



Business Bulletin 2015



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Produced by Wokingham Borough Council Economic Sustainability team
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INTRODUCING YOUR MEMBERS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND FINANCE



Cllr Anthony Pollock

During the coming years, Wokingham Borough will see significant growth in housing, our town centres will be regenerated and an exciting new science park will be built. This will enhance our competitiveness and promote innovation and enterprise in a shifting global market place.

Whether your business is already located here, or you thinking of expanding or moving into the borough we would like to work with you to ensure your business venture is successful.

We are always keen to hear of ways we can support your business, so please do let us know your ideas on how we can help. We do hope you find this Business Bulletin a helpful mix of current news and future developments.



Cllr Stuart Munro

Cllr Anthony Pollock is Executive Member for Economic Development and Finance you can contact him at: anthony.pollock@wokingham.gov.uk. Cllr Stuart Munro is Deputy Executive Member for Economic Development and Finance and his email address is stuart.munro@wokingham.gov.uk.

Superfast Berkshire makes good progress with broadband rollout

Almost one hundred cabinets are now providing superfast broadband to premises across Berkshire.

So far, an additional 19,300 homes and businesses across Berkshire are now able to receive fibre broadband as a result of the Superfast broadband roll-out. This builds on those areas already covered by the commercial programme delivered by the private sector.

When phase 1 of the programme is completed at the end of 2015 more than 92% of Wokingham Borough's homes and businesses are expected to have access to fibre broadband as a result of the programme. This will see another 1879 properties and businesses benefiting from improved connectivity.

Wokingham Borough also hopes to benefit from the Superfast Extension Programme which will expand coverage up to 97%. Discussions are currently ongoing with a potential supplier and Broadband Delivery UK to see how this can be rolled out across Wokingham Borough and it is anticipated an announcement will be made in a few months' time.

To find out when superfast broadband is planned to reach your neighbourhood visit the project website at www.superfastberkshire.org.uk. To find out how to sign-up to the new fast speeds, contact your internet service provider or use a broadband comparison website to check on potential suppliers.



ELEVATE WOKINGHAM FIRST ANNIVERSARY

In September, Elevate Wokingham will be celebrating its first birthday. Over the past year the hub, based at Wokingham Library, has been able to support many young people into jobs, training or with careers advice.

Highlights of the past year include a work experience programme with the Council, Create & Elevate; an art commission for young people, and a construction brokerage service; supporting young people into jobs in the construction industry.

The team at Elevate Wokingham work with partners in the public, voluntary and private sector to provide a coherent and easy pathway into work. If you're a business who may be interested in supporting young people with a work experience placement, or want to find out more about apprenticeships, please get in touch with Sandie Evans or Angela Torr on the below email.

Elevate Wokingham now has a dedicated vacancy service on their website elevateme.wokingham.org.uk if you'd like any vacancies to be advertised on the site email elevate@wokingham.gov.uk.



Nicole Margetts

Elevate Wokingham employment and skills apprentice

Relief Roads

Wokingham Borough Council will be delivering five new major roads, all associated with new housing for growth and economic development.

The 2011 Core Strategy sets out plans for 2,500 homes south of Wokingham, 1,500 to the north of Wokingham, 2,500 north of the M4 at Shinfield and 3,500 homes on the garrison site at Arborfield. To deliver these houses four new highways will be needed.

Construction of the Shinfield Eastern

Relief Road (funded by a HCA loan of £24.7m) is well underway and will be delivered in the summer of 2016. The project includes a new bridge over the M4 from the existing Blackboy junction to the A327 where a new junction will be created.

Wokingham Borough Council also intends to bring forward the development of the Winnersh Relief Road. This will only be made possible by the development of 437 new houses and accompanying highway infrastructure at Hatch Farm Dairies,

Winnersh, linking the A329 Reading Road and the B3270 Lower Earley Way, this will effectively remove all traffic heading for Lower Earley and Shinfield from Winnersh Crossroads.



Train Travel

Rail travel and connectivity in the Thames Valley is about to be transformed with the £2bn electrification of the Great Western Mainline.

This is due to be completed by 2019 and will be complemented by a fleet of new electric high-speed trains. Electrifying the Great Western Mainline will improve journey times and paves the way for Crossrail to extended as far west as Reading.

Crossrail is an 85 mile £14bn project that will be fully operational in 2019. Crossrail will be supplemented by a new link off the Great Western Mainline to Heathrow Airport. In the longer term, rail travel from the Thames Valley will connect with HS2 at Old Oak common. The HS2 programme is planned for delivery in 2026 and will see an investment of £50bn. Old Oak Common, which is less than 20 minutes travel from Reading by train, will be transformed into a Canary Wharf style development, with even better access to rail and air travel.



Wokingham Train Station

Business Rates

Wokingham Borough Council has topped the national council tax collection charts for local authorities for 2014/15.

Council taxpayers in the Wokingham Borough continue to benefit from the most efficient council tax collection system in the country with the borough council collecting 99.5 per cent of the council tax it was owed for 2014/15 - up from 99.3 per cent and 99.4 per cent respectively from the previous two years.

Cllr Keith Baker, leader of Wokingham Borough Council, said: "We continuously face big financial challenges following the settlement from central government getting worse so I'd thank all those residents who pay

their council tax on time.

"It is a fantastic achievement to have the best collection rate amongst the local authorities in the country and a real credit to the efforts of our staff."

Efforts to collect the 0.5 per cent outstanding at March 31, 2015 will continue. For business rates the Wokingham Borough was joint third at 99.8% just behind Canterbury on 100% and Tower Hamlets on 99.9%.



Possible third runway at Heathrow

In the summer of 2015, The Davis Commission provided the Government with a report into airport capacity and economic growth for the south of England.

The report concluded that the development of a new runway at Heathrow will have a much larger economic benefit (up to £214bn) than the development of a new runway at Gatwick (which could generate up to £127bn). The Government will now make a decision on which option to progress and a decision has been promised before Christmas 2015. As the Davis Commission outlined in the report, the development costs and delivery of a new runway at Gatwick are much less about £7.5bn and can be delivered much quicker than the £14.8bn required to progress the Heathrow option which will take much longer to build.

Wokingham town centre regeneration

The Council's project to regenerate Wokingham town centre continues apace.

Planning consent was granted in March for the redevelopment of Peach Place, which will be replaced with a range of quality retail and leisure units facing out onto Peach Street and inwards to a new pedestrianised square on the site of the Rose Street car park. Work on site is expected to start early 2017 with an end date of late 2018.



A western view of the multi-story car park at Carnival Pool

Planning consent was also granted in July to move forward with delivering a new 529 space Multi-storey car park with ground floor bowling alley on the Carnival Pool site. The application also granted outline consent for additional development including a large extension to the existing leisure centre, further commercial and leisure floorspace and residential units. This new car park and leisure facility will help meet the requirements of a rapidly growing town as well as supporting the centre whilst other developments are going on. Work to deliver the new car park is expected to start in spring 2016 with completion by the end of the year.

Alongside these projects work is ongoing on finalising designs for the Elms Field phase of the regeneration. These proposals will anchor the south of the town centre with a new boutique cinema, foodstore and Premier Inn hotel. The designs will also deliver new retail and leisure units alongside a high quality town park, framed around the edges by new residential properties. A planning application is expected to be submitted by the end of the year.

You can find out more about the Council's regeneration projects at www.regenerationcompany.co.uk.

Bracknell & Wokingham College Developing people, developing business

Bracknell & Wokingham College has a BA (Hons) Business Studies Degree which is designed to help businesses by:

- Growing and developing the skills of existing employees in line with business needs
- Recruiting and retaining high-quality staff
- Ensuring that their business is future proofed through the introduction of new ideas and continued creativity
- Creating a talent pool from the existing staff and new entrants to support succession planning and organisational development

"With the coursework being based around the company's own core principles and internal training policies I feel I am getting the best education from both sides"

Simon Lane - Manager, Bombardier Engineering

During the four years the successful student will:

- Achieve a BA (Hons) Business Studies degree (University of Chichester)
- Develop their skill base
- Make a direct impact on business performance

To find out more about this or other opportunities at the College for you or your employees:

Online bracknell.ac.uk/he | Email inbusiness@bracknell.ac.uk | Phone 01344 766432 | or to request a prospectus bracknell.ac.uk/contact-us

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