.

“Health, access for all and wellbeing are at the heart of all our plans, and this is no exception. People who cycle or walk to work are generally healthier and live longer than those who drive, with lower rates of heart disease, so it’s vital to create these opportunities.

“As well as encouraging people to drive less where possible, which will address the root cause of traffic congestion and frustrating delays, we need to provide high-quality infrastructure to make this an attractive, realistic option.

“We’re pleased to have one of the lowest rates of serious and fatal road collisions in the country - and many of those which happen are, sadly, due to other people’s actions beyond our control. However, we’ll do everything we can to address the challenge of reducing them further.

“We’re facing unprecedented financial challenges, so this will rely on external funding – and having a robust Local Transport Plan will put us the best position to secure this and make the borough a better place for everyone to live.”

Why the plan needs updating

All local highways authorities must have an up-to-date Local Transport Plan. This must be presented to the Department for Transport and can help secure funding.

The council’s existing plan, which runs from 2011 to 2026, has brought benefits like new walking and cycling routes, including the Bader Way from Woodley to Dinton Pastures Country Park and the greenway from Arborfield Green to California Country Park.

Agenda Item 7

It has led to Wokingham town centre improvements like the bus interchange at the station and the link from Wellington Road to Reading Road. It has also provided several major new roads, including the award-winning Observer Way at Arborfield, with shared footways and cycleways along their length.

However, with most of these now completed, changing travel trends after the pandemic and a greater focus on the climate emergency, the new Local Transport Plan must reflect changing local and national priorities.

Listening to your hopes and concerns

The council first consulted in early 2020 but events since then, including the pandemic and cost of living crisis, have hugely affected how people work, travel and use public services.

Because of this, further engagement was carried out in spring 2023 to ensure the council still understood everyone's views.

One key finding was that most people strongly agree with reducing vehicle emissions and air pollution. People highly agreed with making longer car journeys if this helped make walking and cycling to school safer for children.

The top three concerns were pedestrian safety, air quality and traffic congestion, while specific issues included children's safety, a lack of cycling infrastructure and narrow travel options.

All this was considered when drafting the Local Transport Plan and the council will continue listening as it moves to the next stages.

- ENDS -

Further information:

1. More from Cllr Paul Fishwick, executive member for active travel, transport and highways, at paul.fishwick@wokingham.gov.uk

NEWS RELEASE



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Date: 29 January 2024
Issued by: Debby Morgan

Issue No: 12/24

YOUR VIEWS SOUGHT ON TWO HOUSING STRATEGIES

Wokingham Borough Council is asking for feedback on two new draft housing strategies, one on affordable housing and the other on housing for priority groups of young people.

By affordable housing, the council means housing for those residents whose housing needs are not met by the general market, such as discounted rents and affordable home ownership arrangements.

The council is inviting everyone to feedback on the priorities and actions in the draft strategies until 18 February on its Engage Wokingham Borough platform.

[The need for affordable housing](#)

Wokingham borough is an expensive area, and with the added impact of rising energy prices, interest rates and inflation sending the country into a cost of living crisis, the need to address affordable housing is greater than ever.

The average price of a home in the borough is £511,505, which is nearly £220,000 more than the national average of £292,882. The current population of 177,500 people is expected to increase around nine per cent between 2018 and 2028.

As of September 2023, there were 606 households on the council's housing register identified as having priority housing needs. These are set out in the [Housing Allocation Policy](#) and include those fleeing domestic abuse, care leavers, members of the armed forces who have been injured in action, where someone has an urgent health or disability need or where the property is unsuitable such as being under occupied, over-crowded, posing a serious risk to life or has been compulsory purchased.

- MORE -

Agenda Item 8

Building on success

The draft Affordable Housing Strategy 2024 to 2028, co-produced with tenants, partners and other key stakeholders, builds on the success and learning of the previous strategy and looks to address future challenges.

The council has delivered a range of activities over the course of the current strategy, including delivering one of the highest number of new affordable homes in England over the past three years at 542.

It has also delivered specialist housing schemes for key workers, adult social care users, care leavers and temporary accommodation; been awarded government funding for projects such as tackling rough sleeping, refugee housing and improving energy rating; and helped people get private rented housing through schemes such as the deposit loan scheme.

The updated draft strategy prioritises understanding what the housing needs in the borough are, providing suitable accommodation options for the most vulnerable residents, and encouraging a positive social impact that promotes inclusive growth and develops thriving communities. It also looks to make homes healthy, safe, efficient, environmentally sustainable and well designed.

Increasing need for young people

There is an increasing need for affordable housing for young people, with 200 young people approaching the council about homelessness between October 2022 and September 2023.

Evictions nationwide are at an all-time high, reducing housing security, straining relationships and increasing family breakdowns; the leading cause of 16 and 17 year olds at risk of homelessness.

The council anticipates that there will be 172 care leavers requiring affordable housing over the next four years, partly due to an increase in unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) care leavers. The number of UASC has risen since 2022 when the government set mandatory targets for local authorities to take in UASC.

- MORE -

The draft Young People's Housing Strategy 2024 to 2028, co-produced with young people, residents and partners, focuses on the 16 and 17 year olds who are at risk of homelessness and those who are moving out of the care system. The draft strategy recognises that although other young people may need help, especially in owning their own home, their needs can be met through the Affordable Housing Strategy.

The young people's strategy prioritises expanding housing options for these groups of young people, supporting them to keep their tenancies, reducing homelessness and rough sleeping and working with young people to plan next steps for their housing needs.

Help us shape the next phase

Cllr Stephen Conway, leader of the council and executive member for housing, said: "As a council affordable housing remains one of our top priorities. Everyone deserves a safe and warm place to live.

"Since our last strategy, we have achieved many things, including increasing specialist housing for those needing more support such as care leavers, adult social care users and those sleeping rough, completed phase one of the Gorse Ride regeneration project and increased temporary accommodation for families at risk of homelessness.

"This is your opportunity to help shape the next phase of our affordable housing work, so please do take the time to feedback on our proposed strategies so that we can take your views into account during discussion and decisions."

For further support

Visit the council's [cost of living help hub](#) for the latest advice and support options.

- ENDS -

Further information:

1. More from Cllr Stephen Conway contact Stephen.conway@wokingham.gov.uk

03/01/2024

14:08

Wokingham Town Council

Page 1

Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 31/12/2023

Month No: 9

Cost Centre Report

	Actual Last Year	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available
<u>401 Highways and Planning</u>						
1106 Grant Funding (External)	4,800	5,200	2,640	(2,560)		
1163 Cycle locker income	0	80	300	220		
Highways and Planning :- Income	4,800	5,280	2,940	(2,340)		
4111 Bus Shelter Repairs	1,977	383	2,700	2,317	313	2,004
4529 Cycle lockers	4,800	1,147	2,640	1,493		1,493
Highways and Planning :- Indirect Expenditure	6,777	1,530	5,340	3,810	313	3,497
Net Income over Expenditure	(1,977)	3,749	(2,400)	(6,149)		
Grand Totals:- Income	4,800	5,280	2,940	(2,340)		
Expenditure	6,777	1,530	5,340	3,810	313	3,497
Net Income over Expenditure	(1,977)	3,749	(2,400)	(6,149)		
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(1,977)	3,749				