

Wokingham Borough 2025

Proposed Vision and Priorities Engagement Summary



Introduction

The Borough is a diverse area with rural and urban needs. There are increasing demands in areas such as social care budgets. Wokingham Borough Council receives the least funding from the Government in the country and therefore is funded via Council Tax and Business Rates. Hence the reduction in government funding has placed pressure on the Council and Council Tax payers.

In 2018/19 Wokingham Borough received £82.47 per resident from the Government compared to neighbouring authorities receiving more; West Berkshire £111.03, Bracknell Forest £167.77 and Reading £215.28. Government grants have been reduced by over £23million since 2011/12. It is expected that Government funding will further reduce between 2018/19 and 2019/20 from £82.47 per Wokingham Borough resident to just £40.64. Whilst the Council has made many efficiencies it is difficult to maintain the level of services it has traditionally provided. Hence we are seeking your views on what should be our future areas of focus and how we can work with partners and residents to achieve this.

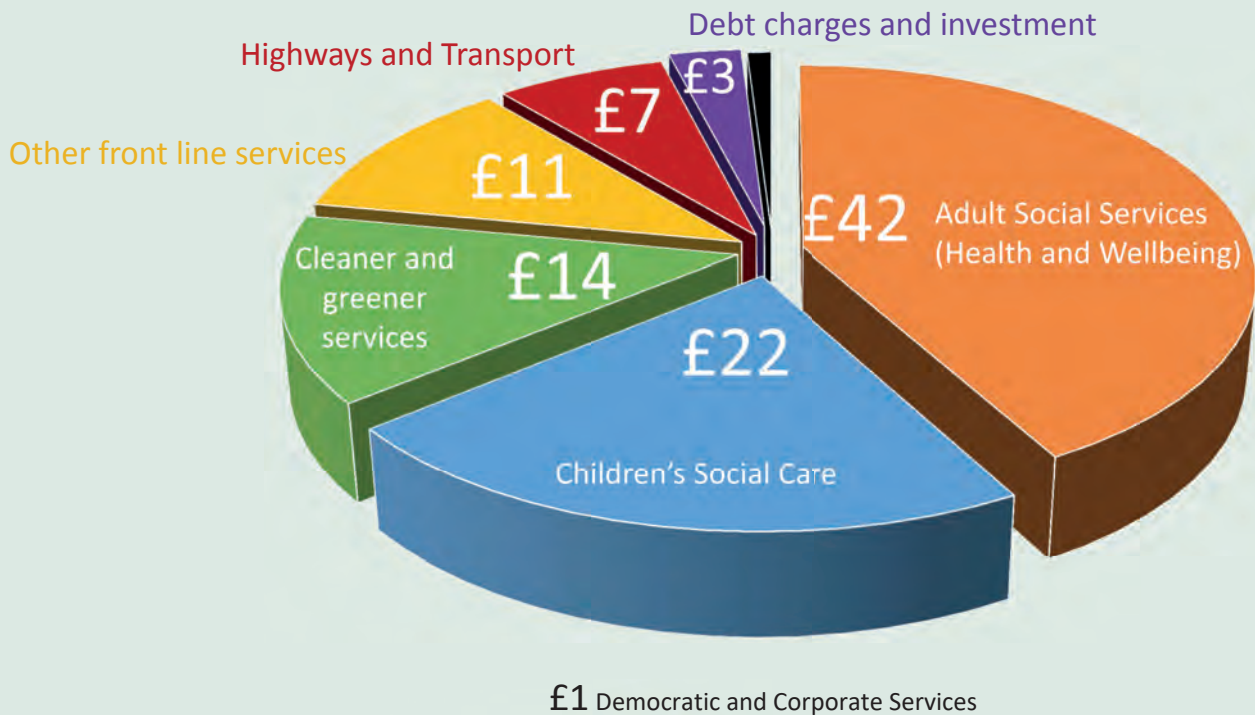
In order to deliver the most we can, the Council and its partners are keen to engage and work with anyone with an interest in Wokingham Borough. We will work with individuals, groups, businesses, the police, GPs and other health partners. We want to create a plan for the Borough outlining how together we can meet the challenges our community faces.

The following challenges we have identified represent what we know from listening to residents, reviewing the law and analysing data on the future needs of the Borough.

We welcome your view - You can respond using our online survey which is available [here](#) or by visiting www.wokingham.gov.uk and searching 'consultation'

Hard copies of this document are available to view at your local library and at main reception at our Shute End offices. If you would like to request a hard copy of this document please email communityengagement@wokingham.gov.uk or telephone (0118) 974 6000.

DIVISION OF SERVICES PER £100 SPENT



In addition to these main areas of spend the Council also provides:

- Affordable housing
- Leisure Centres
- Early Years Services (0-5 year olds)
- 0-25 services for children with additional needs
- Planning permission and enforcement
- Building control - ensuring that buildings meet regulations
- Environmental health, licensing and trading standards
- Libraries

What the Council doesn't do

- Fire
- Police
- GP services
- Hospitals
- Utilities: energy, water, gas, electric and telecoms
- Public transport: trains and buses
- Motorways
- Budgets for academies and free schools
- Other Councils on our borders that impact on our residents

A vision for the Borough of Wokingham

“A Borough that nurtures individual responsibility, assists those who are unable to be self-sufficient, and promotes equality of opportunity”

Engagement Questions:

1. Do you share this vision for the Borough?

2. Do you support the idea of those who are able assisting others in your community?

3. Are you clear what the Borough Council does in your local area?

4. Do you support the Borough Council working with the rest of the public sector, business community and voluntary groups?

5. How can the Borough Council best support the Borough in achieving this vision?

6. How do we promote accessibility and equality of opportunity for all?

7. What ideas do you have on how together we can assist those who are unable to be self-sufficient?

Our values

Our values will guide how we behave to enable us to deliver our vision and priorities for the Borough and its people.

- **Ambition**

We are ambitious for our Borough. Our ambitions remain despite funding cuts. Our ambition drives us to do things differently, to be more commercial and where appropriate pool resources with partners. We aim to be public service role models.

- **Customer First**

We will treat everyone as an individual and see each situation through the eyes of that person. We will be an advocate for our community in everything we do. There are times where we will directly take action but we know that working with others brings about sustainable changes and improves outcomes. Our work is rooted in the community and supports a sense of local identity and pride.

- **Compassion**

We will work with customers to understand their needs and address these in a compassionate way. We are committed to consistently delivering high quality customer service and engaging with people in a way that demonstrates that we are actively listening and responsive to their views.


- **Respect**

We will act with honesty, integrity and respect. We will listen and be open and honest with our residents and communities. We will be clear on what residents can expect from us. When we need to deliver difficult messages we will ensure we do so with consideration and empathy.

- **Creative**

We will focus on change to deliver value for money and improve efficiency. We will be courageous, innovative and try better ways to achieve outcomes for our community. Adaptability and agility will be key to how we respond to, and anticipate future challenges and communicate these clearly and transparently.

Engagement Questions:



1. Are these the right values for the Borough Council?

2. Do you think Wokingham Borough Council currently exhibits these values?

3. In your dealings with Wokingham Borough Council, have you got examples of the Council living up to these values or occasions when they have not?

Our principles

Our principles will guide the way we work to deliver our vision and priorities for our Borough and its people.

- **Collaborative**

Collaboration is at the heart of all we do. We recognise that most outcomes need a joint approach with communities and partners in the public, voluntary and charitable or business sectors. We will work with everyone with an interest in the Borough to ensure our collective endeavours make a difference for you.

- **Entrepreneurial**

We will be commercial in how we address issues as well as maximising opportunities to bring in additional income to safeguard vital services. We will seek a good return on our investment and protect and develop our assets.

- **Innovative**

Our ambitions to achieve 'the best' means being creative in how we work, learning from national or international best practice across the public and private sector and to be a pioneer.

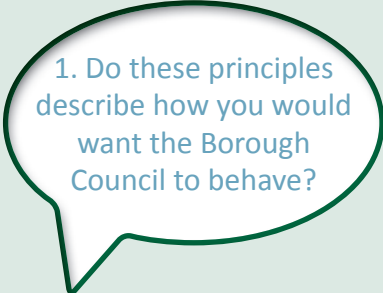
- **Digital**

A strong digital strategy is at the heart of how businesses and communities interact in 21st Century. Whether this is for traditional communication, social media activities or business. We will ensure that we harness the full potential of this medium for greater access, more efficient and customer centric ways to deliver services by utilising insight from digital information to continually learn and improve.

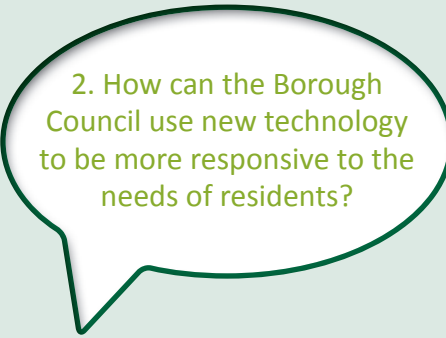
- **Accountable**

We will focus on impact and outcomes. To achieve this we need robust governance and oversight to demonstrate value for money and quality of services. The "golden thread" of translating our vision into action and results is about strong political leadership and effective performance management where we are prepared to learn, adapt and be responsive.

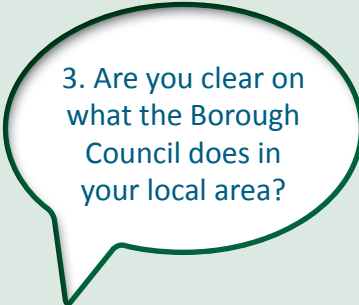
Engagement Questions:



1. Do these principles describe how you would want the Borough Council to behave?



2. How can the Borough Council use new technology to be more responsive to the needs of residents?



3. Are you clear on what the Borough Council does in your local area?

Key areas of focus for Wokingham Borough





The Facts:

Wokingham Borough is considered one of the best places to live in the UK. With high employment, excellent schools and a thriving economy. Over 5.5 million passengers travelling to or from Wokingham Borough train stations each year



161,900
Wokingham
Borough
residents.

Frequent
travel to
work
<12 miles.

1,477
New homes
built in
2017/18.



3,100
Potholes
repaired
in 2017.

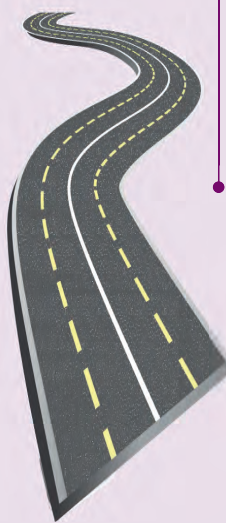


Since 2010, **110 hectares** of new public open space, play areas and parks opened (equivalent to 180 football pitches).



Average
house price
£411,900.

450
Miles of highway
and associated
footways.



Around **6,200**
vehicles travel along
a typical Wokingham
road each day.



Over half of households
own two or more cars.

5.5 million passengers
travelling to/from railway
stations in the Borough.



Affordable housing

Our Challenges: Growing population, increasing demand on services.



In 2013/14, 81 households presented in housing crisis.
In 2017/18, this had increased to 178

Average age of first-time buyer is **34.**



Proposed Solutions:

- Building key worker housing to recruit and retain staff who deliver essential public services
- More genuinely affordable housing in the right location
- Sufficient temporary accommodation in the Borough to meet demand
- Offer varied schemes such as shared ownership, social rented housing, rent to buy

Engagement Questions:



Tackling Traffic Congestion

Our Challenges: Nationally, traffic levels predicted to grow by a further **55%** by 2040. Many people consider congestion in towns and cities to be a serious or very serious problem. A high volume of traffic goes through the Borough to neighbouring areas or to join the motorway network.

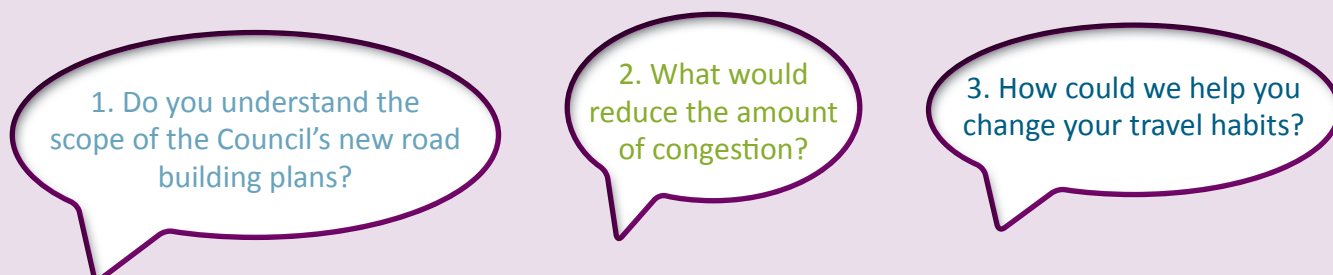
The majority of travel is by car. **Only 30%** of roadworks in Wokingham Borough are due to the Council.



Proposed Solutions:

- Make our current traffic system work more smoothly
- Provide more public transport, cycleways and byways and promote their use
- Build new roads to handle increased traffic
- Ensure new developments are in the right place
- Support homeworking through the roll out of superfast broadband

Engagement Questions:





Addressing the Impact of Development

Our Challenges: Increased housing need as a result of a growing population.

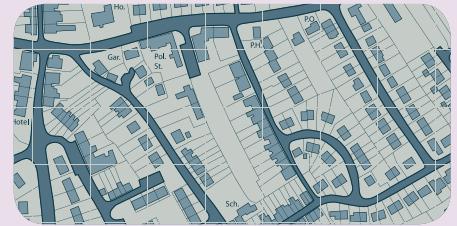
Ensure housing is built in the **right place, at the right time.**

For high quality development that best meets the needs of existing and new communities.



Maintain a balance of strong economy, meeting housing need and offering a high quality environment.

Central Government Target to build **850-900** new homes per year in the Borough compared to West Berkshire target of 545, Reading 611 and Bracknell Forest 670.



Proposed Solutions:

- The Borough Council to further engage with local communities about where new developments can go and continue to challenge the number of new homes being imposed by central government
- A more realistic expectation of what housing can be delivered in the Borough
- Work with neighbouring authorities to ensure homes are completed in the right places and are supported by government funded major infrastructure, where possible in advance of any new development
- Champion for the strategic infrastructure that Wokingham Borough needs and deserves as a major contributor to the South East economy
- That development is the right type to meet our current and future needs including accessibility and incorporate environmental measures such as electric charging points
- Continue applying the Community Infrastructure Levy to new homes being built (generating £45k per unit of new development)

Engagement Questions:

1. Do you feel that Wokingham Borough Council has properly explained the constraints it faces in relation to development?

2. Do you support Wokingham Borough Council in working with other Local Authorities to lower the number of houses built in Wokingham Borough to provide a more equal share of new housing?

4. Do you support infrastructure rich development, or allowing developers to decide where new homes are built by the use of the planning appeal process?

5. Do you understand how you can shape development through our Local Plan Update?

3. Do you support lobbying the Government to change how housing need is calculated to ensure that every council is allocated a fair share?



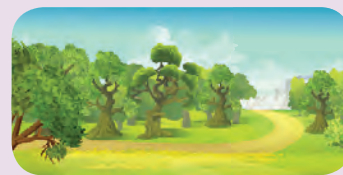
Clean, Green and Enjoyable Spaces

Our Challenges: To improve the environment for our residents.

Landfill tax charged at a standard rate of **£88.95 per tonne**. High waste disposal charges.



39% of Wokingham Borough household waste reused, recycled or composted in 2016/17 (South East 46.2%, England 43.7%).



The Council looks after around **4.4 million square metres of grass** across Wokingham Borough.

Volunteers contributed **2,000 days** of work in our Country Parks.

702.4kg of residual household waste per household in Wokingham Borough in 2016/17 (South East 556.9kg, England 557.3kg).

The Borough has **1,198 hectares** of public open spaces; equivalent to **1,109** football pitches.

Proposed Solutions:

- Introducing wider recycling of additional items such as pots, tubs, trays, foil and cartons, food waste.
- Promote and encourage waste reduction e.g. reduce wastefulness of food.
- Increase glass banks from 40 to 50 across the Borough
- Continue work with Re3 to reduce residual waste, increase recycling and adopt the Re3 Waste Strategy
- Provide a further 180 hectares of public open spaces (equivalent to 240 football pitches)
- Work with communities on improving their surrounding e.g. grass cutting and litter collecting.
- Self-financing countryside services
- Work to increase biodiversity by introducing long grass areas to introduce new wildflower areas whilst ensuring the grassland is well-maintained
- Work with Town and Parish Councils on asset transfers to help parishes make green spaces that work for their local communities

Engagement Questions:

1. Do you think Wokingham Borough is a clean, green and enjoyable place?

2. What is most important to you in protecting our environment?

3. What should we be doing to maintain or enhance our local environment?

4. Do you have enough access to leisure and open green spaces?

5. Should services, that the Council doesn't have to provide by law, be self-financing?

6. What would help you to reduce waste and recycle more?



The Facts:

Wokingham Borough is one of the least deprived areas in UK.



In 2016/17 academic year 42% of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals achieved 9-4 in English and Mathematics GCSE compared to 78% of all other pupils in Wokingham Borough; an achievement **gap of 36 percentage points**. South East gap 34, England 27.

12.5% of pupils (3,648) have Special Educational Needs. National 14.4%, South East 14.1%. **One in ten** adults are carers.

Wokingham school attendance rate 92%; ranked 25th nationally.

Residents generally are in good health. **One third** of population aged **under 25**.



47 local authority maintained schools in the Borough (including nursery, special and Pupil Referral Unit), 21 other schools (including academies, free schools and non-maintained special) and 11 independent schools.

Patients that were ready to leave hospital but still occupying a bed:
 - Wokingham 7.7
 - South East 16.9
 - England 14.9
Per 100,000 in 2016/2017

94% of Wokingham Borough schools with Ofsted rating Good or Outstanding.



Adults

Our Challenges: People are living longer which creates a greater demand on Social Care services.



Our **over 65** population is predicted to rise by **35% by 2030** and over 80s to rise by 70%.

We have an **increasing proportion** of older people with learning disabilities.

People are more likely to **experience depression** in residential and nursing homes.

Proposed Solutions:

- Helping people to live independently at home
- Ensure people only spend as much time in hospital as they need
- Enable people to have a good quality of life and equal access to the services/information they need
- Provide safe quality value for money services
- Provide support and respite for carers
- Reduce social isolation and loneliness

Engagement Questions:

1. What should the priorities be for adults in the Borough?

2. What more can the community do to meet the growing social care needs of our adult population?

3. How can we promote greater independence amongst adults with care needs?

4. Would you be prepared to pay more to provide social care?



Children

Our Challenges: There is an increasing number of children in care and those on Child Protection Plans.

There are **119** children and young people with special educational needs who are educated out of Wokingham Borough, costing **£6.6m**.

Achievement gap between disadvantaged children, eligible for Free School Meals or Pupil Premium, and other Wokingham Borough children.



Develop a wider understanding of emotional and mental health needs outside of treatment.



Nearly 2% of Wokingham Borough school children have been diagnosed with social, emotional and mental health needs.

Over 20 schools in Wokingham Borough are academies or free schools outside of the Council's control, and a further 8 are in the process of converting.

Proposed Solutions:

- Further improve high school achievement rates
- Protect, safeguard children and young people
- Effectively use resources to recruit and retain highly qualified staff who provide good school support and challenge
- Offer the right learning provision to meet diverse needs
- Improve housing and employment outcomes for young people leaving care
- Provide effective support for vulnerable learners, for example children with special educational needs or disability
- Raising attainment for lower achievers

Engagement Questions:

1. What are your key priorities for children and young people in the Borough?

2. How do we ensure that young people have the right skills for our economy?

3. What can the community do to support children and young people achieve their full potential?

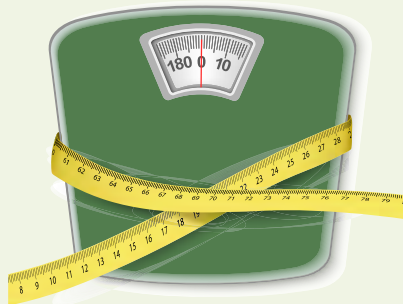
4. How could we ensure that more students with special educational needs are educated locally?



Health and Wellbeing

Our Challenges: Around **17% of adults** do less than 30 minutes exercise per week.

Over half of Wokingham Borough adults are overweight or obese as are 26% of children in Year 6.



85% Rise

In 2016/17 there were 262 emergency admissions for intentional self harm; this is an **85% rise** over last two years.

19.3% of adults surveyed feel they have high levels of anxiety compared to 19.5% in South East and 19.9% in England.

Over **one third** of older people live alone. Around half of service users would like more **social contact**.

Over 800 Wokingham Borough residents are considered to have a severe mental illness. **4.18%** of over 65's (1,026 people) in the Borough have dementia compared to 4.25% in the South East and 4.33% in England.

Proposed Solutions:

- Increase physical activity for adults and children
- Improve emotional and mental health and reduce self-harm

Engagement Questions:

1. Are these the right health priorities for Wokingham Borough?

2. What would help improve your general health and wellbeing?

3. How can the Council work with residents to ensure a sense of community that ensures people do not feel isolated and lonely?

4. How can the Council help improve the mental health of residents?

5. Would you like more opportunities to get involved in a voluntary organisation working in the community, and if so, would you like us to contact you about this?



The Facts:

High employment rates in Wokingham Borough with good salaries.

Low levels of crime.

4 major development areas offering new housing, roads, schools, community and sports facilities in the Borough.



Strong and thriving businesses in the Borough with key sectors in IT, environment, technology and pharmaceutical.



53% of residents aged 16-64 are qualified to NVQ4 and above, South East 41%.

3 town and 14 parish councils in the Borough.



Economic Prosperity

Our Challenges: Skills shortages reported by **one in five** Berkshire employers; in areas such as digital technology, engineering and construction, health and social care and education. Ensuring that the right training is on offer through local colleges and other training providers to meet business need and demand. Pockets of inactivity or unemployment. Ensuring young people have a variety of options for continued employment, education or training within the Borough. Impact of future transport infrastructure on economic delivery. Decline in apprenticeships; 1,080 learners starting apprenticeships in 2015/16 compared to 2,720 in 2012/13. Improving productivity and engaging with smart technology. Encouraging business growth in the right sectors and attracting businesses to Wokingham Borough.



Proposed Solutions:

- Play an active role in the development of the Berkshire Local Industrial Strategy
- Continue to support young people under 25 to access education, employment and training through the Elevate programme
- Secure Employment Skills Plans on all new works contracts and planning applications over 10 dwellings.
- Hold a programme of “Fit for Business” events to engage more with local businesses
- Continue to monitor the impacts of Brexit and changes in Government policy on local business
- Work with partners, such as the Business Growth Hub and Enterprise Cube, to support business start-ups and growth
- Roll out Superfast Broadband across the Borough and embrace the Smart Cities agenda
- Become a more “commercial Council” ensuring we maximise opportunities to generate additional income to fund key services
- Work with local schools and colleges to address skills shortages.

Engagement Questions:

1. What sort of businesses should the Borough be seeking to attract?

2. What infrastructure would support and grow small businesses and start-ups?

3. What jobs does the Borough need?

4. What could organisations in the community do together to boost skills and training?

5. How can the community support local businesses?

6. Are there any factors that you feel are stunting economic growth within the Borough?



Community Safety

Our Challenges: Overall levels of crime in Wokingham Borough remain low compared to other areas within Thames Valley region.

On average, around **36 reported crimes per thousand** residents in Wokingham Borough compared with Thames Valley average of 59 reported crimes.

Some crime rates have increased over the last year; including bicycle theft, theft from person and domestic burglary however rates remain below Thames Valley average.

POLICE

POLICE

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Nearly **40%** of 10-17 year olds are worried about being a victim of crime or anti-social behaviour.

26 first time entrants to the Youth Justice System; less than the previous year.

98 offences were committed by **43** young people, aged between 15-17, during 2016/17.



The offences most frequently committed were violence against the person, criminal damage, motor offences and theft. However the number of offences committed by young people remains low compared to neighbouring areas and there is very little repeat offending amongst groups of young people.

Proposed Solutions:

- Engagement with community and voluntary sector
- Support communities to take proactive approach to meet their needs—Neighbourhood Action Groups
- Work with Police and other partnership organisations
- Plan new housing developments with designs to minimise crime and anti-social behaviour

Engagement Questions:



Sustainable Towns and Parishes

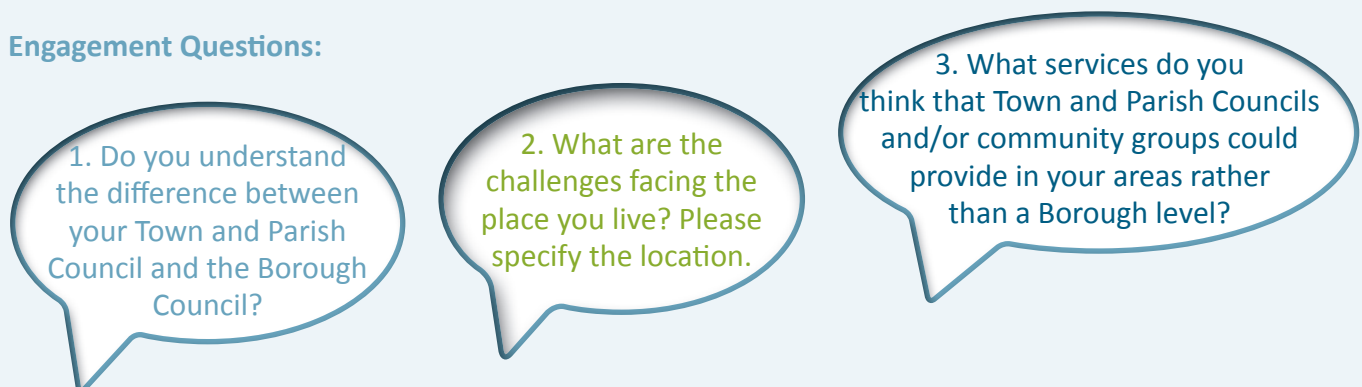
Our Challenges: Wokingham Borough has a mix of towns, rural villages and small communities. The impact of development affects each of these localities in different ways. New communities are being formed, as a result of growth in the Borough, and existing communities are changing; each with different aspirations and need. There is a challenge to ensure thriving, strong local communities where people have a sense of place and feel rooted in their local area. Town and Parish Councils hold a wealth of local intelligence on each locality and provide a voice for their community. Maintaining a balance between local and Borough-wide responses to the challenges being faced.



Proposed Solutions:

- Take a flexible approach to engaging with each Town and Parish Council—not a one size fits all
- Support communities to take proactive approach to meet their needs
- Council services delivered locally

Engagement Questions:



Engagement Questions:



You can respond using our online survey which is available here:

<https://www.snapsurveys.com/wh/s.asp?k=153138368402>. If you would like to request a hardcopy of this document please email communityengagement@wokingham.gov.uk or telephone (0118) 974 6000.

KEEPING YOU BETTER INFORMED

In future, when the Council would like to get in touch to let you know about future consultations or events going on in and around the Borough, please can you tell us the best way(s) to get in touch:

- ☐ Social media Which sites?
- ☐ Our Borough newsletter
- ☐ Our Borough website
- ☐ Text alerts Tel no:
- ☐ By email Email address:

How we use your information: The information provided is only used for statistical analysis and service planning. No personal information is passed to any third party. Where requested by residents it is also used to give updates on services and to invite participation in future consultations.

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