



Our Council Plan

FOREWORD

We wish to thank everyone who has contributed to delivering our vision and priorities over the last four years. There is much to celebrate in terms of our achievements, as there is to learn and reflect upon in terms of ongoing challenges; such as affordable housing, growth in the number of children and adults needing our social care services, and decreasing Government grants.

Some of the achievements we are particularly proud of on behalf of the Council are:

- The number of new homes we have delivered and the increase in the amount of funding per house from developers to invest in vital infrastructure such as road, community facilities and healthcare.
- Being one of the country's highest performing health and care services when it comes to helping people in hospital back into their homes and receiving suitable care.
- The borough consistently ranking as one of the top five places people choose to live. Residents know they can bring up their families with access to high performing schools, great leisure and sports facilities, and world class employment opportunities.
- Having adapted the way we work, investing in our technology and workforce, to become a 21st Century Council that is customer focused. Delivering efficient value for money services and adopting a commercial mindset in how we collaborate with local communities and partners.

This plan sets out our achievements, our actions for 2018/19 and looks forward to how we will develop our next long term plan, which will be a partnership plan for the borough. I hope you can join us in the next chapter of our journey in shaping our future vision values and priorities.

We will carry on investing in towns, villages and communities. The Council has agreed £500 million of investment and hopes to secure more funding from developer for vital infrastructure. However these are challenging times with reduced Government funding and complex challenges facing our residents and communities. We will be bold and ambitious in tackling these issues with you. Helping our communities to be self sufficient, live independently, supporting the most vulnerable and promoting equality of opportunity for all.

Cllr Charlotte Haitham Taylor

Manjeet Gill

Leader of the Council

Chief Executive

INTRODUCTION

The Borough of Wokingham is one of the best places where people choose to live and are the happiest.

The Borough of Wokingham has had one of the highest levels of economic growth outside of London.

In 2014 we set a vision to be a "great place to live, and an even better place to do business." Independent results show that this vision has been achieved and our ambition is to both maintain these standards and do more so that we have inclusive prosperity for all.

The purpose of this document is to review the previous four years and share what has been achieved over the period of the plan under the priorities we said we would work to.

These were:

- Improve educational attainment and focus on every child achieving their potential;
- Invest in regenerating towns and villages, support social and economic prosperity, whilst encouraging business growth;
- Ensure strong sustainable communities that are vibrant and supported by well designed development;
- Tackle traffic congestion in specific areas of the Borough;
- Improve the customer experience when accessing Council services.

The above priorities were delivered in line with the following underpinning principles:

- Offer excellent value for your Council Tax;
- Provide affordable homes;
- Look after the vulnerable;
- Improve health, wellbeing and the quality of life;
- Maintain and improve waste collection, recycling and fuel efficiency;
- Deliver quality in all that we do.

In this document we have summarised what has been delivered and what our key actions will be for

2018/19.

One of the new 3G football pitches at Arborfield





This plan review also sets out the steps to transition to our next long term plan. The intention is to reflect how our vision and values have adapted to changes in community priorities, and where they may be similar to the previous plan, such as "Ensure value for money as an efficient Council".

The last eighteen months has seen us adopt a new operating model called the 21st Century Council. Its focus is on a more streamlined council, working within the reduced funding compared to four years ago. It maintains an emphasis on being customer focused and understanding the needs of our residents. This has meant investing in new technology that enables residents to access services and information in the way that is easiest for them. Our investment in technology is to enable better services but we are committed to ensure that those without technology are not left behind if they do not have access. Over 23,000 customers have registered for the Council's online customer account that enables them to access services digitally at their convenience. Our investment in technology also enables the Council to utilise information to manage growing demands in areas such as health, and the care needs of a growing older population.

Localism is a key part of 21st Century Council, building on our work directly with residents, or with local partners such as parish councils, GPs and community groups, to develop and regenerate our towns and villages as they grow and evolve. Bringing decisions and services closer to local people. Most importantly we have improved our ways of working to be more commercial and collaborative.

By commercial, we mean that we have delivered social priorities such as housing with a commercial return to the Council, so that we can reinvest this in maintaining services for our most vulnerable residents across the borough.

We have expanded this approach to other areas such as our property portfolio. Collaboration and engagement with our partners and other stakeholders is how better outcomes can be delivered. We want to be more creative in how we do this in future, so that we carry on delivering results efficiently, safely and to the best quality possible.

Developing Leisure Services.

Between 2014/15 and 2016/17 we have invested £3.2 million in Leisure Services.



The Council's vision has been about "a great place to live and an even better place to do business." National surveys show that the Borough continues to be amongst the top places people choose to live. Business growth has exceeded our original forecasts as evidenced by our partnership plans with the Local Enterprise Partnership. We want to continue with this vision as an underpinning principle going forward.

We want our vision to better reflect the current times and the matters that are most important to our residents. We want to develop a future vision for our next long term plan that is shared by partners. Our initial thoughts for what a future vision should encompass is: "A Borough that nurtures individual responsibility, assists those who are unable to be self sufficient and promotes equality of opportunity." We want to hear views from our partners, community and especially young people to shape the next vision with their hopes and aspirations.

We will work with all our partners to ensure that we tailor our approach to the different needs of individuals, whether they are a resident, customer, live in a rural or urban area, are a business or a partner, such as a charities or the police. We want to invest in prevention services that increase or maintain independence, and we must work in partnership with residents and communities to deliver these services. We want to be a borough that embraces localism, with communities and the voluntary sector empowered to help people to help themselves, and others.

The final section of this plan details how we will develop our future Council Plan, a list of stakeholders we will engage with, and a timetable of actions over the year to develop the new Council Plan for 2019/20-2023/24. It also provides details of the investment we are making in the future, including a £500 million capital programme.



Investing in our schools
Between 2014/15 and
2016/17 we have
invested £61 million in
our school buildings.



IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND FOCUS ON EVERY CHILD ACHIEVING THEIR POTENTIAL

We planned to

Work together to secure a world class, full education, from early years experiences to adulthood, delivering outstanding progress and attainment for each person. We will encourage and draw on best practice in Wokingham schools and beyond, in a framework of challenge and support for school improvement which is inspiring, systematic, sustainable and accountable.

Review and re–commission the 0-5 year old offer across the Local Authority, health and early years sector to ensure that children are school ready, emotionally resilient and healthy.

Deliver achievement focused new Primary and Secondary provision including new Primary schools and a new Secondary school in the south of the borough.

Ensure more Wokingham Borough children have access to good or better schools and settings, and mobilise the range of resources around communities and schools to deliver focus on identified priorities and impact on improvements

Implement the changes required to deliver on the supported changes set out in the Children and Families Bill and to go further to bring the child and family into the centre of assessment, planning and support processes.

Design and implement the placements strategy to ensure children in care remain in their community of origin, have access to high quality and consistent teaching, receive high quality care, and are enabled to live within permanent care arrangements within a timescale that makes sense to them.

In 2017, Wokingham
Borough pupils
outperformed all other
authorities in the South
East for achievement of a
9-4 grade in Maths and
English.

92% of pupils attend a
Wokingham Borough
school which is rated
"Good" or "Outstanding"
by Ofsted.



Pupils in Wokingham Borough schools achieved the highest attainment, across the South East, at Key Stage 1 in English Reading & Writing, Mathematics and Science in 2017.

Addington School for children with additional needs rated Outstanding by Ofsted for a 3rd consecutive inspection.

Over 76% of children aged between 0-5 years are assessed as having a Good Level of Development within Wokingham Borough compared to national average of 71%.

We implemented changes set out in the Children & Families Bill. In 2017/18 we issued and maintained 860 Education, Health and Care Plans to support children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities progress towards their aspirations in order to enter independent or supported employment and living.

We built Bohunt Secondary School, which transferred to its newly completed permanent premises on the Arborfield Garrison site in September 2017. The site includes new sports facilities serving both the school and the Wokingham Borough community. The new school will offer 1,200 places.

We have expanded Shinfield Infant and Nursery School with additional classrooms, a new multipurpose hall, refurbished classroom blocks, and a new school meals kitchen. The expansion of these schools brought an additional 210 places in Shinfield. In addition, the expansion of the Grazeley Parochial CofE VA Primary School brought a further 105 places to Shinfield.

We enabled the building of Floreat Montague Park Primary School built through local housing development, and selected the Academy provider. The school transferred to its permanent accommodation in 2017, offering 420 places.

In the last 12 months we have supported over 800 adults and 1,000 children in gaining positive outcomes such as Early Years Foundation Stage and Ready for School.

We designed and implemented our Placement Strategy. Success in recruiting foster careers has resulted in 97% of children and young people coming into care being placed locally so far in 2017/18, enabling them to remain in their community.

- work together to secure a world class, fulfilling educational offer from early years through to adulthood to ensure each person makes outstanding progress and attainment. We will encourage and draw on best practice in Wokingham Borough schools and beyond, in a framework of challenge and support for school improvement which is inspiring, systematic, sustainable and accountable.
- continue to improve the 0-5 year old offer across the local authority, health and early years settings to ensure that children are school ready, emotionally resilient and healthy.
- continue to deliver new primary and secondary provision across Wokingham Borough, in response to local needs.
- ensure all Wokingham Borough children have access to good or outstanding schools, colleges and early years settings.
- continue to close the achievement gap for all vulnerable children including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- where necessary, reshape and extend Special Educational Need (SEN) provision to better match local provision to Wokingham needs.
- continue to ensure that children in care can have their needs met as close to their community of origin as possible.
- work with school nurses and health visitors to increase children's resilience.



INVEST IN REGENERATING TOWNS AND VILLAGES, SUPPORT SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY, WHILST ENCOURAGING BUSINESS GROWTH

We planned to

Submit the new planning applications to regenerate Wokingham town centre, and moving forward to create a town that is vibrant, prosperous and thriving, maintaining the balance of the new and the historic.

Ensure there is a great mix of new retailers coming to the town to occupy the new shops as we build them, so that as we build units, we will fill them.

Progress the design for the Carnival Pool site, to create a new and exciting leisure led offer at the heart of the town. We plan to engage and consult widely with you, so that what we develop reflects what you tell us you want to see.

Implement the City Deal to enhance the support business receives, to improve our local training offers, and to support a commitment to getting local people into locally created jobs.

Focus support for our local businesses, and continue to work with the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership to drive growth and ensure that the infrastructure needs of the borough are recognised in all strategic plans and bids for funding.

Work closely with our town and parish councils to support local communities, including developing some early pilots for joint/delegated service delivery.



Created 60+ opportunities (new jobs, apprenticeships and graduate posts) through Employment & Skills Plans with developers as part of Section 106 agreements.

Carnival Pool Phase 1 delivered. Phase 2 planning application agreed for Swimming Pool, Concert Hall and Library.

22 new key worker homes delivered in Wokingham town centre.

City Deal funding helped Elevate by brokering 51 apprenticeships and 177 jobs to support 16-24 year olds not in education or employment.

Work is progressing with regeneration of Wokingham town centre. January 2017 saw work commence at Peach Place to create a new public square, shops, restaurants, four town houses and 22 key worker apartments—income from the retail units will provide income for the provision of services across the Borough. This will be completed by December 2018.

Construction works have commenced at Elms Field in preparation for development in 2018. The development includes new retail and restaurants, an Everyman Cinema, Premier Inn Hotel, Aldi Foodstore, a range of residential properties, a new road linking Shute End to Wellington Road and an improved park and play area, providing new cultural and leisure opportunities. As well as creating a vibrant town centre this will provide revenue to support the council's vital services.

We completed and opened the new 529 space multi-storey car park to the public in June 2017 and American Amusements Ltd opened their new facility, Wokingham Superbowl, in November 2017 as part of the Phase 1 Carnival Pool redevelopment. Planning consent for the second phase of the Carnival Pool site has been secured and the site will include a new larger leisure centre, library, commercial space and apartments. Work is expected to start in 2020/21 and will be coordinated with the redevelopment of Bulmershe Leisure Centre in Woodley.

We have appointed a new operator for our leisure centres. This will increase revenue for the Council, whilst adopting a public health-led performance contract which aims to improve the health and wellbeing of the population through physical activity. We have started to deliver new and enhanced leisure facilities at Arborfield and Ryeish Green.

- deliver the programme of work for Peach Place, Elms Field and Carnival Pool in Wokingham to improve our retail and leisure offer in a way that also delivers a commercial return.
- work in partnership with our town & parish councils to enable growth and community development.
- look to other towns across the Borough to improve the infra-structure and increase the vibrancy and vitality of the communities.
- continue to implement the City Deal to assist young people in accessing local employment and training and, in turn, help meet the needs of local businesses.
- support our local businesses, by continuing to work with the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership and Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce to drive growth, and ensuring that the infrastructure needs of the borough are recognised in all strategic plans and bids for funding.
- work closely with our town and parish councils to support local communities, including developing some early pilots for joint/delegated service delivery and joint investment priorities.
- develop neighbourhood estates investment programme by commencing with the Gorse Ride Estate in Finchampstead.



ENSURE STRONG COMMUNITIES THAT ARE VIBRANT AND SUPPORTED BY WELL-DESIGNED DEVELOPMENT

We planned to

Implement the Council's Community Infrastructure Levy to ensure that funding for vital infrastructure in the Borough is secured and we will work with our towns and parishes to ensure that local infrastructure provision reflects our joint local priorities.

Adopt and implement the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) in 2014/15 to raise awareness of flood risks and help to develop proposals for reducing those risks across communities.

Ensure that when considering planning and related applications we promote the highest quality of design and secure the greatest amount of new infrastructure that we can justify

Work with towns and parishes and the Strategic Development Location Forums to ensure that as the new developments are delivered, both existing and new communities are well supported and have access to the high quality community facilities they require.

Develop a modern vision for our libraries ensuring local access to high quality services.

Work with Re3 (our waste and recycling partnership) to further develop our local waste strategy and we will work with our communities and our partners to raise recycling rates.



Three new 3G sports pitches.

84% people satisfied with their homes.

Over 450 affordable homes delivered.

Recycling more plastics and food waste.

5 km of cycle ways.

2.25 km of new greenways.

Investigation of over 700 potential breaches of planning control.

We are delivering well designed, high quality developments. The New Homes Survey of new houses on our Strategic Development Locations shows that 84% of respondents are satisfied with their homes, an increase of 4% from last year. We determined over 3,600 planning applications and defended 93 planning applications of which 74% were dismissed. We have adopted a Local Risk Management Strategy and we work closely with developers on flood risk mitigation measures.

We continue to be a good landlord and meet our regulatory requirements, with 99.9% of the housing stock meeting the Decent Homes Standard. Our flagship development in 2017 at Phoenix Avenue, a £13.5 million scheme in the heart of Wokingham's Norreys community on the former Eustace Crescent site, has successfully housed nearly 68 households in either social rented or intermediate rented homes from our housing register.

Our Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is now a key funding source for strategic infrastructure in the borough. Between April 2015, to December 2017 the Council has secured £18.7m in CIL related to new developments in the Borough. Of this, £2.8m has, or will be, given to town or parish councils where that development is taking place. The remainder is allocated to strategic infrastructure projects, such as road improvements, schools and leisure, to support development and the local community

- continue to progress our Local Plan update. We will consult on a draft Local Plan and within a year submit the final version to Government for examination.
- ensure the Council's Community Infrastructure Levy continues to secure funding for vital infrastructure in the Borough, remains fit for purpose and is reviewed alongside the Local Plan.
- continue to work with our towns and parishes to ensure that local infrastructure provision reflects our joint local priorities.
- ensure that when considering planning and related applications we promote the highest quality of design and secure the greatest amount of new infrastructure that we can justify.
- continue to work to safeguard the environmental quality of the Borough to ensure public safety and protection of its residents and businesses.
- work with towns and parishes and the SDL Forums to ensure that as the new developments are delivered, both existing and new communities are well supported and have access to the high quality community facilities they require.
- continue to implement our modern vision for our libraries, ensuring local access to high quality services.
- work with Re3 to further develop our local waste strategy and work with our communities and partners to raise recycling rates.
- continue to expand and improve our leisure offer. We will renovate Ryeish Green Leisure Centre opening in October 2018 and progress with our plans to demolish and rebuild an improved Bulmershe Leisure Centre during 2020.



TACKLE TRAFFIC CONGESTION IN SPECIFIC AREAS OF THE BOROUGH

We planned to

Ensure that new development has the necessary transport infrastructure to have minimal impact on the existing transport network, and we will protect the existing highway network by resisting development that that will have a significantly harmful and unmitigated impact on it.

Ensure that new development provides funding for strategic transport infrastructure (e.g. funding for distributor roads) to alleviate pressure on our roads and that all opportunities to secure further funding including from Central Government, the Local Enterprise Partnership and elsewhere are exploited.

Deliver the Local Sustainable Transport Fund projects, including cycle paths on the A329, traffic signal improvements on the Showcase cinema, and further personal and business travel planning on the A329 corridor.

Deliver operational Park and Ride sites at Mereoak and Winnersh.

Work with towns and parishes to identify local solutions to issues of congestion.

Increase choice of transport options including public transport, cycleway and footpaths.

Cycling at Finchampstead Baptist Church

2.4 million annual passenger journeys on local buses within Wokingham Borough.

14% increase in passenger journeys on local buses in the last three years.



Over 1,400 children (aged 10-14 years) trained on Bikeability cycle training courses at Wokingham schools; majority of which funded by Department for Transport Bikeability grant.

14% increase in cycle journeys on A329 corridor since 2013.

The Council continues to deliver a varied programme of transport investment across the Borough to address traffic congestion, promote economic growth and deliver new homes, as detailed in our Local Plan and Local Transport Plan. There are six main road projects underway to help our residents make their journeys easier around the Borough.

The Council's flagship "My Journey" project continues to promote and deliver sustainable transport schemes, activities and information to new residents as they move into the borough. This has been supported by the early inclusion of new bus services, such as the Leopard 10 in Shinfield and the 125 in North Wokingham. We have delivered the latest section of the A329 cycleway, which provides a continuous link between the Three Tuns and Wokingham town centre and includes upgraded traffic signals and remarked carriageway surfaces.

We opened our first 'Greenway' in California Country Park; which provides a series of traffic free routes for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders linking up key parts of the Borough.

We have invested in, and opened new Park and Ride sites on the A329 Winnersh Triangle and the A33 at Mereoak, which are commercially run by Reading Buses. These sites include two 50kWh Rapid Car Chargers to support the uptake of electric vehicles.

We have lobbied for improved rail services across the Borough. From December 2018 there will be increased train frequencies on Reading to Waterloo and Reading to Gatwick Services. January 2017 saw the introduction of electric services on the Great Western Mainline serving Twyford.

The Council inspected and maintained 720km of highways and footways, making safe 3,150 potholes, and processed 55,000 notices for works to the highway to co-ordinate works. Over 13,500 streetlights have been replaced with new energy saving lanterns across the Borough.

- ensure that new developments have the necessary transport infrastructure to minimise the impact
 on the existing transport network. We will protect the existing highway network by resisting
 developments that that will have a significantly harmful and unmitigated impact on it.
- ensure that new developments provide funding for strategic transport infrastructure (for example funding for distributor roads) to alleviate pressure on our roads. All opportunities to secure further funding including from Central Government, the Local Enterprise Partnership and elsewhere will be explored and exploited.
- deliver new and improved Park and Ride sites at Thames Valley Park/ Winnersh Parkway.
- continue to exercise our Civil Parking Enforcement powers to improve the safety of our roads, ensure that parking is fair and reduce anti-social parking.
- continue to work with towns and parishes to identify local solutions to issues of congestion.
- continue to deliver sustainable transport initiatives including public transport, active travel and smarter choices as detailed within our Local Transport Plan.



LOOK AFTER VULNERABLE PEOPLE

We planned to

Use the Better Care Fund to improve outcomes and reduce hospital stays for vulnerable people by integrating Health and Social Care services.

Ensure our communities are dementia friendly.

Focus on outcomes based assessment and improved re-ablement services so that everyone is helped to be as independent as possible.

Develop and implement an early intervention strategy building on what works well now to support and enable children and families needs to be identified and met at the earliest opportunity, to empower families to meet the welfare and emotional health needs of their children, and ensure children are kept safe and their welfare promoted; including reviewing and re-commissioning emotional health and wellbeing services including primary Children's and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) to improve the emotional health and wellbeing of vulnerable children and young people.

Implement a new placements commissioning strategy to ensure that children in care receive the highest quality care and support.

Adopt and implement the Young People's Housing Strategy in order that children at risk of homelessness are prevented from becoming homeless; that vulnerable young people who cannot live at home are able to access safe, supportive accommodation, and that care leavers have access to suitable accommodation that supports them become full members of a stable community and into adulthood.



Fosters 34 self-contained apartments provide older people with a home that enables independent living and 24 hour onsite care & support by Optalis.

128 care leavers have been supported since 2015.

859,000 free school meals were provided in the academic year 2016/17.

The proportion of service users who say our services make them feel safe and secure increased to 90% in 2016/17.

Residential and nursing placements have reduced and are within our target of less than 11 per month.

Wokingham Borough is rated 10th best in the country for achieving employment for adults with a learning disability.

Our services have supported 128 young people to help reduce substance misuse since 2015.

Wokingham Borough is the Corporate Parent for 100 Children in Care and currently protects 100 vulnerable children via a Child Protection Plan.

We have provided Short Breaks for children and young people with disabilities including 529 overnight stays, support and activities including 4,698 hours day care, and 2,791 hours Saturday Club. Bridges Resource Centre service for disabled children and young people rated Outstanding by Ofsted.

The Borough is in the top 10 local authorities nationally for getting people home from hospital when they are ready to leave.

We are on target to deliver around 500 new affordable homes, meeting a range of needs, before March 2018. As part of the implementation of our Young People's Housing Strategy, we commissioned a new purpose-built supported housing scheme for vulnerable young people at 52 Reading Road, which is due to complete in March 2018. Wokingham Housing Group have welcomed their first tenants at Grovelands and Anson Walk; both schemes house people who may otherwise have been made homeless.

Wokingham Community Mental Health Team (CMHT) is rated Good and our Older Persons Mental Health Service is rated Outstanding by the Care Quality Commission.

We have linked work programmes to patient pathways in the Community Health & Social Care (CHASC) Service so that vulnerable patients can be directly referred and supported to realise the physical and social benefits of exercise.

- continue to use the Better Care Fund to improve outcomes and reduce hospital stays for vulnerable people by integrating Health and Social Care services.
- ensure high quality services and provision to support the needs of people with dementia, in response to local needs.
- work to ensure maximum independence through timely assessments in response to local needs.
- continue to improve and deliver early help services and statutory services to children and their families, to ensure children are kept safe and their welfare is promoted.
- through our Placements Strategy continue to ensure sufficient places are commissioned to ensure that children in care receive the highest quality care and support.
- continue to improve support and opportunities for carers in our community including mental health support to carers.
- implement new ways of working to develop the local community and voluntary sector to improve people's health and wellbeing.
- work with our housing companies and housing association partners to deliver a mix of affordable housing to meet the needs of the local community, including specialist housing for vulnerable people.
- work with our health care partners to improve services by continuing to develop integrated health and social care services.
- increase the number of people that are helped to remain living at home after a period of reablement.
- continue to provide responsive services to support patient discharge from acute care settings.
- continue to improve safeguarding practice and ensure it is easy for local people to refer their concerns to us.
- ensure closer integration of adult mental health services in Wokingham Borough.

IMPROVE THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE WHEN ACCESSING COUNCIL SERVICES.

We planned to

Implement the Council's Improving the Customer Experience Strategy that seeks to maximise the customer and residents perception across all Council Services and maximise first point resolution.

Adopt a revised Statement of Community Involvement to ensure that local residents and our partners know how comment on and influence our approach to land use planning, and use the results of our New Homes Survey to improve the quality of future development in the Borough.

Develop an engagement strategy so that the voice of children, young people, parents and carers are understood and taken into account in service design and delivery across all parts of the Council.

Rationalise Council assets and establish the new community asset in areas of regeneration in a way that maximises service delivery (e.g. through co-location of services) and minimises the operational running costs of services for service reinvestment or reducing the cost of council tax.



Over 65% of calls and emails resolved via first contact.

Handled over 140,000 telephone calls in 2017.

WBC received over 26,000 email requests and handled around 9,000 web chats.

Over 23,000 customers have registered for an online customer account.

21st Century Council is an ambitious reform which will see internal processes reduced and customer service improvements to residents. Under Phase 1 of the 21st Century Council Programme we have saved £2 million per year.

We have redesigned our website to ensure that content is accessible via mobile devices and that our information is easier to find and use.

We are moving more of our services online and an increasing number of customers are using our web chat facility whilst using the Council website; enhancing their experience with advisors responding quickly to their enquiry. We offer a number of services which are completely handled online, such as land charges, disabled parking badges, and school admission applications where we continue to provide a mediated support service for those who may either need further assistance or are unable to access the internet, or may just prefer this choice of access to these services.

By upskilling our Customer Service teams, and enabling them wider access to relevant systems, we have improved the number of enquiries we resolve at first point of contact.

Feedback we received from customers attending our 'Meet the Council' events showed that we are meeting or exceeding their expectations two thirds of the time and feedback was particularly positive in areas such as our willingness to help and how easy it is for customers to communicate with us.

We adopted a revised Statement of Community Involvement that communicates how residents can get involved in the planning process.

- become closer to becoming a self sufficient council funded from Council Tax, Business Rates and other income sources without any general financial support from the Government in the form of the Revenue Support Grant.
- identify opportunities and acquisitions to invest in commercial properties to provide an income to the Council over and above the rate of borrowing. We will use this return to fund vital Council services. In 2018/19 we will build capability in this area and begin to build our £100m commercial property portfolio. Wokingham Housing Ltd will return £700k to the general funds of the Council.
- implement the 21st Century Programme that will deliver better customer service and transparency, making it easier to transact with the Council and more options to access services in different ways.
 While self serve will be actively promoted, there will also be traditional options for those who need or want them.
- maintain high resident satisfaction with new homes and engagement to continue to drive improvements in the quality of new developments in the Borough.
- engage with our housing tenants in the design and delivery of housing services.
- we will lobby local government on fairer funding to keep local taxes local to meet our needs.



OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- Fewer adults waiting over 28 days for an Occupational Therapy or Social Work Assessment; reduced from 31% in 2016/17 to 6% in 2017/18.
- Fewer children who have received social work support are requiring our services for a second time.
- Since April 2016, 16 families have a member who has returned to continuous employment and ten
 families have achieved significant and sustained progress thanks to services we have provided
 through the National Troubled Families Programme.
- More of our older people are being supported to stay in their own home. Older people admitted to
 hospital are experiencing fewer discharge delays. Successful introduction of Step Down Beds
 preventing 'bed blocking' in hospital.
- Wokingham had the 4th lowest rate of first time youth offending in the South East in 2016/17.
- We have continued to invest in our libraries to provide longer opening hours; loaning over 750,000 items and have had 470,000 visits to our ten libraries during 2017.
- Older People's Services continue to deliver carers' education courses for people caring for people with dementia.
- The number of people with a learning disability who live in their own homes, or with their families, has increased to 78%.
- Through our support, the number of people admitted to residential and nursing care homes has reduced; this has enabled them to live in their own home for longer.
- Public Health have commissioned Solutions4Health Stop Smoking services to become the first local authority in the country to bring its smoking prevalence into single figures; now at only 8.8%.
- We have managed and maintained 217 hectares of Country Parks, over 100 hectares of nature reserves and 59 hectares of Suitable Alternative Natural Green spaces. We managed 100 children's play areas.
- Worked with volunteers who committed over 2,000 days worth of support in our Country Parks, helping our Countryside Services to manage and maintain around 380 hectares of countryside sites.
 Worked with 1,400 children on environmental education activities.
- In 2017, we allocated 2,155 primary school places, 575 junior school places and 1,945 secondary school places for children resident in the Borough. We also allocated 1,555 in-year applications within 20 days. We support our schools to deliver high quality education for 26,315 pupils in our 69 schools (including maintained schools, Pupil Referral Units and academies). In 2017 this included teacher training (170 courses) and training sessions for governors (1,084).
- 2,678 children aged between 2 and 4 years, attended our 126 Early Years Settings. Over 30% of 3 and 4 year olds, attending nursery provision in the Borough in 2016/17, were eligible and took up their 30 hours free extended entitlement.
- We collected £112 million of Council Tax from 66,000 properties and £66 million of business rates which we retain, £13.7 million from 4,000 properties with collection rates of 99.6% and 99.7%. In 2016/17 Wokingham topped the national Council Tax collection charts for all local authorities.

Investing in and Delivering Our Council Plan

The Council will bring out the potential of all its assets and resources. We will use our assets to lever in additional resources. This could be using our funding to achieve other external funding, help communities to help themselves and others, and develop our people with the skills needed.

The Council has looked at all its operations to make sure they are fit for purpose. Our 21st Century Council operating model is about putting the customer at the heart of how we organise service delivery. It includes being more digital and investing in the technology to enable greater convenience in how customers access the Council. It enables us to gain greater insight into the needs and demands upon services. This means our reducing resources will be better prioritised and targeted, with commissioning and procurement grounded with evidence based decisions. Our people are our biggest asset, and we are developing our staff and management structures to make sure roles and abilities are relevant to an increasingly digital, commercial and collaborative customer focused approach.

Thanks to the Borough Council's carefully planned developments which are bringing significant contributions from housing developers, attracting Central Government capital grants and through prudent borrowing, we are able to translate people's priorities into day-to-day reality. This means the Borough Council is able to invest an unprecedented half a billion pounds during the next three years in areas that matter most to local people.

Full details of our capital programme are given over the page but some of the highlights include:

- Roads and tackling traffic congestion: £158million. Includes construction of six new relief roads, highways maintenance and improvements.
- Education: £49.3million. Includes new schools; improvements to school buildings; providing new school places and enhanced provision for children and young people with disabilities.
- Regenerating towns and villages, supporting social and economic prosperity: £170million.
 Includes affordable housing; leisure and sports facilities; country parks and play areas and
 Wokingham town centre regeneration, and superfast broadband.
- Building strong sustainable communities: £52.7million. Includes new cycleways, greenways and byways; street lighting replacement scheme; social housing; waste schemes; flood alleviation and drainage scheme; park and ride schemes; and a community centre at Shinfield.
- Commercial assets: £100million. Includes investing in commercial assets to generate income to fund vital services.
- Infrastructure: £4.5million. Includes upgrades to IT to make it more efficient, effective and easier
 for residents to use Council services, and to maintain and refurbish buildings that are used by
 residents accessing adult social care services.



Capital Programme

This table provides details of the significant capital investment the Council is making.

	Manad	Wasan B	Mara 8	
Asset Type	Year 1 2018/19	Year 2 2019/20	Year 3 2020/21	Total
Car parking	2,535	900	1,214	4,649
Cultural enhancement/new build	1,050	1,136	0	2,186
cycle Infrastructure Improvement scheme	950	950	950	2,850
Developer contributions to forward funded schemes	7,006	2,954	506	10,466
Flood Alleviation / Drainage	1,099	1,090	190	2,379
Foot/bridal/cycle ways enhancements/new build	1,320	1,095	1,045	3,460
Mandatory Disabled Facility Grants	806	808	806	2,418
Safety / Crash Barriers	713	713	713	2,139
Social Housing	5,900	8,100	7,300	21,300
Street Lighting Asset Replacement & column testing	19	19	19	57
Waste Schemes	80	580	100	760
Ensure strong sustainable communities that are vibrant and supported by well-designed development	21,478	18,343	12,843	52,664
Enhancing Provision for Children & Young People with Disabilities	71	71	71	213
Schools	8,740	17,072	23,321	49,133
improve educational attainment and focus on every child achieving their potential	8,811	17,143	23,392	49,346
Adult social care asset enhancement/new build	95	95	95	285
IT Systems (Including hardware/software)	566	585	856	2,007
Strategic asset enhancement/New build	45,710	55,733	733	102,176
Improve the customer experience when accessing services	46,371	56,413	1,684	104,468
Affordable housing future schemes (to be approved)	0	8,579	11,340	19,919
Affordable housing initiatives	21,135	0	967	22,102
Country parks & play areas	1,945	965	360	3,270
Leisure facilities	4,982	40	17,245	22,267
Strategic Capital Reserve	2,000	2,000	2,000	6,000
Strategic Development	442	749	95	1,286
Town Centre Regeneration	29,804	29,713	16,101	75,618
Wokingham Housing Limited	6,000	7,590	6,000	19,590
invest in regenerating towns and villages, support social and economic prosperity, whilst encouraging business growth	66,308	49,636	54,108	170,052
Highway Bridges	494	1,900	1,378	3,772
Highways and Maintenance	2,280	2,280	2,280	6,840
Highways Footway Structural Maintenance & Improvement	95	95	95	285
Road & Highways Infrastructure Improvement scheme	34,140	60,997	51,981	147,118
Provision for Super-Fast Broadband	0	0	0	(
Tackie traffic congestion in specific areas	37,009	65,272	55,734	158,01
Total	179,977	206,807	147,761	534,545

Looking Forward—Transition to a New Borough Plan in 2019

This section outlines how we will prepare our future Borough Plan and what we think should be its key components based on our review and engagement with stakeholders, and what makes a good strategic plan. We are going to be creating a Borough Plan that pulls together contributions from across all the stakeholders in the Borough. The Council's contribution will be one amongst many to making the Borough a better place.

Vision and Values

As with our previous plans, it is important to have a clear vision that acts as the golden thread in all we do. We want to engage with partners as well as all within the Council so that we have a shared vision. Similarly our values need to be shaped and shared; we want to be more collaborative, commercial, and customer focused, as well as carrying on with values of providing efficient, value for money services. We want to embrace the potential of digital technology where it can make a difference to our priorities. We think this should be a core value in all that we do. Equally, our role as a Council should be as much about advocacy and influence, as it is about delivering services directly, or in partnership. One of our values is to empower and support individuals and communities to help themselves and others. We want to encourage strong networks, community groups and a thriving voluntary sector.

Our Priorities

There are many priorities in our current plan that should be priorities in the future, such as educational attainment and housing. We want to prioritise what we focus on and what may be a greater priority compared to four years ago, such as community safety, for example.

• The Golden Thread

As a large organisation, working in partnership, a shared vision, values, and priorities are important. In executing delivery of these with maximum impact, it is important that we have the right delivery arrangements in place:

- democratic oversight;
- outcome and success measures with aligned key performance indicators are in place;
- "golden thread" of vison, policy and delivery are clear.

A future Borough Plan would seek to do this for all priorities, where everyone, including our partners have clarity on their roles, actions to be taken, monitoring delivery and celebrating achievements by giving deserved thanks and recognition.



Delivering in partnership

Wellbeing, economic prosperity, educational attainment or safer communities are all outcomes that are shaped and enabled by many. Most important are the residents we serve; as a community and as individuals.

What a young person needs for good mental health and a successful future will be unique to each person. This is why we will "work with" and not "do to", acting as advocates and good partners with schools, employers and health services, shaping responsive integrated services.

This is one example of why partnership working is important and how we must be the leaders in modelling collaboration across the public sector for our communities.

We have many excellent partnerships, and this transition plan shows the many that we work with. However we are ambitious to be consistently excellent and to improve greater collaboration that is focused and provides value for money. Therefore we will engage with a range of stakeholders to develop the 2019 version of this plan, building on the solid foundations of partnerships to establish priorities and joint actions.

This is not necessarily about establishing new partnerships, but rather making sure existing partnerships are delivering and all are committed to taking action toward achieving shared visions and outcomes.

The page opposite lists all the stakeholders we will work with over the next six months, from April to October. This is not a exhaustive list, but by way of illustration, shows the many different types of stakeholders the Council works with and values.

The details of how we will engage with stakeholders will be expanded on going forward, to ensure that it is based on an active dialogue between the Council and our partners.

Key Stakeholders we will work with

- Residents and service users
 - Families
 - Children and young people
 - Adults and older people
 - Special interest groups
- Parishes, Towns and Neighbourhoods
 - Parish and town Councils
 - Resident Associations
 - Neighbourhood groups
 - Community groups at local level
- Voluntary, charity and community
 - Charities that advocate and or deliver services
 - Networks such as Healthwatch
 - Community groups
 - Faith organisations
 - Businesses
 - Business and enterprise bodies such as the CBI, LEP, Chamber of Commerce and Federation of Small Businesses
- Public Sector
 - NHS Trusts, Clinical Commissioning Group
 - Police, Police and Crime Commissioner and criminal justice bodies
 - Blue light services such as Fire and Ambulance
 - Schools, Colleges, Universities
 - Transport bodies—Rail, Bus and Road
 - Infrastructure and Utilities such as Highways Agency, Environment Agency, Water, telecommunications and energy providers.
 - Housing Developers, Homes England, Housing Associations
 - Government, local MPs and Berkshire Local Authorities



Timeline to Develop the New Borough Plan 2019-2024

March – April 2018

- Evidence gathering of data and trends analysis to establish focus for future needs.
- Review existing arrangements to establish strengths and development areas.
- Project plan for how we engage with stakeholders.
- Communicate to all stakeholders approved plan for 2018/19 and timetable for stakeholder engagement.

May - July 2018

• Engagement with stakeholders to agreed shared vision and priorities.

August – October 2018

- Engagement with stakeholders to agree joint actions and partnership delivery.
- Align Performance Indicators to outcomes and actions.

October – February 2018

- Agree Governance arrangements for oversight and delivery of Borough Plan by partners and Council.
- Approved Borough Plan.

Conclusion

A great deal has been achieved and a lot of challenges in the future still need to be addressed. The Council has the ambition and determination to provide leadership working with its many valued partners and colleagues in the Borough Council, as well as around Berkshire and at a national level.

This year we will embed the principles of our 21st Century Council and achieve a Borough Plan that is truly a partnership plan, with a clear focus on key priorities and the values that drive a more entrepreneurial approach to focus on customers and communities. Our plan releases the potential of all our assets and will be commercial in approach where possible.

We want to maintain our position as a Borough where people choose to live and grow their business; a place where people have the support to be self sufficient and independent, with support for our most vulnerable, and equality of opportunity for all.

