

# Notice of Meeting

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## Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission

**Tuesday, 22nd March, 2022 at 6.30 pm**  
in Second Floor Meeting Area Council  
Offices Market Street Newbury

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Date of despatch of Agenda: Monday, 14 March 2022

For further information about this Agenda, or to inspect any background documents referred to in Part I reports, please contact Gordon Oliver on (01635) 519486  
e-mail: [gordon.oliver1@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:gordon.oliver1@westberks.gov.uk)

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**Agenda - Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission to be held on Tuesday, 22 March 2022 (continued)**

- To:** Councillors Alan Law (Chairman), Lee Dillon (Vice-Chairman), Jeff Brooks, James Cole, Gareth Hurley, Thomas Marino, Steve Masters, Claire Rowles, Tony Vickers, Tony Linden, Lynne Doherty, Richard Somner and Howard Woollaston
- Substitutes:** Councillors Adrian Abbs, Jeremy Cottam, Carlyne Culver, Owen Jeffery, David Marsh, Garth Simpson and Andrew Williamson
- Other Officers & Members invited:** Councillors Lynne Doherty (Leader of the Council and Executive Portfolio Holder for District Strategy and Communications), Richard Somner (Executive Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport & Countryside), and Howard Woollaston (Executive Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance, Leisure and Culture, and Nigel Lynn (Chief Executive), Susan Halliwell (Executive Director – Place), Joseph Holmes (Executive Director – Resources), Andy Sharp (Executive Director – People), Sarah Clarke (Service Director – Strategy & Governance), and Paul Hendry (Countryside Manager)

## Agenda

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1. <b>Apologies for Absence</b> To receive apologies for inability to attend the meeting (if any).	5 - 6
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3. <b>Actions from previous Minutes</b> To receive an update on actions following the previous Commission meeting.	21 - 22
4. <b>Declarations of Interest</b> To remind Members of the need to record the existence and nature of any personal, disclosable pecuniary or other registrable interests in items on the agenda, in accordance with the Members' <a href="#">Code of Conduct</a> .	23 - 24
5. <b>Petitions</b> <i>Purpose: To consider any petitions requiring an Officer response.</i>	25 - 26

**Agenda - Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission to be held on Tuesday, 22 March 2022 (continued)**

6. **Securing Effective Management of the Kennet and Avon Canal** 27 - 68  
*Purpose: To consider how West Berkshire Council can work with the Canal and River Trust, Sustrans and other partners in the effective management of the Kennet and Avon Canal Towpath.*
7. **Scrutiny Review of the Draft West Berkshire Leisure Strategy** 69 - 130  
*Purpose: To present to OSMC the work undertaken by the Task and Finish Group to review the Draft Leisure Strategy and the business case for the Newbury Lido.*
8. **Appointment of Task Groups** 131 - 134  
*Purpose: To agree Terms of Reference and Membership for any Task and Finish Groups that Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission may wish to appoint to undertake in-depth scrutiny reviews:*
- (1) *Customer Journey Task and Finish Group - To agree Terms of Reference for a Task and Finish Group to look at how the Council's call centre, phone system and website support the customer journey, and also the Council's Out of Hours Emergency Service.*
  - (2) *Other Task Groups*
9. **Health Scrutiny Committee Update** 135 - 136  
*Purpose: To receive an update from the Chairman of the Health Scrutiny Committee.*
10. **West Berkshire Council Forward Plan 01 February to 31 May 2022** 137 - 146  
*Purpose: To advise the Commission of items to be considered by West Berkshire Council from 01 February to 31 May 2022 and decide whether to review any of the proposed items prior to the meeting indicated in the Plan.*
11. **Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission Work Programme** 147 - 148  
*Purpose: To receive new items and agree and prioritise the work programme of the Commission.*

Sarah Clarke  
Service Director Strategy and Commissioning

If you require this information in a different format or translation, please contact Stephen Chard on telephone (01635) 519462.

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OSMC – 22 March 2022

## **Item 1 – Apologies**

Verbal Item

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## DRAFT

Note: These Minutes will remain DRAFT until approved at the next meeting of the Committee

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 25 JANUARY 2022

**Councillors Present:** Alan Law (Chairman), Lee Dillon (Vice-Chairman), James Cole, Thomas Marino, Steve Masters, Claire Rowles, Tony Vickers, Adrian Abbs (Substitute) (In place of Jeff Brooks) and Tony Linden (Substitute) (In place of Gareth Hurley)

**Also Present:** Councillor Lynne Doherty (Leader of the Council and District Strategy and Communications), Councillor Erik Pattenden, Councillor Howard Woollaston (Executive Portfolio: Internal Governance, Leisure and Culture), Nigel Lynn (Chief Executive), Joseph Holmes (Executive Director - Resources), Andy Sharp (Executive Director (People)), Sarah Clarke (Service Director (Strategy and Governance)), Matthew Pearce (Service Director-Communities & Wellbeing), Paul Martindill (Interim Consultant (Leisure)), Gabrielle Mancini (Service Lead - Customer Engagement & Transformation), Gordon Oliver (Principal Policy Officer), and Vicky Phoenix (Principal Policy Officer – Scrutiny)

**Apologies for inability to attend the meeting:** Councillor Jeff Brooks and Councillor Gareth Hurley

## PART I

### 32. Minutes

The Minutes of the Special meeting held on 31 August 2021 and the meeting held on 12 October 2021 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### 33. Actions from previous Minutes

It was noted that all actions had been completed. Further updates were provided on the live actions:

- Action 43 – provisional dates had been proposed for future meetings (24 May 2022, 06 September 2022, 29 November 2022 and 7 March 2023), which would be two weeks ahead of the relevant Executive meetings where the quarterly performance and financial reports would be discussed.
- Action 50 – Cllr Lee Dillon confirmed that he was still considering whether he wished to submit a question to Executive.
- Action 51 – Cllr Tony Vickers confirmed that he did not wish to propose this as an item for the Commission to review.
- Action 52 – a task group to look at various aspects of the Covid response had been included in the proposed work programme to be discussed later in the meeting.

### 34. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Adrian Abbs declared an interest in Agenda Item 6, but reported that, as his interest was a personal or an other registrable interest, but not a disclosable pecuniary interest, he determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.

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Councillors Tony Vickers, Erik Pattenden and Steve Masters declared an interest in Agenda Item 6, but reported that, as their interest was a personal or an other registrable interest, but not a disclosable pecuniary interest, they determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.

### 35. Petitions

There were no petitions to be received at the meeting.

### 36. Items Called-in following the Executive on 16 December 2021

*(Councillor Adrian Abbs declared a personal interest in Agenda item 6 by virtue of the fact that he was a Ward Member for the Sports Hub site. As his interest was personal and not prejudicial he was permitted to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.)*

*(Councillors Tony Vickers, Erik Pattenden and Steve Masters declared a personal interest in Agenda item 6 by virtue of the fact that they were Members of Newbury Town Council, which had a public position on the London Road Industrial Area. As their interest was personal and not prejudicial they were permitted to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.)*

The call-in request submitted on 22 December 2021 asked the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission to review the Executive's decision (EX4149) of 16 December 2021 concerning the award of contract to build Newbury Sports Hub.

It was confirmed that the call-in request had been submitted in accordance with Sections 5.3 and 6.4 of the Council's Constitution.

Councillor Howard Woollaston presented the background to the Sports Hub and the rationale for the Executive's decision to award the contract for its construction. Key points from the presentation were:

- The Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) had been signed off by partners in December 2019 and adopted by Council in February 2020.
- There was a large shortfall in playing pitch provision across West Berkshire, particularly for football.
- 10 pitches were operating over capacity and 57 were of poor quality.
- The PPS identified a shortfall of seven full-sized artificial pitches.
- All Council owned sites had been considered and rejected.
- Private sector solutions had been investigated, with Newbury Sports Hub deemed to be the best option.
- The Hub would also serve as a partial replacement for the Faraday Road pitch if the London Road Industrial Estate (LRIE) was redeveloped.
- A public consultation attracted 349 responses – 53.1% of respondents supported a new Sports Hub at the Rugby Club.
- Development of a new Step 6 facility had 46.1% support vs 27.4% opposed and 64.1% supported different sports sharing a facility.
- The new facility would deliver significant improvements with: four team changing rooms, medical room, officials changing area, kitchen, board room, social area and separate toilets for spectators.
- The proposal would achieve an FA Step 4 grading, which would allow teams to progress through the football leagues.
- More car parking would be provided with charge points – 52 spaces with 30 extra spaces available on match days, and a further 200 spaces at Newbury College.
- Eight hours per week would be allocated to the Rugby Club, between September and April, with the remainder allocated for football.



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- Agreement had been reached with the Rugby Club for a 40 year lease, including a joint use agreement.
- A range of improvements would be delivered, including additional flood lighting.
- Negotiations had been completed and the agreement would be signed off following planning determination.
- An annual assessment of playing pitch need was underway - the results would inform the need for additional facilities in future.
- Pre-construction assessment showed that the pavilion could achieve a BREEAM rating of 'very good', putting it in the top quartile of new buildings. It would also achieve BREEAM 'excellent' for energy management.
- There would be a 10% gain in biodiversity via: hedgerows; 100 new trees; a wildflower meadow; and a bee bank.
- Many parts and materials would be sourced from local suppliers.
- A new drainage system would be installed on the site.
- The artificial pitch would require less maintenance and watering than a grass equivalent.
- The Council believed that it should lead by example.
- Management of the Hub would be included in the new leisure contract, so clubs would not have no maintenance obligation.
- Sport England had raised no objection to the management of the site or the design.
- Clubs would be able to hire facilities for social events.
- The capital cost would be £3.351 million, subject to planning conditions.
- The scheme had been independently assessed as offering 'very good' value for money.
- In April 2021, a report had identified the need for revenue support of £90,000 and a sinking fund of £25,000 per annum. The latter had subsequently been increased to £35,000 per annum.
- The procurement process would allow for discussions on scope before submission of final tenders.
- Construction of the Sports Hub would take 26 weeks.
- The Sports Hub would provide a state of the art facility for both football and rugby and would help to address the pitch shortfall identified in the PPS. It would allow teams to progress through the leagues and was supported by Newbury Football Club and its current Step 7 league.
- Pitch markings would include five-a-side, seven-a-side and junior training to address under-provision for children.

The Chairman asked if the Executive decision was only for the award of the construction contract and if the decision about the principle of the Sports Hub was taken at the meeting in April 2021. This was confirmed to be correct.

The call-in was formally proposed by Councillor Lee Dillon and seconded by Councillor Tony Vickers.

Councillor Dillon had taken advice from officers about calling witnesses. He referenced section 6.13 of the Constitution about parties attending to give evidence according to a pre-agreed timetable. He asked Members to support the call for witnesses to permit a more thorough debate. It was noted that the planning application for the Sports Hub would be considered on 2 March, so OSMC could meet in advance of this without delaying the Executive decision.

Councillor Dillon proposed to set up a task and finish group of the whole of OSMC to meet on 22 February 2022 to interrogate witnesses and make a resolution on the matter

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at that meeting – this would obviate the need for any further discussion of the matter at the current meeting.

Although the Constitution permitted the Chairman to allow witnesses to attend OSMC to give evidence, he had not been approached in advance of the meeting. Also, the Constitution indicated he should only do so if principles such as fairness to all parties and ensuring efficiency of proceedings could be met. The Chairman considered that OSMC could deal with the matter without the need for witnesses, since the decision related to the development contract and not the principle of the Sports Hub. Also, the Constitution required the matter to be determined as early as possible.

Councillor Dillon formally proposed a motion to set up a task and finish group to consider the call-in and invite witnesses. This was seconded by Councillor Tony Vickers.

Councillor Dillon stressed that the decision would incur a spend of around £15 million, including on-costs. He also highlighted the following concerns, which he felt justified the need for a full debate with witnesses:

- The PPS could be put at risk by this one project.
- The same investment could deliver six new pitches.
- There was confusion about whether or not the facility was a replacement for the Faraday Road pitch.
- There was doubt as to whether or not eight hours per week would be enough for rugby, and how this would work in practice.
- The need for a park and ride to serve the facility.

The Chairman invited Councillor Woollaston to comment on the need for witnesses. This was queried as a point of order. Sarah Clarke confirmed it was in the Chairman's gift to invite other Members to speak. She confirmed that Councillor Woollaston had given the requisite notice and the Chairman had previously indicated how he wished the item to be discussed.

Councillor Tom Marino queried whether a call-in could have a task and finish group allocated to consider it.

Councillor Claire Rowles indicated that she did not see the need for witnesses.

Councillor Adrian Abbs noted that the proposal considered by Western Area Planning Committee was for a Step 6 facility, but the current proposal was for a Step 4 facility. He suggested that witnesses would be important in determining what level was needed and whether the proposal represented good value.

Councillor Steve Masters indicated that without witnesses, Members could not independently verify the views put forward and be neutral in its decision making.

The Chairman indicated that OSMC usually relied on Council officers as expert witnesses.

Councillor James Cole noted that there had been full consultation on both the PPS and the Sports Hub proposal.

Sarah Clarke confirmed that while deferring the call-in to a task and finish group was not explicitly precluded in the Constitution, the rules stated that the matter should be considered as soon as reasonably practicable. The Constitution made it clear that the matter should be disposed of at the call-in meeting. The item had been on the Forward Plan, so OSMC could have undertaken pre-decision scrutiny. The call-in was post-decision scrutiny, so OSMC could only resolve to concur with the Executive's decision, or to refer the matter back to Executive with recommendations for changes. It was agreed

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that OSMC needed to consider whether the proposal to defer the decision was appropriate.

Councillor Dillon felt that the matter was being addressed at the meeting and his motion would ensure the best outcomes for taxpayers. A special OSMC meeting on 22 February would not incur additional delay, since the contract was subject to planning permission, and the application would be determined on 2 March. The proposed approach would allow OSMC to understand if the proposal was workable.

It was noted that the Constitution stated it was for the Executive Leader and OSMC Chairman to determine when the matter should come before the Commission and it was for them to consider the implications of delay.

The Chairman highlighted that the call-in did not propose a task and finish group. He accepted that the call for witnesses was a valid point and sought to conclude the debate on this point.

Councillor Dillon did not accept that the proposal was a deferral, but suggested that it would be a continuation of the current meeting.

Councillor Masters suggested that task and finish groups had been set up in response to previous call-ins. However, it was confirmed that this was incorrect and was precluded by the Constitution.

Councillor Masters reiterated that scrutiny could be concluded prior to determination of the planning application.

The Chairman noted that requests for witnesses could have been submitted to him in advance of the current meeting. Councillor Dillon indicated that the advice from officers was that the decision to call witnesses was for the Commission to make. It was highlighted that the Constitution also gave powers to the Chairman to agree witnesses.

Councillor Woollaston stressed that an independent consultant's report had confirmed that the proposal represented very good value for money, especially in the current construction market, so he did not see the need for witnesses.

Councillor Vickers noted that the motion was to defer debate in order to be able to call witnesses and facilitate thorough scrutiny of the implications of the Executive decision. The Executive decision included a commitment to build, maintain and use the Sports Hub, with ongoing subsidy for 40 years, so the commitment was for more than just a £3.5 million construction contract. He highlighted that the planning decision had not been referred up to District Planning Committee until after the call-in had been submitted, so Members had not known that a task and finish group could be called without incurring additional delay. This would allow OSMC to undertake proper scrutiny in the interests of due diligence in the spending of public money. He indicated that the playing Pitch Strategy was not disputed. He would have supported a more modest proposal, but considered the Sports Hub specification to be over-the-top. Also, it had been admitted that the Sports Hub was a replacement for the Faraday Road facility, which was an Asset of Community Value, with planning consent for a replacement facility that had the backing of the Football Association and would thus attract funding. This suggested that the Football Association should be called as a witness, as well as community members who would use the facility. He stated that witnesses had attended previous task and finish groups and it was important in this case to inform scrutiny of this decision and the wider impacts. He noted that the proposal to build housing on the Faraday Road site had no planning policy background.

The Chairman stressed that the call-in related to the construction of the Sports Hub and not to Faraday Road and the LRIE, which he considered irrelevant.

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Councillor Vickers indicated that there was an opportunity to call external witnesses without incurring additional delay to the project.

The Chairman noted that the third call-in reason stated that further evidence was needed from Sport England. Consequently, if the alternative course of action requested by the call-in was approved, then the Executive would be asked to delay the award of contract and take evidence.

Members of OSMC were asked to vote on the proposal by Councillor Lee Dillon, seconded by Councillor Tony Vickers to set up a task and finish group to consider the call-in and invite witnesses. At the vote, the motion was not carried.

Councillor Dillon was invited to present the reasons for the call-in.

In relation to the first reason, he stated that it was necessary to know the whole life cost of the project in order to understand if it would harm the PPS. It would be possible to deliver six artificial grass pitches for the same amount as the Sports Hub, which suggested that the specification was over the top. The PPS only required seven 3G pitches – not a sports hub with a park and ride, which would only be needed if replacing a football club in the town centre. Also, planning permission had been sought for a Step 6 facility, but the design was for a Step 4 facility, which again was an over-specification. He observed that the cost of the stand-alone pitches was excessive due to their location. Subsidy would be required for the Rugby Club and the business case was considered unsustainable due to the chosen operating model and design. If the design was stripped back, more money would be available for the rest of the PPS. He noted that the Council had approved a planning application for a replacement 3G pitch at Faraday Road, which would provide a net income that could be used to help fund the remaining six 3G pitches that were needed. He suggested this would be a better way to deliver the PPS for the whole district. Also, the Council would be spending up to £15m for the new Sports Hub in order to realise a £3.5 million gain from the LRIE development. Instead, funding could be used to address shortfalls in sports facilities elsewhere in the District. Additionally, he noted that there was no other 3G playing pitch in the country with a park and ride

In relation to the second call-in reason, Councillor Dillon asked why Councillor Woollaston had made direct comparisons with the Faraday Road site if the Sports Hub would be a stand-alone facility. Western Area Planning Committee had been confused as to whether this was a stand-alone facility, and there were multiple references to the Faraday Road site in the Executive report. National Planning Policy Framework referred to the need to reprovide existing open spaces and since the new AGP would go on an existing grass pitch, that would need to be reprovided as well - it was not known what this would look like or how much it would cost.

The Chairman asked if the fact that the Sports Hub was a replacement for Faraday Road was contested. It was noted that it had been contested by the Leader of the Council and Planning Officers. Also, Councillor Woollaston had contested it at the planning meeting.

Councillor Dillon highlighted that the Executive report referred to a Step 4 facility, so the Sports Hub was not only a replacement for Faraday Road, but an upgrade. He suggested that a contract should not be awarded until the Sports Hub had been tested as a replacement for the Faraday Road facility through planning. To do so could be considered a reckless misuse of public funds. He accepted that there was a difference in views about what could be achieved for LRIE, but suggested that the administration was not being clear about the impacts and implications of their plans and that they were hedging their bets and playing one committee off against the other.

The case was made for evidence to be sought from sporting bodies regarding the future split use of the Sports Hub to ensure it would work properly and assess the impacts of

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the time allocation. It was noted that that the site could not host rugby games because the run-off area was too short.

In terms of finances, Councillor Dillon stressed that the total cost of the project was unknown and this should be considered when awarding the contract. He suggested that the administration was not being open about this. He referred to the LRIE Task and Finish Group, which had exposed issues in relation to poor project management.

Councillor Dillon stated that there would be a need to reprovide a grass pitch, but it was not known where this would go. He reiterated the point that delaying consideration of the call-in in order to call witnesses would not have incurred any additional delay to the Executive's decision.

Councillor Abbs noted the inconsistency about whether the facility would be Step 4, Step 6 or Step 7. The PPS required a Step 7 facility, but Western Area Planning Committee had considered a stand-alone Step 6 facility. He asked why so much money was being spent on a Step 4 facility and why anything greater than a Step 7 facility was being considered.

Councillor Vickers noted that in January 2021, project risks had included failure to get support for the project from national sports bodies. Support had yet to be secured from the Football Association and the Rugby Football Union. This was both a reputational and financial risk. Another key risk was negative feedback from the community on the preferred option. As a local ward member he was aware of negative feedback on the Sports Hub, but not for the alternative proposal. He reiterated that there was no planning permission for the Hub.

Councillor Erik Pattenden indicated that the call-in questioned how the contract would help the Council achieve its ambition to achieve net zero carbon by 2030. He suggested that local town and parish councils were doing more to achieve net zero carbon than West Berkshire Council. He stated that a town centre facility would be more accessible by active travel modes and asked why a contract would be awarded that did not support the net zero carbon ambition.

Councillor Woollaston confirmed that Newbury Football Club currently played at Step 7 and it would be reasonable to assume that they would improve over time. The current proposal was for a Step 4 facility.

Councillor Abbs asked why planning permission had been sought for a Step 6 facility.

Councillor Woollaston confirmed that the ambition of the Executive was to achieve a Step 4 facility. The design was driven by national governing body standards, including FIFA and World Rugby Regulation 22 standards. Four changing rooms would be provided to maximise playing time and income, support mixed gender teams and safeguard young people. In summary the proposal would be future-proofed.

Councillor Dillon noted that existing sites were used as intensively as the proposed Hub would be, but without the need for changing facilities, since players arrived wearing their kit.

The Chairman noted that the ambition of the Executive was for a Step 4 facility with whatever features that required.

Councillor Abbs suggested that a fraudulent planning application had been submitted.

In relation to the point about value for money, Councillor Woollaston noted that an independent consultant had confirmed that the scheme achieved very good value for money.

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Councillor Dillon asked if this rating was for the construction or whole life costs. Councillor Woollaston confirmed that it was the latter and indicated that it would be expensive to purchase a new site. Councillor Dillon suggested that alternative options were available, such as partnering with schools.

Councillor Woollaston confirmed that the contract would not be awarded until the facility had received planning permission. He confirmed that the ambition was to deliver a first class facility of which the community could be proud, and a similar facility at an alternative site would cost the same. The only differences were the limited payments to fund community rugby and ground rent. However, there was no need for land purchase. He highlighted that the cost to the community would be limited, as the Council would utilise Government borrowing at a very low rate of interest.

Councillor Woollaston confirmed that in addition to the construction costs, there would be annual costs for ground rent and a sinking fund of £35,000 to replace the 3G pitch every 10 years.

The Chairman noted that a budget had been allocated for all aspects other than those that might come out of the planning permission. However, Councillor Dillon indicated that funding had only been requested for capital costs and total costs over the 40 year lifetime had not been confirmed. The Chairman indicated that this had been discussed as a Part II item. Councillor Dillon felt that the public should know how much money was being committed over a 40 year period. The Chairman confirmed that this information was commercially sensitive and the figure would be made available at the appropriate time.

Paul Martindill outlined the measures that would maximise the environmental benefits of the scheme. A BREEAM pre-assessment had indicated that the pavilion would achieve a rating of 'very good', putting it in the upper quartile for all new buildings. Key features would include: air source heat pumps; low energy lighting; pure electricity provision for the kitchen; no hand towels or hair dryers; and an obligation on the operator to maximise usage of sustainable transport. There would be a 10% ecological enhancement on the site. This would be consistent with the Council's Environment Strategy.

Councillor Vickers asked if he could call a member of the public present at the meeting as a witness. The Chairman confirmed that witnesses were not permitted. Sarah Clarke indicated that members of the public were permitted to speak at the meeting only if OSMC so resolved. She considered that this matter had been considered earlier in the meeting. The Chairman stressed that the proper processes needed to be followed.

Councillor Dillon stressed that the previous vote had related to the task and finish group and that calling a witness would not affect the expediency of the meeting.

Members of OSMC were asked to vote on the proposal by Councillor Lee Dillon, seconded by Councillor Tony Vickers to call a witness to this meeting. At the vote the motion was rejected.

Councillor Masters asked if the proposed contract would be for a Step 4 facility or a Step 6 facility. It was confirmed that it would be for Step 4. Councillor Masters asked how that would progress if planning permission had not been given for a Step 4 facility. The Chairman confirmed that that planning was not a matter for the call-in.

Councillor Marino asked what further measures were sought by the call-in Members in relation to the net zero carbon commitment and for evidence that town and parish councils were doing more to achieve net zero carbon than West Berkshire Council.

Councillor Pattenden felt that it would have been useful to know the extent to which each of the proposed measures would contribute to net zero carbon. He also noted that

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Newbury Town Council had reduced its carbon emissions by more than West Berkshire Council.

Councillor Tony Linden accepted there was political opposition to the proposal. He felt that planning was a 'red herring', since this could be addressed through a variation, and it was not appropriate for OSMC to discuss planning matters.

Councillor Abbs asked why the Hub would not include provision for solar power. He also noted there were off-the-shelf solutions for net zero carbon buildings. The Chairman considered this to be a matter of detail and not central to the debate.

Councillor Cole observed that the contingency seemed low. Paul Martindill explained that considerable work had been done to reduce risk during the design stage with surveys giving a very clear picture of risk and costs had been revised in response, with contingency reduced to 3%. He acknowledged that there could be additional costs associated with planning conditions, but a substantial amount of design work had already been completed.

OSMC Members were invited to vote on the motion proposed by Councillor Dillon and seconded by Councillor Vickers that the contract to build Newbury Sports Hub should not be awarded at this point in time. At the vote, the motion was not carried.

OSMC Members were then invited to vote on the motion proposed by Councillor Cole and seconded by Councillor Marino to uphold the Executive's decision (EX4149) of 16 December 2021 concerning the award of contract to build Newbury Sports Hub and that it be implemented with immediate effect.

**RESOLVED:** that OSMC upholds the Executive's decision (EX4149) of 16 December 2021 concerning the award of contract to build Newbury Sports Hub and that it be implemented with immediate effect.

### 37. **Operational Review of the Communications and Engagement Strategy**

The Commission considered a report on the Operational Review of the Communications and Engagement Strategy (Agenda Item 7).

Before introducing the report, Councillor Lynne Doherty expressed her concern at the behaviour Members had shown in the previous item. She indicated that the work of the Commission was valuable to the Council and she welcomed scrutiny of the Executive's decisions.

Councillor Doherty stated that the Strategy had been approved in October 2020 and that it had since been successfully implemented. In 2019, a Peer Review had recommended that the Council was "hiding its light under a bushel" and communications needed to be improved. Since then the Council had gone on to receive awards for its communications. She was proud of the team and noted that many residents had given unsolicited compliments on the Council's communications.

Gabrielle Mancini introduced the report. She explained that effective communication and engagement was key to being open and transparent and involving the community in the work of the Council and the democratic process. The Communications Strategy and Delivery Plan to address points raised in the peer review, and set out a comprehensive range of actions. Additional investment had been made in the Communications Team, which had also been restructured. Significant progress had been made in a short period. This had coincided with the Covid pandemic, when effective communications had been of increased importance. Feedback and awards had demonstrated how much the Council had improved, with benefits for the Council and the communities it served. It was

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acknowledged that more needed to be done to reach those who were seldom heard, but there was confidence that the Council would continue to move forward.

Councillor Lee Dillon indicated that it would be good to understand the level of resource and spend required to deliver each of the outstanding actions. For example, improving the website would be a relatively large and costly exercise compared to other more minor actions. Similarly for partially complete items, it was difficult to understand the remaining commitment. Also, he felt that some actions were not specific enough (e.g. 'greater social media').

Councillor Claire Rowles congratulated officers on making so much progress in a short period. She indicated that there had been good engagement with the Residents' Bulletin on Covid. She noted that the branding exercise had not been progressed and asked if this remained a long-term ambition. She also asked about plans to engage better with people with disabilities.

Councillor James Cole agreed that good progress had been made, but highlighted issues with the search engine on the Council's website.

Councillor Tony Linden was pleased at the improvements made. He agreed about the limitations of the search engine and noted that it had been difficult to find the last election results. He stressed the importance of making articles easy to read, including for residents whose first language was not English, and engaging with people who were not digital natives.

Councillor Tony Vickers suggested that when the Council organised conferences and events, there was a risk of talking too much and not listening enough. He stressed that residents had a lot to offer and should be listened to. Also, the Council was able to impart information in other ways.

Councillor Adrian Abbs suggested that relatively few people subscribed to the Council's social media channels, but engaged with their own community groups. He suggested that the Council and Members could post / re-post to the most active local groups in order to increase the audience.

Councillor Steve Masters congratulated officers on the improved communications. He acknowledged the success of the newsletter, but noted that engagement on social media was less than it could be. He suggested that the Council could pay for social media advertising to get into the feeds of local residents. With regard to live-streaming Council meetings, he asked if British Sign Language interpretation could be used to improve accessibility.

The Chairman also congratulated officers and praised the report. He agreed that the website needed to be improved, since this was often the first point of call for residents. He highlighted that his Council laptop was using Explorer as the default browser, but this did not work with the Council's website or intranet.

Gabrielle Mancini responded to members concerns as follows:

- Necessary resources had been made available for all actions.
- Progress was regularly monitored by the Customer First Programme Board.
- Weighting of actions had not been considered to date, but this would be looked at - projects were currently progressed in priority order.
- It was recognised that updating the website was a big project.
- Concerns about the search engine would be fed back to the Digital Team.
- The website performed well in terms of Government accessibility standards.
- The Council was improving access for residents by increasing the range of channels through which people could engage, including directly through the



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Contact Centre or via digital channels. The Digital Waste Permit Scheme was cited as a success story with residents able to access other services via their online account in future.

- Engagement with seldom heard groups was considered a priority and additional resource had been added to the Consultation Team to facilitate active engagement with these communities.
- The demographics of social media subscribers and consultation respondees were regularly reviewed and any gaps were actively targeted. Also the Residents' Survey was going out to a representative sample of local residents.
- The Branding exercise had been deferred due to budget and resource constraints associated with the pandemic.
- Regarding conferences, the Council was seeking to move from the traditional approach of broadcasting messages to a more collaborative approach that involved others in the setting of agendas. An 'un-conference' approach would be used for the forthcoming District Parish Conference.
- Engaging with individual groups on social media would lead to a huge call on staff resources and it was suggested that Members and other community leaders could help to spread key messages.
- The Council made good use of paid advertising on social media, which targeted those who were not currently engaging with the Council.
- British Sign Language for council meetings had not been considered to date, but this would be discussed with the Portfolio Holder.
- Explorer was no longer supported by Microsoft, so ICT would be asked to remove this from Members' laptops. Members would be able to access the Intranet via Chrome.

### **Actions: Gabrielle Mancini to:**

- **Consider introducing a weighting of actions by resource / time requirement;**
- **Feedback concerns about the search engine on the Council's website to the Digital Team;**
- **Discuss the possibility of British Sign Language interpretation for public meetings with the Executive Portfolio Holder;**
- **Ask the ICT Team to remove Explorer from Members' laptops.**

## **38. Fees and Charges**

The Commission considered a report on Fees and Charges (Agenda Item 8).

The report provided an overview of fees and charges across the Council. It included the level of fee income in recent years, and the type of charges the Council made and for what services.

The Commission was invited to make proposals and recommendations regarding areas where a more detailed review could be undertaken. Corporate Board had made some initial suggestions.

It was suggested that OSMC may wish to set up a Task and Finish Group to look at this and make recommendations back to a future meeting.

The Chairman had expected the report to set out some potential options for further charges that could be introduced. He noted that this work could not be completed in time to inform the 2022/23 Budget, which would be considered at the February meeting of the Executive. However, proposals could be incorporated into a revised mid-year budget in September. Otherwise they could be introduced as part of the 2023/24 budget.

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It was agreed that a Task and Finish Group would be the most appropriate mechanism for this work. The Chairman proposed that this be considered as part of the next agenda item.

Councillor Lee Dillon suggested that the Task Group should set some overarching guidelines, with charges for necessities kept to the minimum (e.g. Blue badges for disabled residents), but having charges for standard items rising with inflation.

The Chairman suggested that the Task Group should have a free hand to determine these, working with officers.

Councillor Rowles suggested that it would be helpful to present the information more visually.

Councillor James Cole noted the proposed increase in charges, which were lower than current inflation rates. Also, the increase for the Public Protection Partnership fees were more than those for Council services. Councillor Dillon explained that the report referred to the previous year's charges.

The Chairman suggested that the Task Group could consider which measure of inflation would be appropriate to consider when setting in increases (i.e. RPI or CPI).

It was proposed that Councillor Jeff Brooks and James Cole be members of the Task and Finish Group.

The Chairman proposed that Councillor James Cole be appointed as Chairman. This was seconded by Councillor Claire Rowles. At the vote the motion was passed.

**RESOLVED:** that Councillor James Cole be appointed as Chairman of the Fees and Charges Task Group.

The Chairman asked if the Green Party wished to be represented. Councillor Steve Masters indicated that they did not currently have spare capacity.

Councillor Tony Vickers proposed that an invitation could be extended to all back-bench Members. The Chairman suggested that one or two additional members could be co-opted to the Task Group.

### 39. **Membership of Task and Finish Groups**

The Chairman noted that there had been difficulties in arranging meetings of the Leisure Strategy Task and Finish Group. This had partly been due to senior officers having to prioritise the Covid response. He stressed that meetings should not be dependent on directors being present.

It was noted that Councillor Gareth Hurley also had experienced difficulties in attending meetings, so Councillor Tony Linden had been asked to replace Councillor Hurley on the Task and Finish Group.

The expectation was that the Group would meet at least twice and report back to OSMC in March. The Chairman confirmed that he had secured the agreement of the Leader that the Leisure Strategy would not go to Executive until the Task Group had made its report. The original request had been for the Task Group to help guide and develop the strategy.

Councillor Lee Dillon sought clarification regarding who would Chair the Task and Finish Group. The Chairman confirmed that it would be Councillor Linden.

### 40. **Task and Finish Group Updates**

The Commission received updates on the work of the current Task and Finish Groups (Agenda Item 10).

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There was no further update from the Leisure Strategy Task Group.

Councillor Tom Marino confirmed that it had been agreed that the ICT and Digitisation Task Group should be wound up as the Strategy had been adopted and there did not appear to be any significant issues with the programme. Also, there was a need to free up resources to focus on other task groups.

### 41. Health Scrutiny Committee Update

Councillor Claire Rowles presented the update on the work of the Health Scrutiny Committee (Agenda Item 11).

The last Health Scrutiny Committee meeting was on 10 November. Items considered included:

- NHS Dentistry
- Access to GP surgeries
- Clinical Commissioning Group update
- Healthwatch West Berkshire update
- Adoption of prioritisation methodology
- Protocol between Health Scrutiny Committee and local health bodies

The 3 February meeting had to be cancelled due to lack of availability.

The Committee was developing its work programme using the prioritisation methodology and a meeting was being arranged with Sarah Clarke to discuss this further and agree dates of future meetings.

It was noted that Vicky Phoenix had been appointed to provide additional officer support.

Councillor Rowles had attended a meeting of the Hampshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to receive a briefing on plans for the new hospital at Basingstoke. She stressed the importance of attending meetings about facilities in neighbouring areas where West Berkshire residents would be affected.

### 42. West Berkshire Council Forward Plan 2 February to 31 May 2022

The Commission considered the West Berkshire Forward Plan (Agenda Item 12) for the period covering 2 February to 31 May 2022.

Councillor Lee Dillon asked for the Forward Plan to be sorted by chronological order. He also suggested that the Commission may wish to consider the Review of the Library Service, which was going to Executive in April.

The Chairman confirmed that it would not be possible to undertake pre-decision scrutiny on this item due to the tight timescales. It was suggested that a 6 month review could be considered.

Councillor Steve Masters asked if Thames Water had confirmed attendance. It was noted that this item had been pushed back to the September meeting.

Councillor Tony Vickers asked about the scope of the Thames Water item and suggested that foul water drainage, surface water drainage and supply were all relevant.

It was confirmed that it would cover Thames Water's investment priorities for the next five years. This would include investment that affected West Berkshire residents, including elements just over the district boundary.

Councillor Claire Rowles asked why Health Scrutiny was shown alongside OSMC as the responsible body on forward plan items. It was confirmed that scrutiny matters were shown under a single category for the purposes of the Forward Plan.

**43. Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission Work Programme**

The Commission considered its work programme (Agenda Item 13).

The Chairman noted that the December meeting had been cancelled due to reports not being ready in time. He had been assured that there were good explanations for the delays. As a result, it had been necessary to make significant changes to the work programme.

Councillor Claire Rowles felt that the Equalities and Diversity Strategy was a key item. She noted that it had been pushed back and asked who the lead officer was. It was explained that Pam Voss had been appointed as Equality and Diversity Officer and would lead on the strategy. There had been challenges due to the Covid pandemic, but external support was being procured to assist with co-production of the strategy.

Prior to closing the meeting, the Chairman observed that it had been a difficult meeting and apologised to viewing members of the public for how the meeting had been conducted. He noted that there were some Constitutional issues that needed to be considered.

*(The meeting commenced at 6.32 pm and closed at 9.39 pm)*

**CHAIRMAN** .....

**Date of Signature** .....

**Actions arising from last OSMC Meeting**

The OSMC is requested to consider the following list of actions and note the updates provided.

Ref No:	Date	Item/Action	Member/Officer	Comments/Update
50	31/08/2021	<b>Council Motion Referred to OSMC</b> Cllr Lee Dillon to submit a request in writing to the Executive to provide a chronological list of all decisions made by Executive in relation to LRIE, including when the decision was made to submit the planning application for the football ground.	Cllr Lee Dillon	<b>In Progress</b> - Cllr Dillon has met with officers and will decide if he wishes to submit a question to Executive.
52	12/10/2021	<b>Review of the Council's Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic</b> To look at the Scrutiny programme to schedule some task groups, to look at the response from the perspective of residents, service users and then businesses	Cllr Alan Law & Cllr Lee Dillon	<b>In Progress</b> - This has been included on the revised work programme from September 2022 onwards
53	25/01/2022	<b>Operational Review of the Communications and Engagement Strategy</b> Consider adding a weighting of actions by resource / time requirement	Gabrielle Mancini	<b>Outstanding</b> - This will require a detailed review.
54	25/01/2022	<b>Operational Review of the Communications and Engagement Strategy</b> Feedback concerns about the search engine on the Council's website to the Digital Team	Gabrielle Mancini	<b>Complete</b> - Concerns have been fed back to the Digital Team and detailed conversations have been held with relevant Members to understand more about their concerns
55	25/01/2022	<b>Operational Review of the Communications and Engagement Strategy</b> Discuss the possibility of British Sign Language interpretation for public meetings with the Executive Portfolio Holder	Shiraz Sheikh / Stephen Chard	<b>Outstanding</b> - This action has been reassigned to Democratic Services and will initially be discussed with the Equalities and Diversity Officer.
56	25/01/2022	<b>Operational Review of the Communications and Engagement Strategy</b> Ask the ICT Team to remove Microsoft Internet Explorer from Members' laptops.	Gabrielle Mancini	<b>In Progress</b> - The request has been submitted to ICT.

Last updated: 14 March 2022

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OSMC – 22 March 2022

## **Item 4 – Declarations of interest**

Verbal Item

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OSMC – 22 March 2022

## **Item 5 – Petitions**

Verbal Item

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# Securing Effective Management of the Kennet and Avon Canal

<b>Committee considering report:</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
<b>Date of Committee:</b>	22 March 2022
<b>Portfolio Member:</b>	Councillor Richard Somner
<b>Date Portfolio Member agreed report:</b>	Sent 04 March 2022
<b>Report Author:</b>	Paul Hendry, Countryside Manager
<b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>	HSC/OSMC

## 1 Purpose of the Report

To consider how West Berkshire Council can work with the Canal and River Trust, Sustrans, Environment Agency and other partners in the effective management of the Kennet and Avon Canal Towpath.

## 2 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That the OSMC consider the proposals set out in this report so that the future effective strategic management of the Kennet and Avon canal can be secured.

## 3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
<b>Financial:</b>	There are no financial implications directly as a consequence of this Report.
<b>Human Resource:</b>	None
<b>Legal:</b>	There are no legal implications as a result of this report
<b>Risk Management:</b>	None
<b>Property:</b>	None

<b>Policy:</b>	There are no Policy implications as a consequence of this Report.			
	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
<b>Equalities Impact:</b>				
<b>A</b> Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		<b>X</b>		Not at this stage
<b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		<b>X</b>		Not at this stage
<b>Environmental Impact:</b>	<b>X</b>			Potentially improved environmental management of the canal in this area
<b>Health Impact:</b>	<b>X</b>			The canal is a great recreational facility. Greater strategic overview opens up the benefits to the community as a whole.
<b>ICT Impact:</b>		<b>X</b>		None
<b>Digital Services Impact:</b>		<b>X</b>		None

<b>Council Strategy Priorities:</b>	<b>X</b>			Maintain a green district. Support businesses to start, develop and thrive in West Berkshire. Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnerships. Develop local infrastructure, including housing, to support and grow the local economy
<b>Core Business:</b>	<b>X</b>			Elements towpath maintenance are core functions of the countryside Service
<b>Data Impact:</b>			<b>X</b>	None
<b>Consultation and Engagement:</b>	Not required. Further discussions with key stakeholders will be required			

## 4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 The Kennet and Avon Canal is a wonderful recreation, leisure, heritage and nature conservation asset which is located within easy access to all of the main residential areas of the District. Management of the canal and towpath is not without its challenges however. This report considers in some detail the rather complex nature of the management of the canal including its associated cultural assets and in particular the towpath. The report sets out the main management challenges, mostly related to the often conflicting uses of the canal and the wider implications for its funding and promotion.
- 4.2 The report considers the main sources of funding, mostly local authority revenue, and also funding from the Canal and Rivers Trust under whose stewardship the canal rests. The report establishes that despite the keen interest of stakeholders, some of whom provide funding, and others who don't, there appears to be a lack of strategic management underpinning this valuable asset. Valuable in the sense that its promotion and use has undoubted benefits for all the key stakeholders in terms of its social value, health and wellbeing, and sustainable transport opportunities.
- 4.3 In light of these issues, and the fact that all three riparian authorities will cease funding at the end of the current management agreement in 2023, the report proposes potential options which the OSMC are asked to consider further in more detail. It is expected that further conversations will be required with stakeholders in order to progress these options further. It is apparent that a more holistic and strategic approach to the management of the canal will be vital over the coming years in order to address the concerns set out in the report and to identify joint funded improvement projects.

## 5 Supporting Information

### Introduction

- 5.1 This report sets out the background to the current use of the canal and its towpath for leisure and recreation, and for the appreciation and enjoyment of nature. It identifies the main stakeholders and their respective roles and the current funding arrangements which are in place for the management of the canal. The report also briefly explains the major sources of contention and conflict and the maintenance arrangements which are currently in place to mitigate these.
- 5.2 In light of what is set out in the report, specifically in relation to the use of the canal and areas of conflict, and the funding and maintenance arrangements, the OSMC may wish to examine further the strategic and collaborative arrangements for the management of the canal and whether these are fit for purpose. This is of increasing importance in the context of the council's Environment Strategy and policies for sustainable travel and tourism, the regeneration of Newbury Town Centre, and the need to provide a canal infrastructure which supports the uses to which it is put. Furthermore without a strategic overview opportunities for securing external funding may be overlooked.

### Background

- 5.3 The Kennet and Avon Canal runs for 87 miles and connects the River Avon at Bristol with the River Thames at Reading. It is, therefore, a waterway of strategic importance connecting London with Bristol and forming part of a group of canals in the South West. The Kennet and Avon Canal opened in 1810 linking the Kennet Navigation between Reading and Newbury with the River Avon which linked Bristol and Bath.
- 5.4 As with other waterways, usage of the canal declined in the face of competition from other forms of transportation and the Kennet and Avon Canal was eventually closed by the British Transport Commission in 1955. Subsequently, the Kennet and Avon Canal Association was set up to campaign for its re-opening and, by the 1960s, a number of restoration projects were being undertaken. Key capital projects included:
- A major lock rebuilding programme during the 1980s
  - Major works to reline the Dundas Aqueduct and remove landslips in 1984
  - Relining works and bridge improvements
  - The restoration of the Caen Hill flight of locks
- 5.5 The culmination of these projects was the official re-opening of the Kennet and Avon Canal to through navigation in 1990 by HM The Queen. The waterway however still suffered from significant and long-standing structural problems of water leakage and embankment stability which, unless they were addressed, would have threatened future usage of the canal.
- 5.6 A second major phase of restoration was thus undertaken following a successful £25 million bid made in 1996 to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for funding to complete the restoration of the canal. Match funding totalling an additional £4.24 million was provided by British Waterways (as was), the Kennet and Avon Canal Trust and riparian local authorities including West Berkshire Council. Work began in 1997 and involved key tasks such as ensuring adequate water supplies, repairing embankments and canal

structures, and Improving access, interpretation, and also nature/heritage conservation throughout the length of the waterway.

- 5.7 Work was completed in December 2002 and the works completion was celebrated by the visit of HRH the Prince of Wales in May 2003.
- 5.8 This ongoing restoration and maintenance effort meant that the canal was able to operate at 100 per cent cruising status. Moreover, the waterway supported a significant tourism and leisure economy which provided employment opportunities for local people. One of the justifications for the award of the HLF grant was, therefore, the protection and safeguarding of these jobs. In addition it was widely anticipated that the restoration programme, by raising the profile of the canal and resulting in increased usage, would have an impact on the local property market by making canal-side sites more desirable for both residential and commercial property development.
- 5.9 As part of the Heritage Lottery funding of the restoration of the Kennet and Avon Canal, three riparian Councils entered into funding agreements in October 1997 with British Waterways, now the Canal & River Trust (CRT) to support the restoration of the canal and its subsequent maintenance. These agreements run until 2023. West Berkshire Council's contribution is currently £25,700 per annum, although this funding is due to cease in 2023.
- 5.10 Further information on the history of the canal can be found here: [Kennet & Avon Canal | Bristol to Reading Canal | Canal & River Trust \(canalrivertrust.org.uk\)](https://www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/bristol-to-reading-canal)

### Designations

- 5.11 The Kennet and Avon Canal fulfils a number of functions and purposes, not just boating (both leisure and commercial) and related water based activities but also many other leisure and recreation and nature conservation functions. Consequently, the canal corridor has formal designations in recognition of this. It should be noted that conflict between users can often be a significant issue for managers of the canal navigation itself and also the local highway authority with regards to any right of way that exists. These are set out in detail at paragraph 5.54 below.
- 5.12 **National Trails.** The Kennet and Avon Canal also forms part of the Thames Path National Trail at its eastern end. As the canal connects the River Thames at Reading with the River Avon near Bath it therefore provides a popular link between the Thames Path at Reading and to the Cotswold Way National Trail, following the canal through Thatcham, Hungerford, Pewsey, Devizes, Bradford-on-Avon, Bath and Bristol. In Bath the canal is joined by the waymarked River Avon Trail. The canal therefore provides an excellent cross England walking route.
- 5.13 **Rights of Way.** Much of the canal towpath in West Berkshire is also designated a public right of way. The remainder is designated as a permissive path. Rights of way provide the single most important route into and through private land in England and are critical as sustainable transport routes and for health and wellbeing activities. Funding for rights of way management comes from local authority budgets. Funding is discussed in more detail at 5.46 below.

- 5.14 **Sustrans Routes.** Sustrans are custodians of the National Cycle Network (NCN), a UK-wide network of signed paths and routes, connecting cities, towns and countryside. More can be found here: <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/national-cycle-network/>. NCN Route 4 connects Fishguard to London via Bristol, Bath and Reading. It follows the canal towpath between Bath and Devizes, then switches to quiet roads between Devizes and Marsh Benham where it re-joins the towpath and follows this all the way to Reading, with the exception of a couple of short sections at Thatcham and Burghfield Mill. As part of the creation of NCN Route 4, extensive improvement works were carried out, including widening of the towpath and construction of a crushed aggregate, all-weather surface. The route was officially opened in June 2000 to mark the first 5,000 miles of the NCN.
- 5.15 **The Kennet and Avon Cycle Route** is part of the Sustrans network and is around 83 miles in length from Bath to Reading. It uses the canal towpath network and by the same method as the National Trails this Sustrans route links to other national cycle routes along the length of the canal. The Kennet and Avon Canal route links to the 13 mile Bristol and Bath Railway Path, which in turn becomes part of the Severn and Thames cycle route between Gloucester and Reading.
- 5.16 Bearing in mind the linking nature of both footpath and cycle routes above it becomes apparent just how important the canal and its towpath are to the communities of West Berkshire. One of the significant weaknesses of our rights of way network (1100km) is its rather fragmented nature. Many footpaths and bridleways often end up in a dead end with no linking route to centres of population and local attractions. The exception is the canal towpath which forms a perfect linking route potentially bringing tourist and day tripper spend to our local communities.
- 5.17 **Sites of Special Scientific interest.** The canal and its environs are important for wildlife conservation. Many of these exist directly as a consequence of or are reliant on the canals existence. Note however that the use of the canal can have significant negative impacts on some adjacent river habitats. These impacts are discussed at paragraph 5.63 below.
- 5.18 There are several Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) along the canal corridor, which exhibit great biodiversity. Key sites that are home to several rare species include the River Kennet, Aldermaston Gravel Pits at Woolhampton, Thatcham Reed Beds (this site is also designated a special Area of Conservation, one of the highest levels of protection in Europe) and Freeman's Marsh, Hungerford. There are also many non-statutory nature reserves along the canal. Although these sites do not have statutory protection they are nevertheless highly valued by local communities.
- 5.19 More than 100 different species of bird have been recorded in surveys over the length of the canal, of which 38 could be classified as specialist waterway birds, including grey heron, reed bunting and common kingfisher. Fourteen species have been confirmed as breeding including sand martins, which nest in drain-pipes in the brick walls of the canal in the centre of Reading. Further, Wilton Water by Crofton Locks and the Kennet Valley gravel pits provide habitats for breeding and wintering waterfowl. Several species of dragonflies and damselflies and other invertebrates have also been recorded. Common reed is among the plant species growing along the edges of the canal. Measures to preserve and create water vole habitat have had considerable impact on the restoration



of the canal, and new "vole-friendly" techniques of bank protection have been developed.

5.20 **Heritage designations.** Originally constructed over 200 years ago to serve the transport needs of the Industrial Revolution, the Kennet and Avon Canal is one of the finest examples of living, working industrial heritage in the world. There are over 300 designated heritage assets within or close to the Kennet and Avon canal corridor so the canal has undoubted cultural and historic importance. These assets are mostly listed buildings – especially bridges – but also scheduled monuments and the World Heritage Sites at Avebury. Designated assets in the vicinity of the canal reflect a variety of themes: transport – both across the waterway and along it; trade; milling; military; religious and domestic. In addition to normal development controls specific protection is provided for Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and archaeological sites.

### **Functions and use of the Thames Path and K&A towpath**

5.21 More than 8.5 million people (nearly 15 percent of the population) live within 1km of one of England's waterways. In urban areas, the percentage is often much higher. Research carried out by the CRT shows that spending time by water, whether it be at lunchtime, part of a daily commute, or just talking a leisurely walk improves the health and wellbeing of the local community. With ever increasing rates of obesity, stress and declining mental health in the UK, canals are well placed to make a significant contribution to improving the physical and mental wellbeing of millions of people. The Kennet and Avon canal runs through, or is adjacent to some of the largest communities in West Berkshire, providing accessible green and blue space where it's needed the most.

5.22 **Tourism and Leisure:** In 2002, the tourism and leisure economy along the Kennet and Avon canal was worth between £25-30 million p.a. This economy directly supported between 740-860 FTEs, and between 965-1,120 FTEs once indirect and induced effects have been taken into account. I would be not unreasonable to assume that this figure has grown significantly over the years up to present given the general economic conditions over this time. More recent national data for August 2013 suggests that record numbers of people made a trip to the nation's canals and rivers. During August 2013 5.4 million people visited a canal or river breaking previous visitor records. More recently we know that during and post the Lockdown, canals and other blue and green spaces received significantly increased visitors, with increases in some areas as high as 160% (London Sustainable Development Commission October 2020).

5.23 The Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission may consider it appropriate to follow up with the CRT whether they have any more up to date information and statistics since the ECOTECH report as undoubtedly Tourism is a significant factor of interest. The greater the potential income generation the easier it is to justify expenditure, whether this be from government sources, local taxation or grant aid.

5.24 **Boating:** Unfortunately officers do not have access to up to date canal boat tourism data in relation to the Kennet and Avon Canal. The last detailed study we have access to was carried out in 2014 by a company called ECOTECH working on behalf of the CRT and providing information to the key local authorities involved in contributing funding to the management of the canal. This report highlighted the general increase

in the popularity of boating on the canal across all categories of boat; visiting boats, day boats and hire boats. In the 10 years between 1995 and 2005 the number of visiting boats increased by 20%, while the number of hire boats and trip boats increased by 25% and 55% respectively. The number of privately moored boats grew much more slowly in this period due to capacity issues with over 200 individuals on a waiting list for a British Waterways mooring on the Kennet and Avon Canal.

5.25 **Canoeing:** There is no specific data on the number of canoeists using the canal as far as our research can establish. Sport in England: Public Funding and Participation in the UK, a report by Statista has established that there are 128,000 canoeists in the UK in 2021 but that this figure has decreased over the last 5 years. What is clear however is that canoeing is a popular pastime on the canal, so there is clearly demand for facilities, consequently there are a number of canoe hire facilities along the canal. There are also several canoe trails which are promoted by the Canal and Rivers Trust.

5.26 There is no specific data on the number of anglers using the canal. Angling faces some very serious challenges nationally. It has had declining participation, partly from reduced marketing and therefore reduced fishing licence sales. A consequence of this is reduced funding from government, the profile of people who take part is increasingly the older generation and it does not encompass some sections of the population. For angling organisations this is a significant concern, consequently a national Angling strategy has been published which aims to increase participation in angling, and:

- To increase the numbers of people getting active outdoors through angling
- To improve the health and well-being of those that take part.
- To connect more people to nature through angling for their well-being and to improve the environment.
- To increase the economic impact of angling and in particular deliver economic benefits in rural and coastal communities and revenue to clubs, fisheries and businesses

5.27 **Cycling:** Again data is limited or historic however Sustrans, undertakes monitoring of patterns of use on the national cycle network. Data from over 300 automated counters forms the basis of Sustrans' user monitoring. This reporting indicates that there has been a steady increase in usage of the national cycle network (by both cyclists and walkers).

5.28 Research carried out as part of the ECOTECH study makes a direct correlation between the increase in cycling (and other participation activities) and canal business turnover. Many cycling visits to the canal are often also made by people staying overnight in the local area. This assumption is justified by the results of the Kennet and Avon Towpath Survey 2005, the results of which indicate that 20.2% of respondents were in the area on a short-break or holiday (although over a quarter of these were staying with friends and relatives rather than in paid accommodation).

5.29 In its report 'Economic Benefits of Cycle Tourism', Cycling UK estimates that the Total tourism spend from cyclists and mountain bikers in the UK is £520m. There are 1.23m overnight cycle trips per year in the UK, contributing around £443m – with an average spend of £360 per trip or £46.75 per day

- 5.30 **Walking:** There is no specific data on the use of the canal towpath by walkers. According to the Active Lives Adult Survey (2018) walking for Leisure, and walking for travel, are still the most popular activity in the UK with 18.6 million of adults achieving 150+ minutes of activity each week. According to the survey, increasing numbers of older people are exercising each week. An increase in participation rates with activities such as brisk walking, has resulted in the number of 55-74 year olds meeting the 150 minute threshold, a rise from 58.3% to 59.6% between November 2016 and November 2017. It is very clear therefore that the canal provides a popular off road route between residential areas and local amenities as well as being a visitor destination in its own right and is vital in helping our communities achieve recommended activity rates.
- 5.31 **Volunteering:** According to CRT, the Trust employs 158 volunteers along the K&A Canal, recruited from local communities and those interested in adopting sections of the canal. There has been a reduction in the number of active volunteers across the entire region, largely as a result of Covid-19 and consequently this has had an impact on volunteer activity. Volunteers along the canal continue to play a crucial role in the day-to-day maintenance of the waterway: working in a towpath taskforce group; carrying out preventative maintenance works; volunteering in customer service and administrative roles; attending events; and taking part in heritage and environment projects. There are a range of partner groups along the waterway, including Bath College, Claverton, Devizes Moorings and Community Matters Newbury. Throughout 2019/20, Trust volunteers supported the local CRT operations team by delivering projects including; re-pointing of stonework, including the pedestrian bridge at Kintbury, grass cutting, carpark maintenance, litter picking, painting of structures and graffiti removal.
- 5.32 In addition to the above, Sustrans has its own network of volunteer rangers who have responsibility for regularly checking NCN Route 4 and carrying out minor maintenance work, such as cleaning and replacing cycle route signs, removing overhanging branches and vegetation, and picking up litter. They also organise regular task days to carry out bigger activities over a larger stretch of the National Cycle Network.
- 5.33 **Sustainable Transport:** Britain's canals offer huge opportunities to help local councils and their communities on the challenging journey towards achieving the Government's 'net-zero' carbon targets by 2040. And with its extensive 'Blue/Green' corridors, it's ideally placed in our towns and cities to be at the forefront of the new 'Green Industrial Revolution' too. [PM outlines his Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution for 250,000 jobs - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-outlines-his-ten-point-plan-for-a-green-industrial-revolution-for-250000-jobs)
- 5.34 With the right investment, the canal and towpath offers a fantastic sustainable transport link, east to west and within and between towns and villages. The Canal and Rivers Trust has worked with many councils in recent years to transform muddy towpaths into all-weather surfaces, providing perfect off-road routes for walking and cycling for both commuting and recreation, and collaborated with developers and councils to provide active travel routes to support sustainable development.

### Management Stakeholders

- 5.35 **Canal and Rivers Trust (CRT):** Formerly the British Waterways Board. The Canal and River Trust is a charity which was set up in 2012 to care for England and Wales' waterways, network holding them in trust for the nation in perpetuity. It has responsibility for 2,000 miles of navigable canals and rivers, together with bridges, tunnels,

aqueducts, docks and reservoirs, along with museums and archive collections. The Trust receives a fixed grant from the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs over the 15 years commencing 2012. Its major other sources of income are from utilities (including fibre optic data connections and water sales) and property rentals from a £500 million property endowment granted by the government. It also receives an income from issuing licences for boats using and mooring on the waterways; this is one of the largest income streams that Canal and River Trust Limited has, after the government grant and has been given a funding pledge by the People's Postcode Lottery of over £1 million. Further details on the funding of the canal are set out at paragraph 5.43 below.

- 5.36 In West Berkshire District the CRT's primary purpose is to manage the canal as a navigable waterway and also help to maintain the towpath and other canal structures and buildings under their care. They also have a role in promoting and marketing the canal as a leisure and tourist destination
- 5.37 **National Trail's Office:** National Trails are long distance footpaths and bridleways in England and Wales. They are administered and funded by Natural England, a statutory agency of the UK government. Each Trail in England and Wales has a National Trail Officer who is responsible for overseeing its management and maintenance to nationally agreed standards. Each National Trail Officer co-ordinates maintenance, improvement and promotional work on the ground. Much of the maintenance work is undertaken by the local highway authority together with landowners and also with the help of volunteers. In West Berkshire only a very small section of the canal is also a Towpath so the Ridgeway & Thames Path National Trails Office input to the management of the towpath in this area is minimal.
- 5.38 **The Environment Agency (EA):** Whereas the Canal and Rivers Trust manages the canal network, the Environment Agency manage all inland river, estuary and harbour navigations. They are also involved in fisheries, conservation and ecology, water quality and resources and controlling waste from industry. If we consider that the Kennet and Avon Canal is effectively a canalised river (the River Kennet in this District) then the role of the EA becomes clearer. At paragraph 5.58 below there is further discussion about the tensions which exist between those managing the canal, and those with an interest in the river. The EA is not a major funding source for the canal however as their expenditure is focussed in inland rivers.
- 5.39 **Sustrans:** As set out earlier in this report Sustrans is a United Kingdom walking and cycling charity, and the custodian of the National Cycle Network (although they only own around 2% of the overall network).
- 5.40 Several Sustrans routes link to the Canal towpath and National Route 4 follows the canal towpath between Bath and Devizes, and, between Mash Benham and Reading with a couple of minor exceptions. Sustrans does not receive ongoing Government funding for the maintenance of the National Cycle Network and so it has traditionally not contributed significant sums to the maintenance of the towpath.
- 5.41 Sustrans currently has many sources of funding; supporters' donations, Department for Transport, and the National Opportunities Fund, specifically for the Safe Routes projects. Additional funding comes from charitable grants and trusts, local government and income from the sales of merchandise, maps and books.

- 5.42 **Local Authorities and the Kennet and Avon Canal Partnership.** Local authorities who are currently actively involved in the management of the canal are; Bath and North East Somerset, Wiltshire County Council and West Berkshire Council. All three council's (or their predecessors) have been working with the British Waterways Board, and latterly the CRT, ever since the canal reopened in 1990. The CRT are the freehold owners of the canal whilst the local authorities have both riparian and other freehold ownership interests and specific management responsibilities as a consequence of the towpath being a right of way.
- 5.43 In September 1996 British Waterways, working on behalf of the Kennet and Avon Canal Trust and the local authorities was awarded a grant of £25 million towards the continued capital improvement of the canal. The project was framed following an extensive consultation process, which revealed much interest in and support for further works to the canal. This arrangement saw the formation, in 1997, of the Kennet and Avon Canal Partnership (the Partnership) which exists to this day. The Partnership includes the key local authorities and the Kennet and Avon Canal Trust but notably does not include other organisations such as Sustrans.
- 5.44 As part of this agreement in September 1997 the local authorities and the BWB signed a joint funding agreement which committed each local authority to contribute agreed sums each year until the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018. Current funding arrangements are set out below.
- 5.45 The Partnership met on a regular basis over the years but latterly the meetings have diminished and most recently appear to have ceased altogether. This is unfortunate given that this is the only significant strategic body involved in management and funding of the canal.

### **Funding Arrangements**

- 5.46 **Local Authority Funding.** The financial contributions of all three councils is set out in the current funding agreement. The initial payments from all the councils totalled £383,000 per annum, and these sums were to be uplifted each year by RPI. The then Newbury District Council, now WBC contributed £51,000 per annum to this total.
- 5.47 This arrangement continued until 2012/13 when the various councils asked for a review of funding contributions in light of Austerity measures. In order to reduce the burden on the local authorities the agreement was renegotiated and the remaining sums due until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 were profiled over a longer period. The agreement is now due to end in 2022/23 financial year. Combined payments are now £135,000 per annum whilst WBC contributes £25,000 to this sum each year.
- 5.48 OSMC should note that there will be no local authority revenue finding towards the canal as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) expenditure for capital projects is possible and the canal towpath would be a worthy recipient of capital for structural and surfacing improvements. In West Berkshire, a sum of £300,000 of developer contributions 106 was secured from the Newbury Racecourse development to for the improvement of the canal towpath from Hambridge Road to Victoria Park. A project which was completed in the 2019/20 financial year. This mirrors similar projects by other authorities along the canal. Officers are however mindful that any expenditure has to be seen as part of a strategic approach to the management of the canal, which

has diminished since the Partnership ceased to function. Without this overview then there is a likelihood that 3<sup>rd</sup> party funding opportunities will be overlooked.

- 5.49 **CRT Funding.** Further detail on the funding of the canal is set out in the Kennet and Avon Canal Partnership Annual Report (Appendix 1). Overall the total cost of operating and maintaining the canal in 2019/20, the last year for which figures are available, was £6.1 million. This includes all operating costs and capital projects, some of which were defrayed from the previous year. In terms of projects, in 19/20 the CRT spent just over £2.5 million on the canal: £826,950 in West Berkshire, £1,231,147 in Wiltshire and £461,141 in Bath and North East Somerset.
- 5.50 **Government Funding.** Government funding for the canal network is focussed on the CRT. The CRT receives approximately £52 million per year from DEFRA for the national waterway network, this appears to be a fairly stable income stream. The CRT has a rather complex funding portfolio but in summary its £261million budget comes from a number of sources including; investments, donations and legacies, charitable activities, and boating and mooring. The full CRT annual report with accounts can be found here: <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/media/original/42580-annual-report-and-accounts-2019-20.pdf>
- 5.51 Sustrans does not receive ongoing Government funding for maintenance of the National Cycle Network. However, on the back of its Paths for Everyone Report, it has managed to secure £52 million from the Department for Transport and £5 million from Highways England. This has been used to improve stretches of the Network through improved signage, surface and width, with 55 'Activation Projects' scheduled to be delivered by the end of 2023. These include an improvement to the section of NCN4 between Padworth and Ufton Lane. The priority of this project is to improve the quality of the surface and increase the width of the towpath. The estimated completion date: 30 September, 2023
- 5.52 **Other funding available.** Government grant funding may be available to local authorities including West Berkshire Council. Certainty Bath has benefitted in recent years from Department of Transport funding under the Cycle City Ambition Programme. Grant funding for specific projects is worthy of specific investigation.
- 5.53 Charitable grant funding may also be available, although there may be limitations on which bodies can apply. Recently, West Berkshire Spokes leveraged £10,000 of its own funds to raise over £100,000 of additional funding from various bodies through the Good Exchange, including match-funding from Greenham Common Trust. This paid for the upgrade of the towpath on the section east of Colthrop up to Brimpton Road.

### Key Issues on the Canal

- 5.54 This section merits a report in itself however the key issues along the canal mainly relate to conflict between users, towpath condition and pollution at the intersections between the Canal and the River Kennet and Dun.
- 5.55 Canals have historically been spaces for recreation and leisure, in addition to its commercial use. Today, multiple groups (walkers, cyclists, anglers, canoeists, rowers, swimmers) vie for the recreational use of the canal network. The Kennet and Avon

Canal is no different, in fact it can be argued that due to its location in a heavily populated and affluent part of the country, the issues may be more acute.

- 5.56 The towpath is clearly heavily used and as a consequence both this council and the CRT receive complaints about the conduct of one category of user or another. We regularly receive feedback from residents about a few inconsiderate users who don't consider others when they use the canal towpath. Complaints are received regarding cyclists travelling too fast, anglers using scarce boat moorings, boaters who clutter up towpaths and pedestrians who 'walk in packs' - the list is endless.
- 5.57 Cyclists are often viewed as the main offender. Some years ago a permit system was introduced to manage cycling on the canal but in recent years this changed and there is now no requirement for a permit to cycle on the towpath. A general principle exists, often promoted locally via leaflets and signage that cyclists must cycle with care for pedestrians, wildlife and the fabric of the towpath to ensure that everyone can enjoy them to their full potential.
- 5.58 There are also conflicts between anglers and just about every other category of user. The towpath is often a venue for match fishing and the passage of boaters and canoeists on the canal, and runners, walkers and cyclists on the towpath, requires the constant lifting and replacement of fishing equipment, especially where long roach poles are used.
- 5.59 The issue of bad behaviour on towpaths led the CRT to run a consultation on 'Sharing Towpaths' earlier in 2021. It sets the CRT's proposed approach to towpath management to ensure that they are 'shared spaces' where a range of uses can be enjoyed. Consultation on this issue, carried out by the CRT, will result in the production of a Towpath Code in due course.
- 5.60 Much focus of local angst is the physical condition of the canal towpath. Extensive works were undertaken in the 1990s to upgrade the sections of towpath used by NCN Route 4, with the path widened to 2m where possible, and an all-weather surface constructed. This mostly utilised a crushed aggregate construction in rural sections, with bound or paved surfaces in busier urban areas. The crushed aggregate sections had a design life of around 12 years. However, there has been little in the way of ongoing structural maintenance of NCN Route 4, and so now, over 20 years on, these sections have deteriorated considerably with grass encroaching to such an extent that the path is now almost unusable by cyclists and wheelchairs in places. Originally 1.5 – 2m wide, it is now less than 0.3m in places and is virtually unusable by cyclists, families with pushchairs and wheelchair users.
- 5.61 Although much of the towpath in West Berkshire is also a right of way (highway authority responsibility), in some locations there is a permissive right (private landowner responsibility) only so the responsibility for maintenance is often confused. Towpath repairs are not a significant feature of the Council's rights of way capital improvement programme, partly as a consequence of the ongoing partnership funding which the Council contributes to the CRT. We consider that the ongoing funding should in part be allocated towards towpath repairs. There is however no obligation on the CRT to allocate this funding to towpath maintenance, whereas the council, as highway authority does have a responsibility for the surface of the sections of towpath which are rights of way. For our residents and users of the canal this only serves to create confusion.

- 5.62 The passage of increasing numbers of walkers, particularly those with dogs (dogs erode the towpath sides as they move into and out of the canal for exercise), and greater numbers of cyclists, and the actions of anglers who cut protective vegetation way from the canal side, all have a detrimental impact on towpath condition. Often this kind of damage results in the erosion extending across the width of the towpath. In addition, there is erosion from boats, both from their wash and also from them pulling on mooring pegs, which can tear chunks out of the bank.
- 5.63 Pollution concerns are also a significant source of contention. At a number of points along the canal corridor, water from the canal is discharged via overflow weirs into the Rivers Kennet and Dun. There is therefore an exchange of water from canal to river and vice versa. Significantly the River Kennet is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
- 5.64 The water quality in the river and canal differ greatly. The river is a groundwater-fed chalk stream whose chief characteristics are clear and fast-flowing water. Although the source water into the canal is much the same, the fact that these rivers are slow-flowing or static watercourses means that they act as a series of temporary sinks of catchment derived sediment. This makes the river vulnerable to pollution. Further, the long retention time of the canal water means it effectively becomes a bioreactor for algae and a source of other pollution (from agricultural run-off and hydrocarbons) and this manifests itself in discharges of turbid water from the canal to the river, especially at times when there is increased navigation, releasing algae in suspension and re-suspending sediments that have settled on the bed of the canal at locks.
- 5.65 As a consequence of this, there is a tension between the promotion of the canal as a recreational and leisure destination and any duties which the various partner organisations may have to the conservation status of the River Kennet.
- 5.66 All of the key issues set out above bring about greater pressure for coordinated management action on the canal. The difficulty is however, if you consider the rather complex nature of the various recreational use, the demands of the many stakeholders and the complicated funding arrangements for the canal, an uncoordinated approach can result in increasing tension and public dissatisfaction.
- 5.67 The CRT have their own maintenance teams who operate along the canal and who keep the towpath clear of vegetation and who make repairs to the towpath. This council also has similar responsibilities where the towpath is a right of way but it's not always clear who does what and whether there is a responsibility on the council to act where the CRT does not. Further, adjacent riparian landowners also have some responsibility to keep the towpath clear of vegetation. The Committee might want to consider whether there is a more effective strategic approach to be implemented in this respect. Note that the Kennet and Avon Canal Partnership has not met for some considerable time, something which might be considered strange as the local authority contributions to the CRT cease next year.

## **Proposals**

In light of the discussion above officers propose the following for consideration by OSMC:



- That discussions are opened up with the Canal and Rivers Trust to establish how they intend to fill the shortfall of approx. £140,000 once the local authority funding ceases.
- To establish what role, if any, the Kennet and Avon Canal Partnership will fulfil in future.
- In the absence of a Strategic partnership body, to promote further discussion about what is the best model for the future strategic management of the canal and the towpath so as to ensure that all relevant partners are involved in sharing expertise and using the collective strengths to overcome some of the key issues set out in this report.

## 6 Other options considered

6.1 None

## 7 Conclusion

7.1 The Kennet and Avon canal is a fantastic local resource which provides opportunities for the Council to fulfil its objectives in terms of promoting health and wellbeing, sustainable transport and sound environmental management. The canal presents a number of management challenges locally, most of these requiring a more holistic and strategic approach. The solutions are likely to be found in partnership working with other key stakeholders and led by the Canal and Rivers Trust, however the current partnership arrangements have diminished over the last few years and therefore this might now be the appropriate time to review what management models may be most appropriate in order to maximise potential funding opportunities for the benefit of the canal infrastructure and more widely for the benefit of our communities and canal users.

## 8 Appendices

8.1 Appendix A - Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix B - Data Protection Impact Assessment

Appendix C - Kennet and Avon Canal Partnership Annual Report

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### Background Papers:

None

### Subject to Call-In:

Yes:  No:

The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval

Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council

Delays in implementation could compromise the Council’s position

Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee or associated Task Groups within preceding six months

Item is Urgent Key Decision

Report is to note only

**Wards affected:** Hungerford & Kintbury, Newbury Speen, Newbury Central, Newbury Clay Hill, Newbury Greenham, Thatcham, Colthrop & Crookham, Aldermaston, Bucklebury, Bradfield, Burghfield & Mortimer

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Owning Service			

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1			
2			

## Appendix A

### Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) - Stage One

<b>What is the proposed decision that you are asking the Executive to make:</b>	That the OSMC consider the proposals set out in this report so that the future effective strategic management of the Kennet and Avon canal can be secured.
<b>Summary of relevant legislation:</b>	N/A
<b>Does the proposed decision conflict with any of the Council's priorities for improvement?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure our vulnerable children and adults achieve better outcomes</li> <li>• Support everyone to reach their full potential</li> <li>• Support businesses to start develop and thrive in West Berkshire</li> <li>• Develop local infrastructure including housing to support and grow the local economy Maintain a green district</li> <li>• Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnerships</li> </ul>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Name of Budget Holder:</b>	Paul Hendry
<b>Name of Service/Directorate:</b>	Environment
<b>Name of assessor:</b>	Paul Hendry
<b>Date of assessment:</b>	03/03/2022
<b>Version and release date (if applicable):</b>	

Is this a .... ?		Is this policy, strategy, function or service ?	
<b>Policy</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>New or proposed</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Strategy</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Already exists and is being reviewed</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Function</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Is changing</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Service</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		

**(1) What are the main aims, objectives and intended outcomes of the proposed**

decision and who is likely to benefit from it?	
<b>Aims:</b>	Effective management of the Kennet and Avon Canal
<b>Objectives:</b>	A review of arrangements
<b>Outcomes:</b>	Public benefit, including potentially, equalities.
<b>Benefits:</b>	As above

(2) Which groups might be affected and how? Is it positively or negatively and what sources of information have been used to determine this?		
Group Affected	What might be the effect?	Information to support this
Age		
Disability		
Gender Reassignment		
Marriage and Civil Partnership		
Pregnancy and Maternity		
Race		
Religion or Belief		
Sex		
Sexual Orientation		
Further Comments:		
No direct impacts as a result of this report and its proposal at this stage.		

(3) Result	
<b>Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could contribute to inequality?</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Strategic management of the canal may bring about improved access for all.	
<b>Will the proposed decision have an adverse impact upon the lives of people, including employees and service users?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Please provide an explanation for your answer: future management of the canal will consider access opportunities, there are unlikely to be negative impacts.	

<b>(4) Identify next steps as appropriate:</b>	
<b>EqIA Stage 2 required</b>	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>No</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Owner of EqIA Stage Two:</b>	
<b>Timescale for EqIA Stage Two:</b>	

**Name: Paul Hendry**

**Date: 03/03/22**

## Appendix B

### Data Protection Impact Assessment – Stage One

The General Data Protection Regulations require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) for certain projects that have a significant impact on the rights of data subjects.

Should you require additional guidance in completing this assessment, please refer to the Information Management Officer via [dp@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:dp@westberks.gov.uk)

Directorate:	Place
Service:	Environment
Team:	Countryside
Lead Officer:	Paul Hendry
Title of Project/System:	
Date of Assessment:	

#### Do you need to do a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)?

	Yes	No
<p><b>Will you be processing SENSITIVE or “special category” personal data?</b></p> <p><i>Note – sensitive personal data is described as “ data revealing racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, or trade union membership, and the processing of genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a natural person, data concerning health or data concerning a natural person’s sex life or sexual orientation”</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>Will you be processing data on a large scale?</b></p> <p><i>Note – Large scale might apply to the number of individuals affected OR the volume of data you are processing OR both</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>Will your project or system have a “social media” dimension?</b></p> <p><i>Note – will it have an interactive element which allows users to communicate directly with one another?</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>Will any decisions be automated?</b></p> <p><i>Note – does your system or process involve circumstances where an individual’s input is “scored” or assessed without intervention/review/checking by a human being? Will there be any “profiling” of data subjects?</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

	Yes	No
Will your project/system involve CCTV or monitoring of an area accessible to the public?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Will you be using the data you collect to match or cross-reference against another existing set of data?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Will you be using any novel, or technologically advanced systems or processes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Note – this could include biometrics, “internet of things” connectivity or anything that is currently not widely utilised</p>		

If you answer “Yes” to any of the above, you will probably need to complete [Data Protection Impact Assessment - Stage Two](#). If you are unsure, please consult with the Information Management Officer before proceeding.

## Appendix C

# Kennet and Avon Canal Partnership Annual Report





**Canal &  
River Trust**

Making life better by water

## **The Kennet & Avon Canal**

Canal Heritage Lottery Fund Partnership  
(HLFP)

Annual Report

April 2019 to March 2020

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## Executive Summary

This report summarises maintenance and operation expenditure on the Kennet and Avon Canal, as divided by Local Authority Area, for business year 2019 to 2020. The report sets out information that fulfils the Trust's reporting obligations as outlined in the HLF (Restoration of the Kennet and Avon Canal) agreement.

As the report is for the period of April 2019 to March 2020, the impact of Covid-19 on the organisation, its finances and operational output is not covered.

## Role and Objectives of the Canal and River Trust

The Canal & River Trust (the Trust) was established in July 2012 and has guardianship of 2000 miles of canals, rivers, docks and reservoirs in England and Wales, in addition to a number of historic buildings, archives and three waterway museums. These valuable assets are recognised as a national treasure and local haven for both people and wildlife, which the Trust manages on behalf of the nation.

Over the last two years the Canal and River Trust has been working on rebranding itself as a charity for the waterways and wellbeing, guided by the Trust's Chief Executive Richard Parry, and has moved across to a new regional structure to support this development.

Our research shows that spending time by water, whether it be your lunchbreak, daily commute or just a weekend stroll, really can make us feel happier and healthier.

With ever increasing rates of obesity, stress and declining mental health in the UK, the Trust is uniquely placed to make a significant contribution to improving the physical and mental wellbeing of millions of people. Our canals and rivers run through some of the most heavily populated communities in England and Wales, providing accessible green and blue space where it's needed the most.

The Trust works with volunteers and communities to transform canals and rivers into spaces where local people want to spend time and benefit from our free, accessible and local source of wellbeing. We continue to safeguard the nation's waterways, striving to make life better for millions of people across England and Wales.

Our work involves not only looking after our waterways, but promoting them widely to the eight million plus people who have waterways on their doorstep so that many more people benefit from our free, accessible and local source of wellbeing.

## The Kennet & Avon Canal: Key Statistics

The following tables summarise key statistics about the Kennet & Avon waterways, including the numerous engineering, environmental and heritage assets which are managed by the Trust.

Canal length in each area		Kilometres
Reading	River Kennet: London Street to Fobney lock	3
Reading	Fobney Lock to the boundary	2
West Berkshire		43
Wiltshire		65
Bath & North East Somerset	Boundary to the River Avon	9
Bath & North East Somerset	River Avon to Hanham Lock	18
<b>Total</b>		<b>140 km</b>

Assets	Bath & North East Somerset	Wiltshire	West Berkshire	Reading	Total
Locks	12	57	34	3	106
Bridges	42	90	78	12	222
Aqueducts	2	8	2	0	12
Tunnels	2	3	0	0	5
Reservoirs	0	0	0	0	0

	Bath & North East Somerset	Wiltshire	West Berkshire	Reading
Conservation areas	5	8	8	0
Non-statutory wildlife sites	Entire canal corridor	c. 10	c. 14	4
SSSI	5 (in or adjacent)	3	6	0

Permit holder moorings	26	41	36	2
Visitor moorings	17	28	12	0
AONB	Cotswolds AONB	North Wessex Downs AONB	North Wessex Downs AONB	
Heritage Sites (See Appendix 2)	1 World Heritage Site, 5 Grade II*, 2 historic Parks and Gardens, 6 Grade II, 1 Scheduled and Grade 1 Aqueduct	1 Scheduled lock flight, 1 Grade 1 Pumping Station, 1 Historic Battlefield, 1 Grade II*, 9 Grade II	1 Scheduled Lock, 2 Scheduled and listed Locks, 7 Grade II, 1 Grade II*	

## Funding and Finance

Funding streams remain as reported in previous reports. Income is derived from the following sources:

- individual donors and corporate sponsors;
- commercial income including revenue from the licensing of boats, moorings and angling; and revenue from property and utilities;
- grants from the other organisations e.g. HLFP; and
- an eleven-year contract with government.

The Trust also receives £115,700<sup>1</sup> from a maintenance agreement with Bath and North East Somerset, West Berkshire and Wiltshire Councils. This council funding is incredibly important and enables us to carry out critical maintenance work, and improve towpaths and structures for the benefit of the local communities and visitors to our waterways.

Many individuals and organisations are supporting the Canal and River Trust on both local and national levels. The Trust has been able to raise funds to address local, specific issues. With respect to grants and contributions from other organisations, the Trust is similarly continuing to explore new opportunities all the time. For example, we hope to secure funding to improve the towpath conditions along the eastern end of the Kennet & Avon Canal.

The Trust is proactive in utilising its property assets and joint venture vehicles to bring forward land to deliver regeneration, wider benefits to the community and to attract private sector investment. As a charitable trust, all net rental income and capital receipts generated from our property estate and other commercial activities are used to maintain the waterways.

<sup>1</sup> The maintenance agreement funding is divided as follows:

Bath and North East Somerset	£20,000
Wiltshire	£70,000
West Berkshire	£25,700

## Expenditure – Kennet & Avon Waterway April 2019 to March 2020

The Canal & River Trust has undertaken an analysis of what was defrayed on the Kennet & Avon waterway in the 2019/20 financial year, on activities ranging from lock repairs and vegetation management to bank and weir maintenance. In 2019/20, the cost to the Canal and River Trust of operating and maintaining the Kennet and Avon Canal was **£6.1 million**.

The Trust is also now operating on a flat cash policy and needs to be able to maintain the high standards of waterway management, whilst at the same time, reducing spending in line with inflation. Therefore, the Council contributions to maintaining the K&A Canal remain vital in helping us achieve this. Some of the Enterprise projects the Trust delivered in B19 as a result of this funding were towpath improvements in Devizes and Newbury, as well as towpath works and bank protection at Bathwick.

Maintenance works along the canal are prioritised every year, taking account of factors such as public safety, structural condition, amenity and usage. This being the case, the proportion of total expenditure in each Local Authority area varies from year to year, depending on current priorities. Note also that each of the Local Authority areas is different in both length and number of principal assets (bridges, locks, aqueducts, culverts etc.) that fall within its boundaries (see Key Statistic information, above).

The figures below have been taken from the Canal and River Trust's accounting system and summarise the breakdown of last year's spending in each local authority area:

	West Berkshire (£)	Wiltshire (£)	Bath & North East Somerset (£)	Total K&A (£)
K&A Work Orders	791,874	892,426	323,428	2,007,729
CSI Projects	15,549	23,504	9,763	48,816
Enterprise Projects	19,527	315,216	127,950	462,693
<b>Total</b>	<b>826,950</b>	<b>1,231,147</b>	<b>461,141</b>	<b>2,519,238</b>

<b>K&amp;A Overheads P1-P12</b>	<b>623,566</b>	<b>942,600</b>	<b>391,541</b>	<b>1,957,707</b>
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<b>Priority Projects:</b>				
Crofton Pumping Station Improvements		464,677		464,677
K&A Culvert 9	-935			<b>-935</b>
K&A Pumping Resilience	63,327	95,727	39,763	198,817
Froudes Culvert, Culvert 3 Repair	994,643			<b>994,643</b>
Harris Lock Forebay Repairs EMERG		-29,292		-29,292
Martinslade Bridge		24,010		<b>24,010</b>
Culvert CCTV Inspection Prog 2019-20		494		494
Bridge 83 Replacement	1,239			<b>1,239</b>
Milkhouse Embankment Badger Exclusion		2,598		2,598
Avoncliff Embankment 95 Subsidence		1,438		<b>1,438</b>
Honeystreet Embankment Badger Exclusion		1,547		1,547
K&A Long Pound Dredging	420			<b>420</b>
K&A Bath Flight Dredging			5,945	5,945
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,058,693</b>	<b>561,198</b>	<b>45,708</b>	<b>1,665,600</b>

<b>Total</b>	<b>3,509,209</b>	<b>2,734,945</b>	<b>898,391</b>	<b>6,142,545</b>
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## Advisory Boards

Across the Trust we continue to work with six advisory boards, in addition to Bwrdd Glandŵr Cymru in Wales, all of whom support us in shaping our regional direction and strategic programmes. They guide the Trust's decisions in developing local engagement and forming new partnerships, advising us on spending and external funding, whilst also championing the interests of their local waterways.

The South West Regional Advisory Board provides a crucial role in guiding the Trust's strategic priorities for the Kennet & Avon Canal and continues to support and review the waterway's two strategic programmes at advisory board meetings. Members also play an important role in advocating the Trust amongst key external partners and stakeholders.

The key aims of the South West Regional Advisory Board for 2019-21 are:

1. Developing relationships with key 'health and wellbeing' partners
2. Promoting waterways as the 'natural health service' by encouraging use and activities on the canal corridor
3. Building relationships with education trusts and consultation with young people
4. Connecting with key communities near our waterways, particularly in areas of deprivation through improved links with councils, voluntary organisations and community groups
5. Continue to sustain links with canal societies and key regeneration and restoration schemes
6. Help identify, promote and support community-based events
7. Support initiatives to enhance volunteering
8. Promote the Trust amongst regional 'economic driver' organisations – LEPs, regional bodies, Great Western Powerhouse
9. Promote 'destination' plans and enhanced 'welcome' facilities
10. Encourage and support businesses on and alongside the canal
11. Support Trust work on growing tourism and the rural canal network as a 'connective corridor' for visitors
12. Support work to achieve and sustain Green Flag status across SW network
13. Identify initiatives that enable the Trust to become carbon neutral as an organisation and encourage waterway users and to take action in response to the climate emergency
14. Identify new cultural and heritage projects and partnerships



## Our Strategic Programmes

In 2019 we launched two short-term strategic programmes based on the Kennet & Avon Canal: 'Communities on the Western K&A Canal' and 'Making a Difference Locally on the K&A Canal'. We held study days with partner organisations and the local authorities in order to help develop the programmes and find ways in which we could work collaboratively.

### Communities on the Western K&A Canal

The initiative's purpose is to improve conditions along the western end of the Kennet & Avon Canal (between Hanham Lock and Bradford on Avon) with a canal and towpath which is materially fit for purpose and an environment of respect and consideration exists between all communities in order to enhance the wellbeing of all.

Amongst the key aims of this programme is to work closely with the local authorities, police force and Julian House to monitor and resolve any issues of towpath and canal misuse, anti-social behaviour, mooring abuse and high boat density. In 2020/21 we will employ two new Rangers to assist the project and deliver a clear towpath policy, as well as ensure mooring time limits and correct cruising requirements are respected. Key to achieving our aspirations will be effective collaboration with our partners and the local authorities.

### Making a Difference Locally on the K&A Canal

This programme aims to celebrate and enhance the local treasures on the Kennet & Avon (K&A), with a focus on improved brand awareness through the Great West Way programme. It looks to develop wellbeing opportunities for the benefit of the community, to improve visitor experience at key hubs along the canal and to increase visitor numbers and footfall both on the towpath and on the water in the form of unpowered wellbeing activities.

Our status as a key partner in the Great West Way partnership allows us to promote the canal locally and globally as a green and blue corridor, providing numerous wellbeing opportunities and a route by which you can explore key cities and destinations in the South of England. It also enhances brand awareness of the Canal and River Trust as the custodian of the waterway. Through this project we also hope to capitalise on opportunities for mutual promotion through our Great West Way partners.

### Progress in 2019/20

From April 2019 to March 2020 the Wales & South West team underwent internal considerable change, including the welcome of new Regional Director, Mark Evans, previously Waterway Manager for the Kennet & Avon and Bridgwater & Taunton Canals. As a result the programmes underwent some revision mid-year, however significant progress was made.

Below is a summary of some key projects and activities which took place during the year:

- Caen Hill youth engagement project and Jubilee Woodland Forest School
- K&A study day and series of meetings were held with key partners and local stakeholders who support the western K&A project

- Developed crucial relationships with members of the local police force and local authorities
- Worked closely with Julian House to resolve issues and support the local boating community
- Continued delivery of the Waterspace partnership
- Joint promotion through GWR Discovery Pass
- Distributed Trust material at over 200 partner locations
- Promotion of the Trust in Great West Way material and development of waterway maps (to be distributed in 2020/21)
- New welcome & interpretation signage along the full-length of the canal, including dual-branded Great West Way signage and waymarking
- Improved customer facilities at Kintbury
- Towpath improvement works at Devizes, Newbury and Bathwick (including bank protection)
- Globe Garden Project
- Dundas Crane Restoration
- PPL funded 'Let's' activities



## K&A Enterprise Projects FY (2019-20)

- Devizes towpath phase IV - towpath improvements between London Road and Coate Road (Wiltshire Council)
  - Expenditure B19 - £315k
  - Income B19 from Wiltshire Council – £280k
- Bathwick Towpath, Bath - bank protection & towpath improvements between Bathwick Hill and Cleveland House (B&NES Council)
  - Expenditure B19 - £125k
  - Expenditure B20 - £140k
  - Income B20 from BANES and partners - £96k
- Newbury Towpath S106 - £402k towpath improvements between bridge 57 (A339) and Ham bridge (West Berkshire Council)
  - Expenditure B19 - £19k
  - Expenditure B20 - £406k
  - Income B19 from S106 Wiltshire - £10k
  - Income B20 from S106 Wiltshire - £393k

## Towpath and Bank Improvement Works (2020/21)

- Bathwick Towpath P11221/1
- Avoncliff Embankment subsidence P/11503
- Newbury Racecourse bank protection P/09-403/1
- Newbury to Hambridge Road (S106)
- Fobney Lock landscape improvements (Reading BC)
- Colthrop to Midgham Lock works (West Berkshire)
- KA-087-008 Devizes Towpath phase V (2021/22)

## Planned Future Works

### K&A Priority Projects FY (2021-24)

- KA-000-000 Pumping Resilience
- KA-106-017-R Avoncliff Embankment 95 Subsidence: Embankment Stabilisation
- KA-074-014-R Honeystreet Embankment Badger Exclusion: Exclusion of Badgers from Offside Embankment
- KA-044-001 Bridge 83 Replacement: Replace life expired understrength accommodation bridge
- KA east Lock Approach Dredging. Dredging FL's to be determined
- K&A Barlow Rail Footbridges Replacement: Replacement of life expired towpath bridges
- KA -010-004 Bridge 19 Sheffield Swing bridge: M&E Upgrade
- KA-013-006 Bridge 23 Tyle Mill Swing Bridge: M&E Upgrade

### K&A Lock Gate Replacement Programme (2021-24)

Functional Location	Lock no.	Area	Detail	FY
KA-004-002	Lock 105	Fobney	Top End Gate	B21

KA-013-009	Lock 99	Tyle Mill	Top End Gate	B21
KA-032-002	Lock 84	Guyers	Top & Bottom End Gate	B21
KA-094-005	Lock 17	Seend Btm	Top & Bottom End Gate	B21
KA-093-008	Lock 20	Seend	Bottom End Gate	B22
KA-089-003	Lock 33	Lloyds	Top & Bottom End Gate	B22
KA-062-001	Lock 52	Heathy	Bottom End Gate	B22
KA-055-004	Lock 61	Crossing	Top & Bottom End Gate	B22
KA-029-008	Lock 86	Greenham	Top End Gate	B22
KA-021-002	Lock 93	Heales	Bottom End Gate	B22
KA-088-015	Lock 37	Devizes	Top End Gate	B23
KA-015-002	Lock 97	Towney	Top & Bottom End Gate	B23
KA-089-009	Lock 29	Devizes	Top & Bottom End Gate	B23

### K&A Stoppages B20 (2020-21)

Waterway	Location	Details of Stoppage
Kennet & Avon Canal	KA-008	Leak around piles
Kennet & Avon Canal	KA-011-002 - Lock 100, Sulhamstead Lock	Top gate relining and repair
Kennet & Avon Canal	KA-025-003 - Monkey Marsh Bridge	Currently hard to operate
Kennet & Avon Canal	KA-043, near Dun Mill Bridge	Leak into trout farm
Kennet & Avon Canal	KA-050-004 - Lock 67, Little Bedwyn	Top and bottom gate relining
Kennet & Avon Canal	KA-053 (area between bridge 96-97)	Bank erosion and leaks
Kennet & Avon Canal	KA-062-010 - Bridge 109, Wooton Rivers Farm Bridge	Brickwork repair
Kennet & Avon Canal	KA-088-012 - Lock 40, Caen Hill Flight	Relining and repair of the top and bottom gates
Kennet & Avon Canal	KA-088-013 - Lock 39, Caen Hill Flight	Repair
Kennet & Avon Canal	KA-088-014 - Lock 38, Caen Hill Flight	Repair
Kennet & Avon Canal	KA-088-015 - Lock 37, Caen Hill Flight	Repair

Kennet & Avon Canal	KA-125-001 - Lock 6, Weston Lock	Top and bottom gate replacement
Kennet & Avon Canal	KA-062-001 - Lock 52, Heathy Close Lock	Broken gate repair
Kennet & Avon Canal	KA-078, near Allington Bridge	Bank Repairs
Kennet & Avon Canal	KA-029-008 - Lock 86 Greenham Lock	Top gate false heel repair

## Community Engagement

Engaging with community and promoting wellbeing opportunities is at the heart of the Trust. In 2019/20 we led and took part in a variety of activities and events and were successful in securing the Green Flag Award for the full length of the K&A Canal another year running. Below are some highlights from throughout the year.

### Caen Hill and Jubilee Woodland Forest School

In 2019 the Jubilee Woodland Forest School was launched in partnership with Wiltshire Wildlife Trust. Colleagues and volunteers worked incredibly hard to create the Forest School area, which is not only used to hold a range of wellbeing taster sessions, but has also become a canal-side classroom. The Forest School offers a holistic approach to child development, attempting to address all aspects of the child's development and growth. Children are naturally inquisitive, at Forest School we endeavour to encourage children to develop a love of nature, encourage problem solving skills and work collaboratively to make sense of their natural environment.

Jubilee Woodland is used by many people both locally and further afield, and many enjoy exercising their dogs here. We offer a range of experiences at the site, including sessions in the classroom, out on the



banks, in museums and in our Diamond Jubilee Wood at Caen Hill in Devizes. There are boat trips along the waterways available for education groups, along with learning woodland crafts, trying out boat handling and learning how to look after a canal.

Throughout the year we received regular visits from local groups and schools and engaged them in a range of wellbeing activities including Nordic Walking, yoga, bee keeping, canoeing, Thai chi, forest school crafts and fishing. Our Explorers team also delivered a 'Schools Week' at Caen Hill, attracting five local schools for all day activities including some STEM work. The youth wellbeing project facilitated visits for disadvantaged young people via Splash Wiltshire, Youth Action Wiltshire and Wiltshire Wildlife Trust. Activities included boat trips, junior lock keeping, woodland crafts and fishing.



The project has been hugely successful to date in engaging with a diverse selection of young people along the K&A canal corridor. Although activities have been halted due to Covid restrictions, we plan to pick up the project in 2021.

### **Newbury Community Arts**

We hosted a spectacularly successful community arts event on the eastern K&A in Newbury with Caraboose Fire Garden. The event brought some 10,000 people to view fire sculptures in the town and along the canal. It proved a significant challenge to the team to accommodate the event on the Kennet in the open season, but with some careful planning and team working we made it work, resulting in a very successful event.

### **Discovery Days**

On the Kennet & Avon Canal we have been trialling 'Discovery Days'. For one at Caen Hill, we partnered with Nordic Walking UK, Braeside Education Centre and Devizes Angling Club to provide taster activities including walking with poles, canoeing and fishing. In addition, we had yoga sessions and a new woodland trial for Jubilee Wood, as well as craft activities for visitors to 'Admiral', our floating Welcome Station. As a second stage to this project, we have begun 'Let's' activity days using the same model as the GP referral programme, which gets individuals involved across the length of the waterway, in kayak and canoeing taster sessions, with the aim of boosting people's wellbeing by getting them out onto (and beside) the water.



### **Bath Festival of Nature**

The Trust attended the Festival of Nature in Bath in June; the UK's largest free public celebration of the natural world. The event was very successful and the Trust directly engaging with 284 children.

### **Nordic Walking UK**

We have established a new partnership with Nordic Walking UK, which enables us to support each other's health and wellbeing agenda. Following a pilot project, we have engaged in events together and run walking activities along the K&A towpath, focusing on Bath and Reading.

## Explorers

Over the summer we delivered three boat trips and a range of Explorers activities for 64 year three children from St Nicholas's school in Newbury. Educations trips were run for the Mary Hare Special School, St Peters, Trinity School and a home education group at Devizes, as well as water safety education at Thatcham Park.

## Amber Foundation

During 2019 we received fortnightly visits from the local Trowbridge charity Amber, which helps homeless and unemployed young people move on to positive, independent futures through residential training. We aim to build on this relationship by engaging with them through practical tasks and water related activity. Sadly, such activities have been on hold since then due to the outbreak of Covid-19.

## Let's Activities

In the summer we began to develop and deliver a series of 'Let's' activities and events including Let's Canoe and Let's Walk in partnership with Somerset Boat Centre, Wiltshire Council, Nordic Walking UK and Wiltshire Wildlife Trust. These activities were also available through recommendation by a GP. The events and engagement with the community as a result was very impactful and we will be continuing to develop the 'Let's' campaign over the next couple of years.



## The Great West Way

For the second year the Trust was a Title Ambassador for the new initiative, Great West Way (led by Visit Wiltshire), which aims to create one of the world's premier touring routes and will be the first of its kind in England and the only touring route in the world to be multi-modal, focusing on the waterways. It is helping the Trust develop and distribute engaging contents, drive domestic and international visits and connect us with key GWW influences. It is also a key element of one of our strategic programmes and supports the Trust's aims of increasing brand awareness within communities along our waterway corridors and broader communities.



## Volunteering

To date we have 158 volunteers along the K&A Canal, including community and adoption group members. This makes up a significant contribution to the total 242 active volunteers we have across the entire Wales & South West region. We have experienced a reduction in the number of active volunteers across the entire region, largely as a result of Covid-19 and the impact that has had on restricting volunteer activity.

The volunteers along the K&A continue to play a crucial role in the day-to-day maintenance of the waterway: working in a towpath taskforce group; carrying out preventative maintenance works; volunteering in customer service and administrative roles; attending events; and taking part in heritage and environment projects. We have a range of partner groups along the waterway, including Bath College, Claverton, Devizes Moorings and Community Matters Newbury.

Throughout 2019/20, Trust volunteers supported the local operations team by delivering some exceptional pieces of work. Highlights include:

- Resurfacing 100M of towpath between Beehive and Sainsburys Bridge
- Graffiti removal at Claverton
- Multiple fence repairs and constructions, including at Marsh Lane
- New benches installed for visitors to enjoy
- 70 metres of rubber fender was installed on the landing stage above Bradford on Avon Lock
- Installation of new culvert steps to improve safety
- Regraded towpath surface at Dundas Aqueduct
- Re-pointing of stonework, including at Sydney Gardens
- Regular grass cutting, carpark maintenance, litter picking, painting of structures and cleaning of waste facilities
- PPM completed on locks along the canal





## Heritage & Environment

### Claverton Pumping Station

In April 2019, Claverton Pumping Station **was** designated a Grade I listed building, elevated from its Grade II status. The 1813 building received this raised status due to its architectural interest as one of the only a few nineteenth century beam pumping stations remaining today. It is the only working example of a waterwheel-driven pumping station on the national canal network and is therefore of international significance.



## Hydrographic Surveys and Dredging

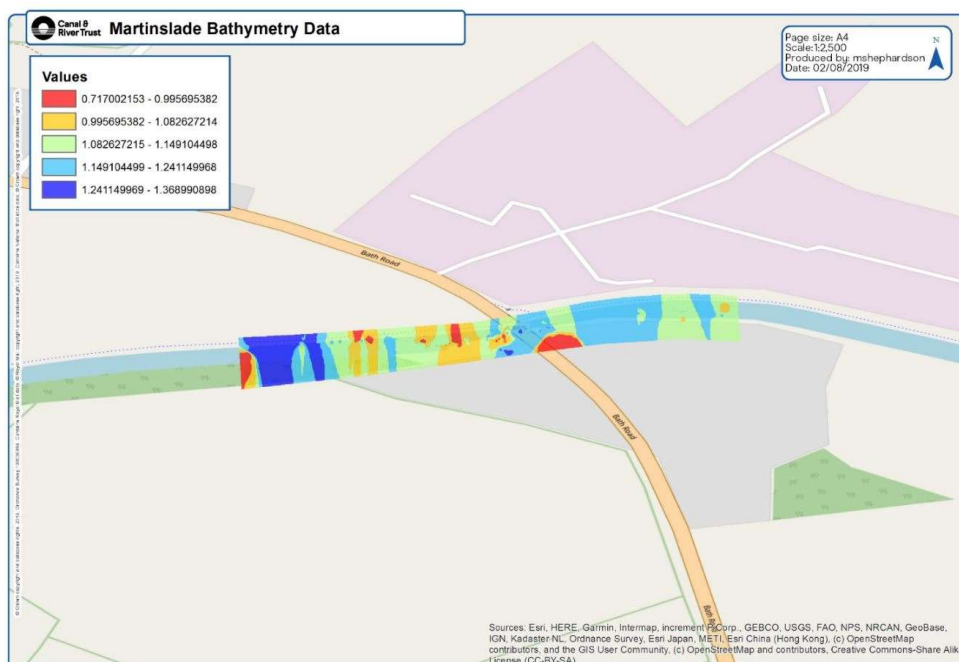
In June 2019 we began working with a group of volunteers to undertake regular hydrographic surveys on the K&A. The underwater surveys were initiated using a remote-controlled boat and sonar technology to survey the canal's bed profile and help to identify and prioritise local dredging requirements. The sonar boat was developed and operated by Rob Coles.

The project began first at Copse Lock, where local Fishery owners were concerned that the water from the canal has a negative impact on the habitat of their river fisheries and River Kennet SSSI. Great Bedwyn Wharf followed, as a boating business customer requested dredging along moorings due to continual grounding of wide beams.



These surveys proved very successful in identifying the need for and prioritisation of localised spot dredging.

In response to customer feedback regarding depth issues and the skewed nature of Martinslade Bridge and the neighbouring section of canal, further underwater depth analysis was carried out at this location. Considerable insight into bed condition was gained from this survey. The image below shows clear highs and lows, mirroring issues experienced by



wide beams. The issue was subsequently addressed by spot dredging.

## Walks and Talks

Throughout the year, the Heritage and Environment Team delivered a range of talks and walks on the history and wildlife on the Kennet and Avon Canal to a variety of groups, heritage branches, local Trusts and members of the community. One example of this was a Canalside Walk, co-led by Ecologist Laura Mullholland and volunteer Ian Herve, as part of the Bath & North East Somerset Bathscape walking festival.

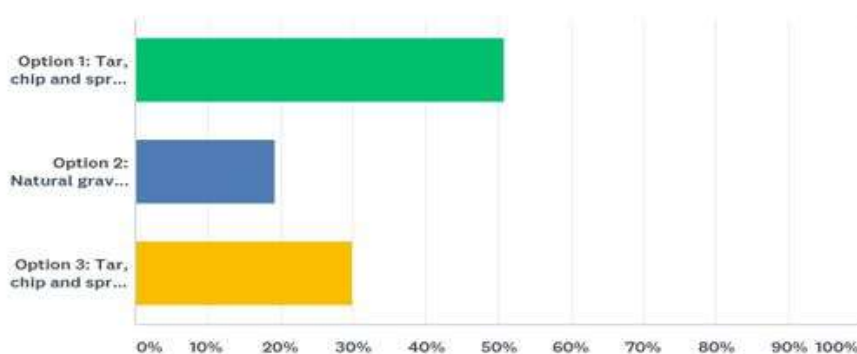
## Dundas Aqueduct

The dedication and skills of the Trust's heritage volunteers working at Dundas Wharf were recognised at a ceremony in November 2019, celebrating the refurbishment of the Grade II wharf crane. The unique Grade II listed iron crane, dating back to Queen Victoria's reign, has spent the last ten years being carefully preserved by a team of Trust volunteers. The crane had been covered in a thick tar-based black paint and some parts were severely corroded. The team stripped it back to the bare metal and repainted it with a high-performance paint. David Viner, Heritage Advisor commented: "This has been a truly collaborative effort" with materials and funding from the Trust, the K&A Canal Trust and IWA, "but all the work was undertaken by volunteers." "The hard work and commitment of the volunteer team means the crane is ensured the secure future it deserves."

## Newbury Towpath

In 2019 a public consultation video was developed for the Section 106 funded towpath improvements in Newbury between Victoria Park and Hambridge Road. It was shared via email and across social media platforms. The video sought the views of customers on the type of towpath surfacing they would like to see installed. The results helped inform the final design of the Newbury towpath. The video is still available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Jnrcia7NVc&feature=youtu.be> It was live for one month, in which time it had a total number of 330 views and 115 participants subsequently took part in the survey. The survey results for the three surface options were as follows:

### Q1 What is your preferred surfacing option?



## Social Media

The Wales & South West Twitter account, which includes the K&A Canal, has performed consistently well over the last year, with a steady growth in followers and an impressive engagement rate. There were strong impressions throughout October 2019 to February 2020, however this declined in March due to the outbreak of Covid-19 when the Trust had to pause its general scheduling and planned media activity.

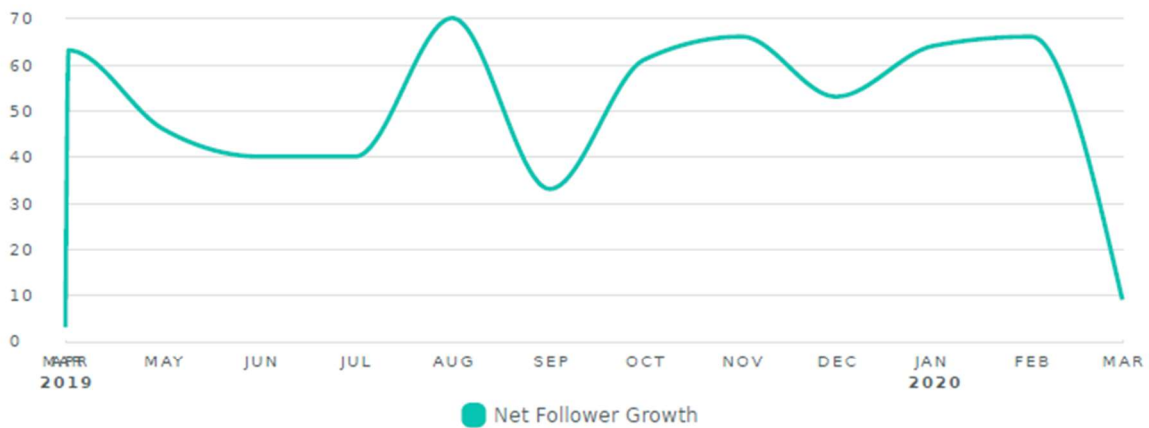
During the financial year, the local account experienced a 19.7% follower increase and a 25.4% rise in impressions. Communicating using this social media platform has led to improved brand awareness of the Trust; has extended our reach to a wider audience; and has proven a successful method of communicating with our customers and visitors, with an increase in the number of enquiries received on Twitter.



### Twitter Audience Growth

See how your audience grew during the reporting period.

Net Follower Growth, by Month



Audience Metrics	Totals	% Change
<b>Net Follower Growth</b>	<b>614</b>	<b>↗ 19.7%</b>

# Scrutiny Review of the Draft West Berkshire Leisure Strategy

<b>Committee considering report:</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
<b>Date of Committee:</b>	22 March 2022
<b>Task Group Chairman</b>	Councillor Tony Linden
<b>Report Author:</b>	Gordon Oliver, Principal Policy Officer
<b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>	HSC/OSMC

## 1 Purpose of the Report

To present to OSMC the work undertaken by the Task and Finish Group to review the Draft Leisure Strategy and the business case for the Newbury Lido.

## 2 Recommendation(s)

That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission endorses the recommendations of the Task Group prior to their consideration by the Executive.

## 3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
<b>Financial:</b>	None
<b>Human Resource:</b>	None
<b>Legal:</b>	None
<b>Risk Management:</b>	None
<b>Property:</b>	None
<b>Policy:</b>	Adoption of the report’s recommendations would improve the Leisure Strategy and associated Delivery Plan.

	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
<b>Equalities Impact:</b>				
<b>A</b> Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		
<b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		
<b>Environmental Impact:</b>		X		
<b>Health Impact:</b>	X			Adoption of the report's recommendations would help to increase residents' activity levels and therefore improve their health and wellbeing.
<b>ICT Impact:</b>		X		
<b>Digital Services Impact:</b>	X			Adoption of the report's recommendations would involve delivering services through digital channels.

<b>Council Strategy Priorities:</b>	X			<p>The report's recommendations support the following Council Strategy Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support everyone to reach their full potential</li> <li>• Develop local infrastructure, including housing to support and grow the local economy</li> </ul>
<b>Core Business:</b>	X			<p>The report's recommendations support core business activities within the Culture, Leisure and Libraries area</p>
<b>Data Impact:</b>		X		
<b>Consultation and Engagement:</b>	See full details in the report			

## 4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 It was agreed at its meeting on 20 April 2021 that the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission would set up a Task and Finish Group to undertake a review of the emerging Leisure Strategy.
- 4.2 This report presents the findings of the Task and Finish Group, which have been grouped according to the key questions as set out in the Terms of Reference:
1. Does the Draft Leisure Strategy achieve all of its objectives?
  2. Has the Council consulted widely enough in preparing the strategy, including community groups and seldom heard communities?
  3. Do we have a clear picture of current and future demand for / usage of / satisfaction with local facilities across the full spectrum of sports and leisure activities, based on high quality, local evidence?
  4. Are there any geographical gaps in provision of sports and leisure facilities?
  5. Is there a sufficient club / voluntary group network within the district (including coaches, trainers, organisers, support staff, referees, etc) to facilitate participation and make effective use of available facilities?
  6. Do we have a clear picture of any barriers to local citizens participating in sports and leisure activities and will the strategy be effective in addressing these?
  7. How popular / well-used are local leisure assets such as the Newbury Lido and the Dolphin Centre in Pangbourne?
  8. How effective has local stakeholder engagement been in informing the development of the strategy and associated major investment proposals (e.g. Newbury Lido), and is there a clear business case for these investments?

4.3 The Task Group did not uncover any major shortcomings in the Strategy or the supporting public engagement, but it highlighted a number of minor aspects where improvements could be made. Most of these points have either been incorporated in the document or could be picked up as part of the Delivery Plan.

## 5 Supporting Information

### Introduction

5.2 The West Berkshire Leisure Strategy was originally went out to consultation in autumn 2020 with a view to adopting the strategy in late spring / early summer 2021. However, following a disappointing response to the initial public consultation and concerns about gaps in the strategy and associated evidence base, the Leisure Service was asked to undertaken further work, to ensure that:

- The scope of the strategy was fully understood;
- There was a wider focus on different forms of leisure activity;
- Conclusions and recommendations were evidenced by data, given the level of investment proposed;
- Sufficient early engagement was undertaken to inform the strategy

5.3 The Leader of the Council suggested that the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission (OSMC) may wish to undertake a parallel scrutiny review. It was agreed that a Task and Finish Group be set up to undertaken the scrutiny review. The terms of reference were agreed by OSMC at the meeting on 20 April 2021 and are included in Appendix A.

### Background

5.4 The Leisure Strategy Task and Finish Group held the following meetings.

Meeting date	Focus of meeting
23 September 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Election of chairman</li> <li>• Review of terms of reference and agreement of methodology</li> <li>• Overview of work undertaken on the Leisure Strategy and proposed project timelines</li> </ul>
14 February 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of Leisure Strategy post-consultation summary report</li> <li>• Review of draft Leisure Strategy document</li> <li>• Presentation on Newbury Lido and Proposed Scheme</li> </ul>
04 March 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of responses to written questions</li> <li>• Consideration of initial draft Task and Finish Group report.</li> </ul>

5.5 The Task and Finish Group encountered significant logistical challenges in undertaking the review as summarised below.

5.6 A meeting on 15 October had to be cancelled when Matt Pearce (Service Director – Communities and Wellbeing) was called away at short notice to respond to the breaking news story about the inaccurate Covid test results at the lab used to process tests from Newbury Showground.



- 5.7 Due to issues affecting the capacity of the Democratic Services Team during October and November, the next meeting was not organised until 9 December. Unfortunately, this meeting had to be cancelled at short notice. Efforts were made rearrange the meeting, but this was not possible due to conflicting diary appointments.
- 5.8 At the OSMC meeting on 25 January 2022, it was agreed that Councillor Tony Linden should replace Councillor Gareth Hurley as Chairman of the Task and Finish Group. It was made clear that the Task Group should provide its report to the next OSMC meeting on 22 March 2022.
- 5.9 A meeting was arranged for 14 February 2022. Due to prior leave commitments affecting officers and Members, a further meeting was not possible in February. It was therefore agreed that in addition to the points discussed at the meeting on 14 February, the officers responsible for developing the Leisure Strategy and the Newbury Lido proposal should provide written responses to a series of detailed questions. These were reviewed by the Task Group together with an outline draft of the report on 4 March 2022.

## Findings

- 5.10 The findings of the Task and Finish Group are summarised below with reference to the questions contained in the Terms of Reference.

### **Question 1 - Does the strategy achieve its objectives?**

- 5.11 The Leisure Strategy sets the following vision:

*'By 2032 we will have an increased participation in active leisure for all with a particular focus on those least active, through access to a network of modern and sustainable indoor facilities together with a diverse mix of accessible public outdoor sports facilities and greenspace and bluespace.*

*We will further develop active partnerships with public, commercial and voluntary organisations to drive participation in a wide range of activities.'*

- 5.12 The vision is supported by the following aims and objectives, which reflect the areas where the most positive contribution to the overall health of the local community could be made:

1. *Increase participation for all, but with an emphasis on those less physically active, and maintain improved activity levels throughout lives*
  - 1.1 *Significantly increase the provision of activities targeted at the less physically active, with a strong emphasis on activities for 'people like me';*
  - 1.2 *Increase the provision of targeted activities for individuals with challenges resulting from health issues or disabilities, through active collaboration with health and voluntary sector partners;*
  - 1.3 *Work across the Council to improve use and accessibility of leisure activities, facilities and greenspace;*
  - 1.4 *Develop low/ no cost activity options for low-income individuals and families;*

- 1.5 *Ensure the provision of leisure opportunities responds creatively to evolving demand;*
- 1.6 *Create a communication strategy to raise awareness of the benefits and local availability of physical activity opportunities.*
2. *Facilitate access to a network of modern and sustainable indoor sports and leisure facilities*
  - 2.1 *Through the Leisure Management Contract, operate a network of attractive, well-run and vibrant leisure centres focussed on delivering a great user experience;*
  - 2.2 *Deliver an infrastructure improvement plan, giving consideration to significant changes in the network of facilities including consolidation, new delivery models and co-location of Council services and those of community partners;*
  - 2.3 *Improve physical access to leisure facilities for people with health or disability needs;*
  - 2.4 *Invest to reduce the carbon footprint of current facilities, with a focus on smart technologies;*
  - 2.5 *Ensure that access to facilities takes account of opportunities provided by the private sector and neighbouring authorities.*
3. *Improve the quality, accessibility and awareness of outdoor sports facilities and play areas*
  - 3.1 *Deliver the recommendations of the Playing Pitch Strategy;*
  - 3.2 *Pro-actively engage with town and parish councils to create a Districtwide long-term development plan for local facilities, underpinned by appropriate resource support from the Council;*
  - 3.3 *Improve physical access to leisure facilities for people with health or disability needs;*
  - 3.4 *Work with voluntary and private sector organisations to increase awareness and utilisation of sports facilities, parks and open spaces in a sustainable way.*
4. *Measurably enhance access to, and utilisation of greenspace and bluespace, through improving accessibility to open water, waterways, parks, commons and Public Rights of Way*
  - 4.1 *Explore new and additional leisure activity options where there is a clear demand;*
  - 4.2 *Work with partners and residents to develop and deliver a programme of work to make our parks 'safe spaces' for all users;*
  - 4.3 *Invest in improving accessibility to greenspace through provision of safe routes and facilities for disabled access;*
  - 4.4 *Improve the provision of facilities for young people in parks and open spaces, considering both physical and social needs;*

- 4.5. *Ensure the recommendations of the Environment Strategy and the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, related to activity, are supported and adopted.*
5. *Further develop partnerships (with town and parish councils, sport governing bodies, health organisations and the voluntary sector), with an emphasis on actively encouraging volunteering.*
- 5.1 *Engage with partners across the voluntary and private sector to improve the level of co-ordinated services delivery;*
- 5.2 *Engage with health organisations to enhance accessibility to services via social and health prescribing opportunities;*
- 5.3 *Co-create a 'volunteering network strategy' with voluntary and community groups to increase the level of volunteering in support of physical activity;*
- 5.4 *Invest in provision of advice and support for voluntary groups, with a focus on access to funding;*
- 5.5 *Develop a focussed programme to engage with target groups, particularly children and young people, to co-create plans that address their leisure aspirations and needs;*
- 5.6 *Work with partners to reduce their cost and access issues for Council facilities.*
- 5.13 The Strategy goes on to make a 'case for change' for each of the above aims, exploring available evidence and exploring why they were important.
- 5.14 The original draft Strategy has been reviewed and restructured to ensure that the thread of the vision and strategic aims runs throughout. Also, the evidence base of the document has been strengthened and developed, and an appendix document has been created to summarise the data that has specifically informed the Strategy. Subsequently, the original aims and objectives have been tested and amended to reflect the findings of the additional engagement exercises and the data analysis.
- 5.15 Overall, the Task Group considered that the objectives were appropriate and evidence led, although some of the evidence was based on national studies, and it was not always clear how applicable findings were to the population West Berkshire.
- 5.16 The focus on the less physically active was felt to be appropriate in order to maximise the health benefits for local residents. However, this should be in addition to existing activities and should not be at the expense of existing users.
- 5.17 In ensuring that the future leisure offer responds to evolving demand, account will need to be taken of recent trends that have been accelerated by the Covid pandemic, such as exercising at home and the use of virtual classes. Therefore, it is likely that delivery of the strategy will require the use of online platforms to complement physical leisure centres.
- 5.18 The Task Group welcomed the aspiration to address silo working to address issues such as improving access and transport links, or to make better links with health professionals.

- 5.19 The aspiration to develop a communications strategy was welcomed by the Task Group, but it was stressed that this must involve two-way dialogue with existing and potential users, rather than just one-way communication as implied by Objective 1.6.
- 5.20 In terms of the locations of leisure facilities, the Task Group felt that there was a public perception that the east of the district was less well served than other areas. Members did not consider that the Cotswold Sports Centre was in the optimum location to serve local communities, and the lack of swimming pools in the area means that schools often travel to pools outside the district.
- 5.21 The Facilities Planning Model indicated that the district is well-served by leisure facilities, which appear to be in appropriate locations, with no significant gaps. Analysis had also been undertaken to look at leisure centre locations in the context of health deprivation and again this had highlighted that facilities were in the right locations. However, for many communities on the fringes of the district, the closest facilities are in neighbouring local authority areas where West Berkshire Council has little or no control over the leisure offer. This could potentially compromise its ability to achieve its objectives.
- 5.22 Transport links to leisure centres were also highlighted by the Task Group as a concern. It was explained that the Leisure Strategy had been reviewed in the context of the Active Travel Strategy and the challenges of improving access from remote areas were acknowledged. Data about how people accessed local leisure centres showed that 84% travelled by car and 11% walked, with very low levels of public transport usage.
- 5.23 It was accepted that there was a need to prioritise facilities at Northcroft in the short-term, since the leisure centre was looking very tired. However, the Task Group suggested that there should be investment in additional facilities in the east of the district later in the Strategy's timeline.
- 5.24 Questions were also asked about the need to investment in facilities to serve rural areas, including the Downlands. It was explained that the catchment for Compton was not considered sufficient to support community use. However, Education funding will be used to provide some enhancements to sports facilities at Compton.
- 5.25 The objective for increased joint working with community partners and co-location of services was welcomed by the Task Group. This could be particularly beneficial for rural communities where it can be difficult to get to leisure centres, which are located in the main urban areas. Village and community halls could provide a focus for outreach activities, which could also address barriers associated with distance and travel. However, it was noted that previous outreach activities were no longer funded.
- 5.26 The inclusion within the Strategy of activities that make use of greenspaces and bluespaces was considered to be appropriate, particularly given the proven mental health benefits of getting into nature.
- 5.27 Also, the objectives around partnership working were considered to be integral to the success of the Strategy and encouraging more people to get involved in sports and leisure activities.

- 5.28 The objective around developing a focussed programme to engage with target groups, particularly children and young people, to co-create plans that address their leisure aspirations and needs was particularly welcomed, since around half of children and young people have been shown to be inactive. This needs to be addressed if we are to avoid health problems as they progress to adulthood. However, the Task Group felt that it was a shame that the Strategy did not seek to engage with schools. While young people who are good at sports are often supported it is often the case that others are not supported and disengage, particularly teenage girls.
- 5.29 Notwithstanding the concerns about investment in the east of the district and the engagement of schools, the Task Group was broadly supportive of the Strategy's vision, aims and objectives. However, it will be the quality of the action plan and its execution that will determine how effectively these are achieved.

**Question 2 - Has the Council consulted widely enough in preparing the strategy, including community groups and seldom heard communities?**

- 5.30 The first consultation on the Leisure Strategy, undertaken in autumn 2020, only attracted 135 responses. This response was considered to be too low to reliably reflect the views of West Berkshire's residents and did not provide a sound evidence base for the Strategy.
- 5.31 A second engagement exercise, entitled 'What's Your Leisure?' was held between 26 July and 5 September 2021. This sought to test the existing draft Strategy, as to whether the findings could be evidenced, and to fill gaps within it. The questions within the online questionnaire focused on the leisure activities that were already undertaken within the District, activities that people were keen to engage in, but were not currently doing so, and the barriers that existed. A copy of the questionnaire is attached as Appendix B.
- 5.32 The Task Group noted that the consultation took place exclusively within the school summer holiday period, which was not good practice. However, it was recognised that slipping the consultation to the autumn was not an option due to the tight timescales for completing the strategy, which was needed to inform the Leisure Contract that is due to be re-tendered in 2022.
- 5.33 The consultation was publicised via:
- The Community Panel
  - A social media campaign
  - Posters in WBC buildings
  - Direct email to organisations working with hard to reach groups asking that they share the link with their clients and possibly support them in completing the questionnaire
  - Get Berkshire Active also shared the link with a further group of organisations
- 5.34 Throughout the consultation exercise, overall response levels and the demographics of those responding were monitored and action was taken to maximise engagement and address any shortfalls in responses from individual demographics.

- 5.35 Of those who answered the question about their gender, around 2/3 were female and 1/3 male. As a result of this, some sports/activities were underrepresented in the responses and so data from the Playing Pitch Strategy and Get Berkshire Active sessions had to be used to gain insight into these areas.
- 5.36 Two specific groups identified as under-represented were the 'less active' and residents aged under 35 years. As a result, social media activity was targeted at both groups. Members of the Community Panel were also contacted and asked to encourage young people within their household to complete the questionnaire. This did improve the levels of engagement of these groups although they remained relatively underrepresented.
- 5.37 At the close of the consultation, 529 responses had been received and, after cleansing, this amounted to 505 useful responses. The Performance, Research and Consultation Team considered this to be a good level of engagement for this type of consultation.
- 5.38 In addition to the online consultation, Get Berkshire Active was asked to undertake more detailed engagement with under-represented and seldom heard groups. A series of seven workshops took place throughout September with the following organisations:
- MNR Coaching – a primary school sports provider
  - Berkshire Youth – a charity providing youth support services
  - Spotlight – a charity providing low cost activities and emotional and practical support to children and young people
  - West Berkshire Mencap – a charity providing support, care, advice and guidance to people with a learning disability and their families and carers
  - West Berkshire Therapy Centre – a specialised therapy gym for people with disabilities
  - Eight Bells for Mental Health Charity – a member-led organisation for people with mental health issues
  - Educafe – a community café and official home to DECSA (the Diverse Ethnic Communities Support Agency for West Berkshire)
  - Age UK Berkshire – a charity for older people
  - Plus a pastoral development worker for West Berkshire Churches and some Social Prescribers
- 5.39 The focus of the workshops was around: the importance of leisure for the audiences they worked with and their attitude towards it; what stopped people from being more active in leisure opportunities; any barriers; and what would encourage participation. They were also asked about which activities were most popular and if there were any activities that their audiences would like to do but could not, as well as a question around any key learnings from the pandemic with regards to leisure, activities, health and wellbeing. Unfortunately, there was no data available as to the number of individuals engaged by GBA.
- 5.40 Due to the additional engagement work undertaken in 2021, the Task and Finish Group felt that the Council had consulted widely enough. Under-represented demographics were actively targeted and although efforts were not 100% effective in addressing the shortfall in responses, reasonable steps were undertaken to ensure that 'seldom heard' groups had a voice and were represented in the responses.

- 5.41 However, a key weakness of the online survey was that it did not capture data on the addresses of respondents. As such, it was impossible to confirm if there were any communities that did not engage with the consultation or that were underrepresented amongst the responses received. While this did not invalidate the results, it is something that should be addressed in any future consultations.
- 5.42 The Task Group noted that when the survey asked about the activities that people engaged in, some activities had multiple entries (e.g. leisure cycling, road cycling, off-road cycling), while other diverse activities were grouped under a single heading (e.g. adventure sports or racquet sports). Court games such as basketball and netball were not mentioned, which was considered to be a missed opportunity, since basketball is the second most popular sport amongst children aged 11-15 in the UK, and netball has ballooned in popularity in recent years on the back of international sporting success. Similarly sports such as ice skating and ice hockey were not mentioned. While it is accepted that West Berkshire may not have the population to support an ice rink, it would be useful to know the demand and locations where people currently go if they wish to pursue these sports.

**Question 3 – Do we have a clear picture of current and future demand for / usage of / satisfaction with local facilities across the full spectrum of sports and leisure facilities based on high quality local evidence?**

- 5.43 The Active Lives Survey, Leisure Centre data, Playing Pitch Strategy data and outputs from the Facilities Planning Model had been used to inform the development of the Leisure Strategy, together with the results of the Leisure Strategy survey and ‘What’s Your Leisure?’ survey.
- 5.44 The Facilities Planning Model indicated that the district is well-served by leisure facilities, which appear to be in appropriate locations, with no significant gaps other than the shortfall of playing pitches, which will be addressed through the Playing Pitch Strategy. Analysis had also been undertaken to look at leisure centre locations in the context of health deprivation and again this had highlighted that facilities were in the right locations.
- 5.45 However, the Task Group perceived some potential discrepancies between the survey results and the outputs from the Facilities Planning Model. In particular, the survey results highlighted that a significant proportion of residents felt unable to access swimming pools, while the model suggested that there were no gaps in provision of swimming pools. This point is picked up in more detail in the section relating to Question 7 (see below).
- 5.46 The Task Group also highlighted that in the ‘What’s Your Leisure?’ survey, the question about the activities that people engaged in had some activities with multiple entries (e.g. leisure cycling, road cycling, off-road cycling), while other diverse activities were grouped under a single heading (e.g. adventure sports and racquet sports). As a result, some activities may have been over-represented and others under-represented. It was accepted that the activities needed to be sorted to reduce the options for the survey so were categorised loosely to the facilities that they would require and assumptions made about the level of demand. For some sports such as basketball and netball, it was explained that their requirements were flexible and the area was not short on sports halls to accommodate them.

5.47 The Task Group asked for a breakdown of data about usage of each of the Council's leisure centres and the Lido, together with any trends. This data had been in earlier versions of the Strategy, but officers agreed that it would be reinstated in an appendix.

**Question 4 - Are there any geographical gaps in provision of sports and leisure facilities?**

5.48 To some extent, this issue was addressed under Question 1 and Question 3 (see above) and in Question 7 below.

5.49 The Task Group challenged officers as to whether there was sufficient coverage in rural areas and the east of the district. Officers provided assurance that the Facilities Planning Model had been used to show that leisure facilities were for the most part in the right place and that there were no hotspots in terms of unmet demand. Supporting data will be provided in an appendix to the Strategy.

5.50 However the Task Group felt that there was a clear lack of provision in terms of swimming pools in the east of the district, particularly Pangbourne, Purley, Tilehurst, Calcot and Theale. Further work may therefore be required to understand which communities are affected and what the barriers are that prevent people from accessing existing pools (e.g. proximity, poor transport links, lack of awareness of facilities in neighbouring areas, etc).

**Question 5 - Is there a sufficient club / voluntary group network within the district (including coaches, trainers, organisers, support staff, referees, etc) to facilitate participation and make effective use of available facilities?**

5.51 The Active Lives Survey suggests that there is a good volunteer network for local sports clubs, with rates that are higher than the Berkshire, South East and England averages (see figure 5.1 below).

5.52 The Active Lives Survey also shows that Club membership is slightly higher than the South East and England averages (see Figure 5.2 below).

5.53 Unfortunately, there does not appear to be any granularity in the data, so it is not possible to say at this stage whether there are any shortfalls in the local club / voluntary group network that affect particular sports / activities, locations, or demographics. Further research could be something that is picked up as part of the Delivery Plan.

5.54 The Strategy includes objectives for the co-creation of a Volunteering Network Strategy and provision of advice and support for voluntary groups. It should be noted that GBA already provides support for local clubs and voluntary groups, including:

- Information, advice and guidance on a wide variety of topics
- Access to various insights, resources and toolkits
- Training and courses
- Provision of grant funding and details of external funders

5.55 The Task Group highlighted the lack of a central directory of clubs / voluntary groups in West Berkshire and felt that this would be invaluable in promoting opportunities for sports and leisure activities to local residents. This could be something along the lines



of the West Berkshire Directory. Again, this is something that could be picked up in the Delivery Plan.

Figure 5.1: Active Lives Survey - Volunteering

Any volunteering in the last 12 months  
May 20-21

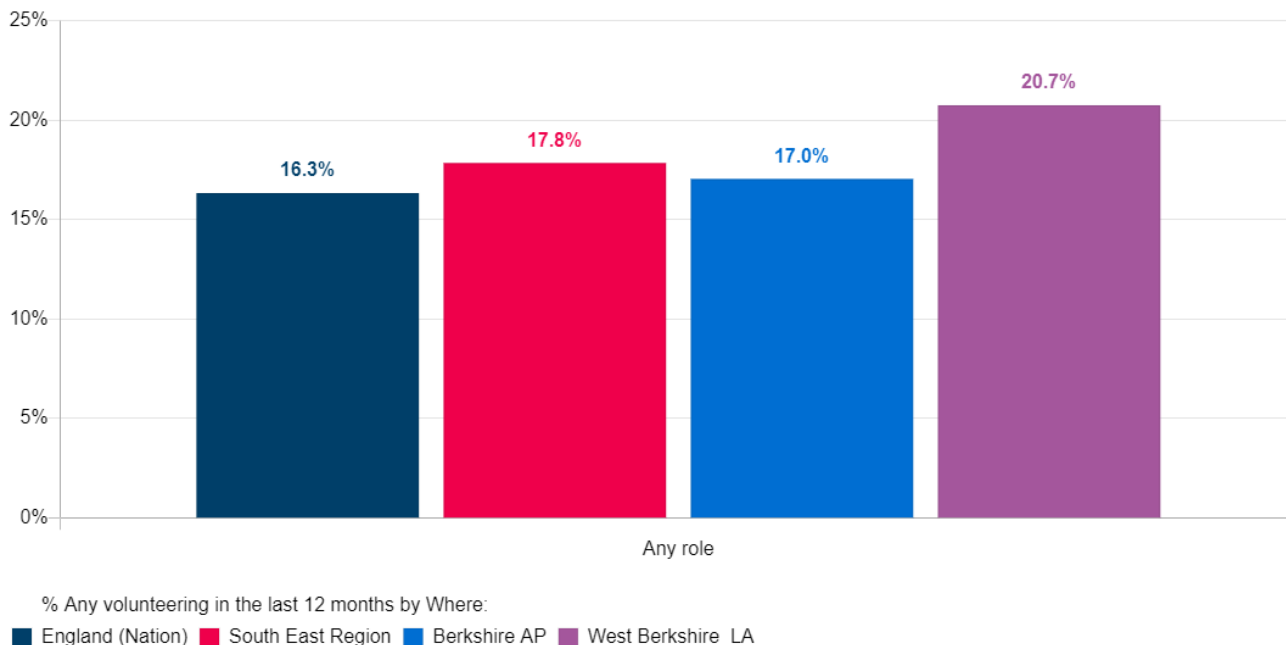
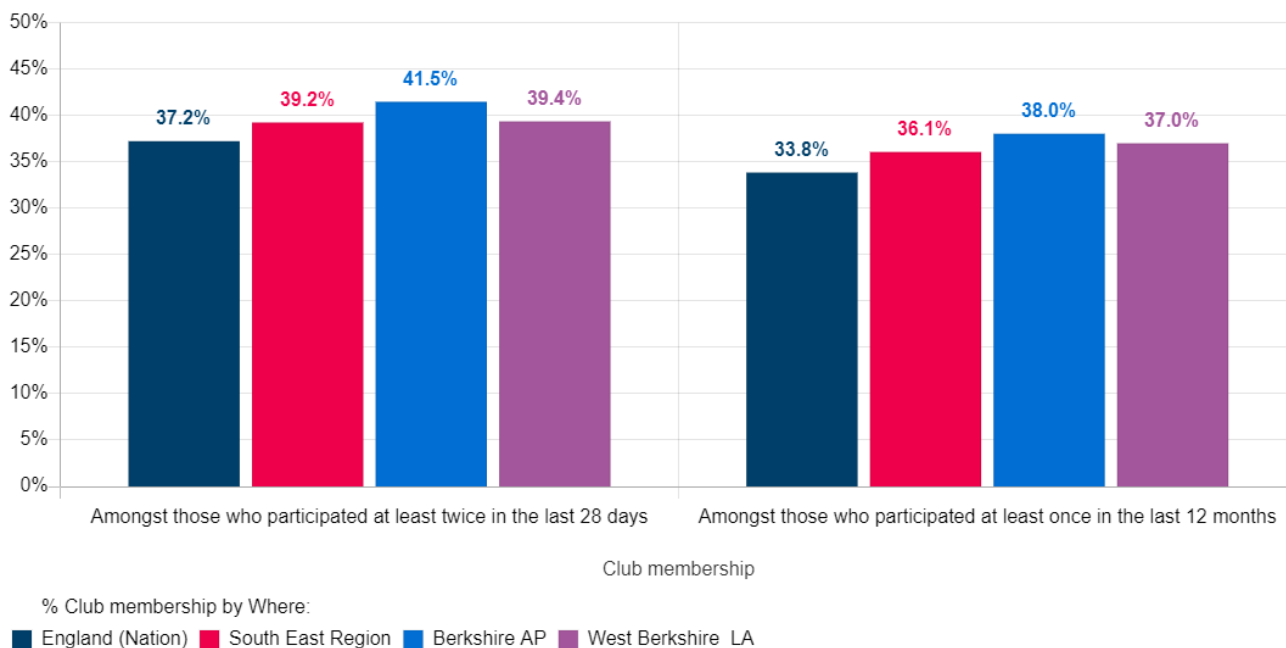


Figure 5.2: Active Lives Survey – Club Membership

Club membership  
May 20-21



**Question 6 - Do we have a clear picture of barriers to participation and will the strategy address these?**

5.56 When asked about what needs to change to encourage participation, the top three barriers that the Council could impact, were:

- Cost
- Confidence
- The need for accessible information on what is available.

5.57 When asked what could be done to encourage people to do more, the responses mirrored the points identified above. There was also a strong emphasis on the need for classes and activities for 'people like me'. For example, relatively inactive individuals can feel excluded from some activities, but the success of programmes such as 'Park Run' and 'Couch to 5k' have been in their ability to stress inclusivity.

5.58 The GBA analysis highlighted a number of barriers affecting different audiences, including:

- The location and accessibility of venues
- The need for better customer service and well-trained staff to run / facilitate sessions
- Better messaging, advertising and signposting
- Activities tailored to specific audiences and their needs, in order to make individuals feel welcome.
- More flexible booking systems.

5.59 Overall, the Task Group felt that the barriers to participation were reasonably well understood, although it was felt that further work may be beneficial to clarify what is meant by 'people like me', since this could include aspects related to ethnicity, religious beliefs, gender, age, ability, body image, etc, which may not have been picked up in the engagement work undertaken to date.

5.60 In terms of better messaging, advertising and signposting, having an easily accessible database of all local clubs, voluntary groups and activity sessions was felt to be an essential element. Also, noting the success of campaigns such as 'This Girl Can', the Task Group suggests that any future local communications programme should include inspiring stories / role models in order to normalise behaviour / show what 'people like me' can achieve.

**Question 7 - How popular / well used are the local leisure assets, including the Lido?**

5.61 Pre-Covid, there were approximately 1 million recorded visitors per year to the Council's leisure centres. However, this is known to be an under-estimate, since it does not include people involved in group bookings where only the person who made the booking is counted.

5.62 The Covid pandemic inevitably impacted upon visitor numbers. Initial statistics suggest that leisure centre usage has returned to around 80% of pre-Covid levels, which

suggests that the focus should be on putting measures in place accompanied by appropriate messaging to give others the confidence to return.

- 5.63 Detailed information for individual sites has not been made available to date, but officers have undertaken to include visitor statistics within an Appendix of the Leisure Strategy. This will be critical in order to understand whether the aim of increasing participation has been met.
- 5.64 Officers confirmed that modelling and sensitivity testing had shown that leisure centres were in appropriate locations, with no significant gaps and this was reflected in the visitor numbers.
- 5.65 Four of the district's leisure centres are on school sites, so educational use of these facilities has priority. The Task Group felt that it would be good to understand current levels of unmet demand during the off-peak period and how this might change in future, particularly as the number of older residents is projected to significantly increase over time. Also, it was noted that there have been changes to working practices, such as increases in flexible and home working, so it would be good to monitor if this has changed how and when people are using local leisure centres.
- 5.66 Newbury Lido has seen a significant increase in popularity in recent years, with visitor numbers reported to have increased from around 9,000 to 25,000 over a 6 year period. However, this is over a very limited season of just 74 days and timetabling / management of the facility is considered to be far from optimal in terms of maximising usage. It is proposed to extend the opening season to 6 months, which would allow much greater use of the facility.
- 5.67 The Adventure Dolphin Centre is now run by a charity rather than West Berkshire Council, so this has not been included within the scope of the review.

**Question 8 - How effective has stakeholder engagement been in informing the development of the strategy and major investment proposals (e.g. the Lido) and is there a clear business case for these investments?**

Leisure Strategy

- 5.68 Consultation undertaken to inform the Leisure Strategy showed that the most popular activities were walking for leisure, followed by gym/yoga/Pilates/fitness classes as a group, Cycling in its various forms and swimming were also major activities.
- 5.69 Of activities that people would like to participate in but felt unable to do so, the top 5 were:

Activity	Responses	Proportion
Swimming	59	11.7%
Open water swimming	55	10.9%
Yoga / Pilates	53	10.5%
Fitness activity / exercise classes	52	10.3%
Adventure sports	43	8.5%

5.70 In terms of barriers to participation in leisure activities, over 20% of respondents cited the need for better information. Given that the responses are from an engaged and active community, it is likely to be an equally significant issue to the less active. Cost was highlighted as a barrier to making more use of leisure centres by around 15% of respondents. An increase in activities 'targeted at me' and 'with people like me' were both cited in over 10% of cases, so needs to be considered when developing information and opportunities. Just under 10% indicated that there was a need for more leisure centres.

5.71 Key findings from the focused engagement work with 'seldom heard' groups were:

- People wanted more activities for 'people like me'.
- The social aspect of active leisure was very important.
- Support networks are important to motivate and enable people.
- Leisure opportunities must be flexible and tailored to different audiences.
- Better signposting and flexible booking is needed.
- Covid-19 is still affecting a lot of people in terms of their confidence and their ability to be active.
- It is important to build relationships to encourage participation.

5.72 The Task Group felt that the results from the stakeholder engagement had been used alongside other sources of information such as the Active Lives Survey, Leisure Centre data, Playing Pitch Strategy data and outputs from the Facilities Planning Model to inform the development of the Leisure Strategy, with clear links to the vision, aims and objectives.

5.73 However, the Task Group perceived some potential discrepancies between the survey results and the outputs from the Facilities Planning Model. As mentioned previously, the survey results highlighted that a significant proportion of residents felt unable to access swimming pools, while the model suggested that there were no gaps in provision of swimming pools. Since the survey had not obtained any data about where respondents lived, it was not possible to ascertain if some communities were more affected than others. However the Task Group felt that there was a clear lack of provision towards the east of the district, particularly Pangbourne, Purley, Tilehurst, Calcot and Theale. Further work may therefore be required to understand which communities are affected and what the barriers are that prevent people from accessing existing pools (e.g. proximity, poor transport links, lack of awareness of facilities in neighbouring areas, etc).

#### Major Investment Proposals

5.74 Due to the limited time available, the Task Group focused on the Newbury Lido proposal.

5.75 In developing proposals for the future of Newbury Lido a formal public consultation exercise was undertaken between 26 July 2021 and 5 September 2021. A copy of the questionnaire is included in Appendix C. This outlined three alternative proposals for redeveloping the lido. Aspects that were consulted upon were:

- (a) Whether investment should be undertaken to safeguard the future of the lido.

- (b) The length of the pool – whether it should be 50m or 71m.
- (c) The mix of additional facilities to be provided alongside the main lido pool
- (d) The preferred length of the season and potential programming elements.

5.76 A total of 715 responses were received to the public consultation exercise. The following represents a summary of the main results:

- (a) 95% of respondents were supportive of investment in the lido.
- (b) 67.4% of respondents were supportive of reducing the length of the lido to 50m
- (c) Respondents wanted a balance between social / family activity and pure swimming.
- (d) Of the proposed ancillary facilities, the strongest levels of support were for a toddler pool, splash pad and slides.
- (e) There was strong feedback that the focus should be on ‘wet’ activity in the lido area, with little support for aspects such as a ‘high ropes’ area. (Elements had to be supported by at least 50% of respondents in order to be included within the final scheme.)

5.77 In addition to the consultation, a webinar took place on August 3rd 2021 which included presentations on the proposals for the lido and a Q&A session. Feedback from the webinar was broadly in line with the consultation responses, with the emphasis on significantly extending the operating season for the lido from the current limit of 72 days.

5.78 Overall, the Task Group felt that the consultation had been effective, with the results clearly being used to shape the final scheme, including the length of the pool and the facilities to be provided, as well as the opening hours. The survey attracted a good level of response, but it was not clear what efforts had been made to engage with ‘seldom heard’ groups, or if alternatives to the online survey had been made available for those who are unable to complete online surveys.

5.79 As with the ‘What’s Your Leisure’ consultation, respondents were not asked to provide details of where they lived, so it was not possible to get a feel for how representative the responses were of the wider district. Newbury Lido has a much wider catchment than a normal swimming pool or leisure centre, with visitors often travelling from further afield to spend the day at the facility, so it is important to ensure that responses are not just from the Newbury area.

5.80 The Task Group also felt that a different response would have been provided if the scope of the survey had been widened to ask people where they would like to see investment in leisure facilities.

5.81 The business case for the lido was driven by the need to address structural issues with the pool, which requires urgent stabilisation works to respond to movement caused by the high water table in the vicinity of the site. The current lido was constructed in 1937

predating construction of the adjacent Northcroft Leisure Centre. The lido is now considered to be at the end of its economic life.

- 5.82 The proposed scheme will reduce the length of the pool from 71m to 50m and will also reduce the depth of the pool to raise it above the water table and thus minimise the risk of future movement and damage. This will also allow for additional water-based activities such as aqua-aerobics. The opportunity will also be taken to enhance the ancillary facilities to increase its appeal for family groups.
- 5.83 It is also proposed to significantly extend the operating period from just over 10 weeks to 6 months per year, which should greatly increase the level of income generated by the lido. In addition, it is considered that the programming of the pool can be considerably revised to increase visitor numbers and revenue without increasing admission prices.
- 5.84 The cost of the works is estimated at £5 million. It was confirmed that the lido would be funded through Community Infrastructure Levy and low-cost borrowing through the Public Works Loan Board, with the balance estimated to be approximately 50/50. It was suggested that the borrowing costs would be off-set through increased ticket sales.
- 5.85 The cost of running the lido was raised as a concern by the Task Group. It was highlighted that the Dolphin Centre was now operated by a charity run by volunteers with no funding from West Berkshire Council. It was also asked whether consideration had been given to handing the pool over to Newbury Town Council to run. Officers explained that the intention was for the pool to be operated as part of the leisure contract to be let in 2022. Officers did not consider that the Town Council would have the budgets or resources to be able to operate the lido. Also, it would be very difficult to decouple the lido from the adjacent Northcroft Leisure Centre.
- 5.86 The Task Group also sought details about the environmental benefits of the scheme and how this would contribute to the Council's net zero carbon aspirations. It was explained that officers had been asked to get as close as possible to net zero carbon for the scheme, which would include solar power and heat pumps. Detailed options would be worked through in the coming months and would take advantage of new technology, which was developing all the time.

## 6 Proposals

- 6.1 As a result of its investigations, the Leisure Strategy Task and Finish Group identified a number of issues, which if addressed could improve the Council's understanding of leisure needs, and future provision of Leisure Service.
- 6.2 None of the identified issues were considered significant enough to suggest that the Strategy should be deferred and amended prior to final publications. Instead, the Task Group considered that most could be addressed as part of the development of the Delivery Plan or as part of future engagement exercises.
- 6.3 The proposals include:
- All future consultations to capture the home postcodes or town / village of respondents to facilitate identification and mitigation of any geographical gaps in the responses.

- Future consultations on leisure activity to better capture data on popular sports such as basketball and netball and consider more categories such as ice sports.
- Where data is only available at the national or regional level, consider whether additional work needs to be undertaken locally to understand if there are local variations.
- Consider how the leisure offer will need to adapt to take account of recent trends that have been accelerated by the Covid pandemic, such as exercising at home and the use of virtual classes, and whether greater use could be made of online platforms to engage local residents in physical activity, thereby addressing barriers of distance and cost.
- Ensure that future communications strategies involve two-way dialogue with existing and potential users rather than just one-way communication.
- Consider whether additional research is required to address the perceived lack of leisure facilities – particularly a swimming pool - in the east of the district and how best to respond to the barriers facing local residents.
- Explore options for reinstating community outreach programmes, and making more effective use of village / community halls for leisure activities in more remote communities.
- There needs to be a strong focus on children and young people, targeting the 50% who are currently inactive and consideration should be given on working with secondary schools to engage those pupils who do not engage in school sports.
- Undertaken additional work (possibly with GBA) to understand if there are any shortfalls in the local club / voluntary group network that affect particular sports / activities, locations, or demographics.
- Consider developing a central directory of clubs / voluntary groups in West Berkshire as part of the Leisure Strategy Delivery Plan.
- Consider whether further work is needed to clarify what respondents mean by 'people like me' and whether this is just related to ability / fitness or whether there are more nuanced factors at play.
- Future local communications programme should include inspiring stories / role models in order to normalise behaviour / show what 'people like me' can achieve
- Ensure that appropriate mitigation and messaging are put in place to reassure people who have concerns about returning to leisure centres after isolating due to Covid.
- Consider how demand for leisure activity will change as a result of the ageing population and also in response to changing working patterns.

## 7 Other options considered

The Executive may choose to implement the proposals in full, in part or not at all as they see fit.

## 8 Conclusion

Although the Task Group did not uncover any major shortcomings in the Strategy or the supporting public engagement, the above proposals highlight a number of areas where improvements could be made.

## 9 Appendices

Appendix A – Leisure Strategy Task Group Terms of Reference

Appendix B – ‘What’s Your Leisure?’ Survey

Appendix C – Newbury Lido Consultation

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### Background Papers:

Draft Leisure Strategy

Leisure Strategy Post Consultation Report

What’s Your Leisure? Post Consultation Report

Lido Post Consultation Report

### Subject to Call-In:

Yes:  No:

The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval

Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council

Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position

Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee or associated Task Groups within preceding six months

Item is Urgent Key Decision

Report is to note only

**Wards affected:** All wards

### Officer details:

Name: Gordon Oliver  
Job Title: Principal Policy Officer  
Tel No: 01635 519486  
E-mail: gordon.oliver1@westberks.gov.uk



### Document Control

Document Ref:		Date Created:	
Version:		Date Modified:	
Author:			
Owning Service			

### Change History

Version	Date	Description	Change ID
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## Overview and Scrutiny Review Matrix

**Review Topic: Leisure Strategy**

**Timescale:**

**Start: May 2021**

**Finish: August 2021**

### Review Rationale:

1. The draft Leisure Strategy went out to consultation in autumn 2020 and is due to be adopted in late spring / early summer 2021 – the Task and Finish Group will undertake pre-decision scrutiny.
2. The Task and Finish Group will review the consultation and its responses to ensure the Council has looked sufficiently broadly across the District.
3. The draft strategy needs to be reviewed, ensuring that it and the subsequent delivery plan are based on high quality, local evidence about the provision of and demand for local leisure facilities, now and in the future.
4. There are proposals for major investments in sports and leisure facilities (e.g. Newbury Lido) and tendering of key contracts within the lifetime of the strategy, which must have a clear rationale and business case.
5. The Task and Finish Group will make comments / recommendations for further work and / or changes to the strategy prior to going to Executive for adoption.

### Key Questions:

1. Does the Draft Leisure Strategy achieve all of its objectives?
2. Has the Council consulted widely enough in preparing the strategy, including community groups and seldom heard communities?
3. Do we have a clear picture of current and future demand for / usage of / satisfaction with local facilities across the full spectrum of sports and leisure activities, based on high quality, local evidence?
4. Are there any geographical gaps in provision of sports and leisure facilities?
5. Is there a sufficient club / voluntary group network within the district (including coaches, trainers, organisers, support staff, referees, etc) to facilitate participation and make effective use of available facilities?
6. Do we have a clear picture of any barriers to local citizens participating in sports and leisure activities and will the strategy be effective in addressing these?
7. How popular / well-used are local leisure assets such as the Newbury Lido and the Dolphin Centre in Pangbourne?
8. How effective has local stakeholder engagement been in informing the development of the strategy and associated major investment proposals (e.g. Newbury Lido), and is there a clear business case for these investments?

### Membership:

Cllr Gareth Hurley  
Cllr Erik Pattenden  
Cllr Steve Masters  
Tim Metcalfe (co-optee)

**Chairman:** Cllr Gareth Hurley

**Vice-Chairman:** TBC

**Lead Officer:** Gordon Oliver

**Information Required:**

- Draft Leisure Strategy
- Consultation Report
- Evidence Base
- Leisure Programme
- Other TBC

**Witnesses:**

- Matt Pearce (Service Director – Communities and Wellbeing)
- Jim Sweeting (Sports and Leisure Manager)
- Others TBC

## What's your leisure?

---

We'd like to learn more about the active leisure pursuits you enjoy, as well as what might be stopping you from taking part. Active leisure is defined as "*recreational and sporting activities (structured and unstructured) that gets you out and about, such as for a walk, a run, a swim, an exercise class or your favourite sport.*" Everyday physical activity such as active travel, gardening and/or housework, while really important, isn't what we are asking about in this survey.

The survey should take approximately 5 - 10 minutes to complete, and your feedback will be used to inform the final Leisure Strategy 2021-2031.

If you have any questions, please contact Jude Thomas – Principal Policy Officer (Culture and Leisure) on 01635 519083.

**The survey is open until midnight on Sunday, 5 September 2021.**

Any personal information you choose to provide will be kept confidential and used in accordance with our privacy notice.

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### 1. How important is active leisure to your health and wellbeing?

- Extremely important
- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not so important
- Not at all important

Please tell us the reasons for your response.

### 2. How frequently do you participate in an active leisure pursuit for at least 30 minutes?

- Never (Go to Q3)
- Less than once a week (Go to Q3)
- Once a week (Go to Q3)
- Twice a week (Go to Q3)
- 3 - 5 times a week (Go to Q6)
- More than 5 times a week (Go to Q6)

## What's your leisure?

**3. Is there anything that prevents you from participating, or participating more regularly, in an active leisure pursuit?**

- Yes (Go to Q4)  
 No (Go to Q5)

**4. What prevents you from participating, or participating more regularly, in an active leisure pursuit? Please select your top five.**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know where to go                  | <input type="checkbox"/> I don't have access to a car to get to them        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know where to find information    | <input type="checkbox"/> There is a lack of public transport to get to them |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poor cleanliness / unpleasant environment | <input type="checkbox"/> It's too expensive to get to them                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I don't feel safe                         | <input type="checkbox"/> It's too expensive to use the facilities           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I'm too old                               | <input type="checkbox"/> It's too expensive to have the equipment           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I'm in poor health                        | <input type="checkbox"/> I prefer to do other leisure activities            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I'm not fit enough                        | <input type="checkbox"/> I don't feel welcome / I feel out of place         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> My physical disability prevents me        | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify):                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I'm not confident enough                  | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I'm too busy                              |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I'm not interested                        |   |

**5. What, if anything, would encourage/enable you to participate, or participate more regularly, in an active leisure pursuit? Please select your top five.**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> More information about what is available | <input type="checkbox"/> More playing fields/play areas       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lessons / coaching                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Safer playing fields/play area       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Activities targeted at my needs          | <input type="checkbox"/> More parking at leisure places       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Activities with people like me           | <input type="checkbox"/> More classes                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> More leisure centres                     | <input type="checkbox"/> More support for clubs and societies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Longer hours in existing centres         | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify):              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cheaper access to swim / leisure centres | _____   |

**6. How does your current level of participation in active leisure compare to before the Covid pandemic (pre March 2020)?**

- Much more (Go to Q7)  
 More (Go to Q7)  
 About the same (Go to Q8)  
 Less (Go to Q7)  
 Much less (Go to Q7)

## What's your leisure?

7. **Please tell us why your participation levels changed compared to before the Covid pandemic.**

8. **What types of active leisure pursuits do you participate in? Please select all that apply.**  
 (Skip question if you answered 'Never' in Q2)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adventure sports                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Off-road biking         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Athletics                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Open water swimming     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cricket                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Racquet sports          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dance                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Road cycling            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Equestrian                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Rugby                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Field sports                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Running                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fitness activity / Exercise classes | <input type="checkbox"/> Swimming                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Football                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Water sports            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Golf                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Walking for leisure     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gym                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Yoga / Pilates          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hockey / Lacrosse                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leisure cycling                     | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Martial arts / Boxing               |  |

9. **Are there any types of active leisure pursuits that you would like to do, but don't/can't at the moment? Please select all that apply.**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adventure sports                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Off-road biking         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Athletics                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Open water swimming     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cricket                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Racquet sports          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dance                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Road cycling            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Equestrian                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Rugby                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Field sports                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Running                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fitness activity / Exercise classes | <input type="checkbox"/> Swimming                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Football                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Water sports            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Golf                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Walking for leisure     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gym                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Yoga / Pilates          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hockey / Lacrosse                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leisure cycling                     | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Martial arts / Boxing               |  |

## What's your leisure?

10. **Please tell us why you don't/can't participate in this types of sport or active leisure activity.** (Include the name of the activity you selected in Q9 in your comment)

11. **Are you a member of a sports club, leisure centre or gym?** (Skip question if you answered 'Never' in Q2)

- Sports or physical activity club, e.g. rugby/hockey club
- Council owned leisure centre
- Private owned gym/leisure club
- No
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

12. **Do you have any additional comments?**

### West Berkshire Council's Community Panel

13. **Would you like to join the West Berkshire Council's Community Panel?**

If you're a resident of West Berkshire, and would like to be invited to participate in any of our future consultation or engagement exercises, you can apply to join our Community Panel.

- Yes (Go to Q14)
- No (Go to Q15)
- Already a member (Go to Q15)

14. **Please tell us your name and email address.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_



## What's your leisure?

### About You

The following questions relate to you individually, and some invite you to provide “special category” data in terms of data protection. As such, we need your explicit consent to collect and process your responses to these questions. They are not mandatory, and you are free to skip any or all of them if you wish. To read more about this, please consult our privacy notice.

**15. \* I consent to the council collecting and processing special category data according to the purposes outlined in its privacy notice.**

- Yes (Go to Q16)  
 No (Go to end of survey)

**16. What is your gender?**

- Male  
 Female  
 Other

**17. How old are you?**

- |                                   |                                      |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Under 18 | <input type="checkbox"/> 45-54       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18-24    | <input type="checkbox"/> 55-64       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 25-34    | <input type="checkbox"/> 65-74       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 35-44    | <input type="checkbox"/> 75 and over |

**18. What is your ethnic group?**

*Categories are based on those asked at the Census 2021*

- White English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British  
 White Irish  
 White other  
 Gypsy, Irish Traveller or Roma  
 Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups  
 Asian or Asian British  
 Black, Black British, Caribbean or African  
 Other ethnic group – please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

**19. Do you have a disability, long-term illness, or health condition?**

- Yes  
 No

## What's your leisure?

---

20. Do you live in West Berkshire?

Yes

No

**Thank you for taking the time to complete our survey. Please return your completed form by Sunday, 5 September 2021 to:**

'What's your leisure?' survey  
Jude Thomas  
West Berkshire Council  
Council Offices  
Market Street  
Newbury  
Berkshire  
RG14 5LD

## Development of the Lido at Northcroft Leisure Centre, Newbury

Thank you for participating in our survey.

It should take approximately 10 minutes to complete, and your feedback will help shape our final proposals for the development of the Lido at Northcroft Leisure Centre.

If you have any questions please contact xx on 01635 xxxxxx or at xxx@westberks.gov.uk.

**The survey is open until midnight on Sunday, 5 September 2021.**

Any personal information you choose to provide will be kept confidential and used in accordance with our [privacy notice](#).

## Development of the Lido at Northcroft Leisure Centre, Newbury

**1. Prior to this survey, were you aware of the existence of the Lido at Northcroft Leisure Centre?**

Yes

No

## Development of the Lido at Northcroft Leisure Centre, Newbury

### 2. Have you ever visited the Lido?

- Yes
- No

## Development of the Lido at Northcroft Leisure Centre, Newbury

### 3. What are your main reasons for not visiting the Lido? Please select all that apply.

- I can't swim
- I don't enjoy swimming
- I prefer to use an indoor pool
- I visit an alternative outdoor pool
- I don't have transport to get there
- I have mobility difficulties and access is an issue
- I can't afford to visit
- I don't have time to visit
- Other (please specify)

Development of the Lido at Northcroft Leisure Centre, Newbury

**4. What, if anything, would encourage you to visit the Lido?**

## Development of the Lido at Northcroft Leisure Centre, Newbury

### 5. How often have you visited the Lido in the past 2 years?

- 0 - 1 times
- 2 - 5 times
- 6 - 10 times
- 11 - 20 times
- More than 20 times



## Development of the Lido at Northcroft Leisure Centre, Newbury

**6. On average, how long did you stay at the Lido per visit?**

- Less than 1 hour
- 1 - 2 hours
- 3 - 4 hours
- Whole day

## Development of the Lido at Northcroft Leisure Centre, Newbury

### 7. How far do you travel to visit the Lido?

- Less than 1 mile
- 1 - 5 miles
- 6 - 10 miles
- 11 - 20 miles
- More than 20 miles

Development of the Lido at Northcroft Leisure Centre, Newbury

**8. How do you usually travel to the Lido? Please select all that apply.**

- Walk
- Cycle
- Public transport
- Car
- Other (please specify)

Development of the Lido at Northcroft Leisure Centre, Newbury

**9. Have you ever had difficulty getting a parking space at the Lido?**

Yes

No

Comments

## Development of the Lido at Northcroft Leisure Centre, Newbury

### Investment for Lido

**10. Substantial investment will be required to modernise the Lido, do you think this should be undertaken?**

Yes

No

Please tell us the reasons for your response.

**Development of the Lido at Northcroft Leisure Centre, Newbury**

The Proposed New Facilities

**11. How far do you agree or disagree with our proposed plans for the development of the following facilities?**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
The children's splash pad	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Aqua features	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Clip and climb	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Café and seating area	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provision of changing cubicles and lockers by the pool	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sun terrace and relaxation space	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please tell us the reasons for your responses.

## Development of the Lido at Northcroft Leisure Centre, Newbury

**12. What amenities would you like to see in the relaxation area at the Lido? Please tick all that apply.**

- Beach huts
- Picnic tables
- Loungers
- Parasols
- Jacuzzi
- Other (please specify)

## Development of the Lido at Northcroft Leisure Centre, Newbury

**13. Are there any additional facilities you'd like to propose for the Lido development?**

Yes

No



Development of the Lido at Northcroft Leisure Centre, Newbury

**14. What additional facilities would you like to propose?**

## Development of the Lido at Northcroft Leisure Centre, Newbury

### Length of Pool

The existing pool is 72m in length, and runs from 0.9 to 2.8m in depth. This pool profile can no longer be retained, and the main pool tank will be need to be changed to a maximum depth of 1.5m. This provides an opportunity to review the overall provision on the site, and we've identified the following indicative options:

- Option 1 - 50 metre pool with racer slide, splash pad and high ropes
- Option 2 - 50 metre pool with toddler pool, splash pad and high ropes
- Option 3 - 71 metre pool with splash pad

**SW REMINDER - ADD IMAGE LINKS TO EACH OPTION**

#### 15. Which of the three options detailed above do you support?

- Option 1
- Option 2
- Option 3

Please tell us the reasons for your response.

## Development of the Lido at Northcroft Leisure Centre, Newbury

### Opening Period

**16. The Lido has historically operated for approximately 10 weeks each year, from mid-June to early September. Do you think it should be open for a longer period than this?**

Yes

No

Please tell us the reasons for your response.

## Development of the Lido at Northcroft Leisure Centre, Newbury

**17. If the Lido was open for longer, in which months would you regularly (at least one visit per week) use it? Please select all that apply.**

- April
- May
- September
- October

## Development of the Lido at Northcroft Leisure Centre, Newbury

**18. If the Lido was open for longer, what activities would you participate in? Please select all that apply.**

- Family session with children
- Sunbathe and dip
- Lane swimming
- Exercise class
- Swimming lesson
- Swimming club
- Competitive event
- Other (please specify)

## Development of the Lido at Northcroft Leisure Centre, Newbury

### Catering Offer

**19. What type of catering offer would you prefer for the Lido?**

- Bring your own
- Vending service
- Cafeteria service

Please tell us the reasons for your response.

Development of the Lido at Northcroft Leisure Centre, Newbury

**20. What catering products would you wish to see on offer at the Lido? Please select all that apply**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cold drinks            | <input type="checkbox"/> Sandwiches/rolls |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy bar             | <input type="checkbox"/> Soup             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy drinks          | <input type="checkbox"/> Healthy meals    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hot drinks             | <input type="checkbox"/> Hot meals        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Smoothies              | <input type="checkbox"/> Ice cream        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Porridge               | <input type="checkbox"/> Crisps           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cereal                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Fruit            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Croissants             |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) |   |

## Development of the Lido at Northcroft Leisure Centre, Newbury

### West Berkshire Council's Community Panel

#### 21. Would you like to join the West Berkshire Council's Community Panel?

If you're a resident of West Berkshire, and would like to be invited to participate in any of our future consultation or engagement exercises, you can apply to join our Community Panel.

- Yes
- No
- Already a member



Development of the Lido at Northcroft Leisure Centre, Newbury

**22. Please tell us your name and email address.**

Alternatively, you can [apply online](#).

Name

Email address

## Development of the Lido at Northcroft Leisure Centre, Newbury

### About You

The following questions relate to you individually, and some invite you to provide “special category” data in terms of data protection. As such, we need your explicit consent to collect and process your responses to these questions. They are not mandatory, and you are free to skip any or all of them if you wish. To read more about this, please consult our [privacy notice](#).

**23. I consent to the council collecting and processing special category data according to the purposes outlined in its privacy notice.**

- Yes
- No

## Development of the Lido at Northcroft Leisure Centre, Newbury

### About You

**24. Are you a member of a swimming club or triathlon club?**

Yes

No

**25. What is your gender?**

Male

Female

Other

**26. How old are you?**

Under 18

18-24

25-34

35-44

45-54

55-64

65-74

75 and over

**27. What is your ethnic group?**

**Categories are based on those asked at the Census 2021**

- White English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British
- White Irish
- White other
- Gypsy, Irish Traveller or Roma
- Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups
- Asian or Asian British
- Black, Black British, Caribbean or African
- Other ethnic group – please specify

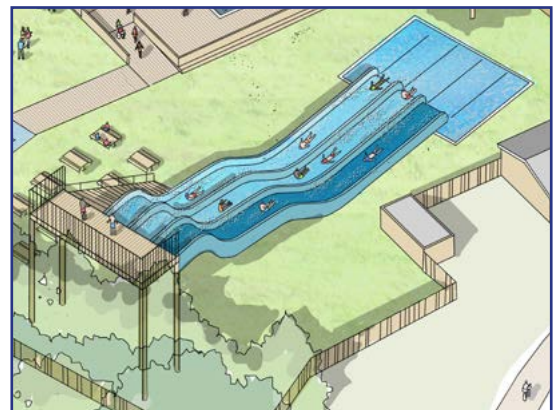
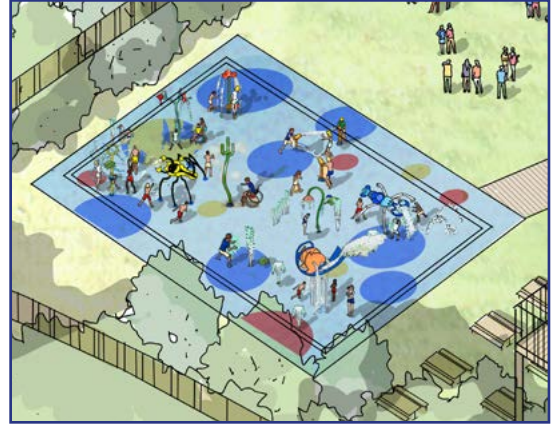
**28. Do you have a disability, long-term illness, or health condition?**

- Yes
- No

If you've answered yes, and feel the nature of what we're proposing/considering would have an impact on you because of your disability, illness or condition, please clarify what the disability is in the space below.

# Development of the Lido at Northcroft Leisure Centre, Newbury

## Option 1: 50 metre pool with racer slide, splash pad and high ropes.

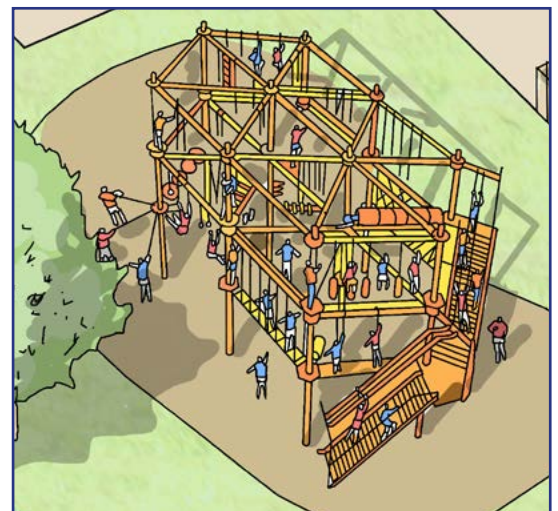
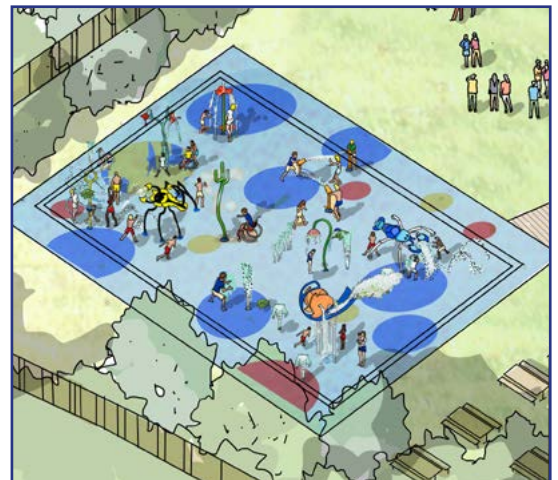


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# Development of the Lido at Northcroft Leisure Centre, Newbury

## Option 2:

50 metre pool with toddler pool, splash pad and high ropes.



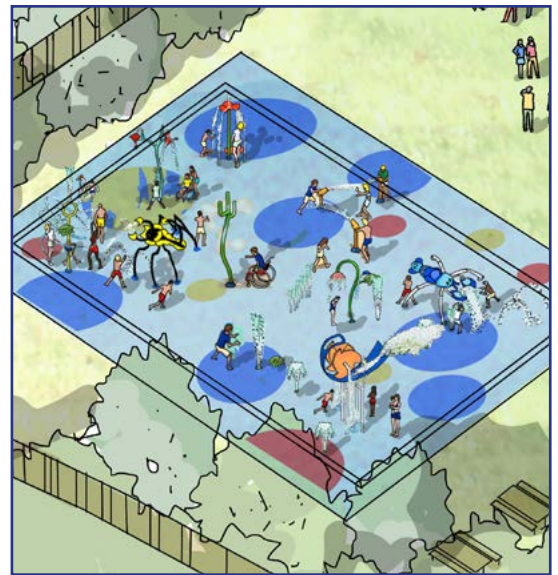
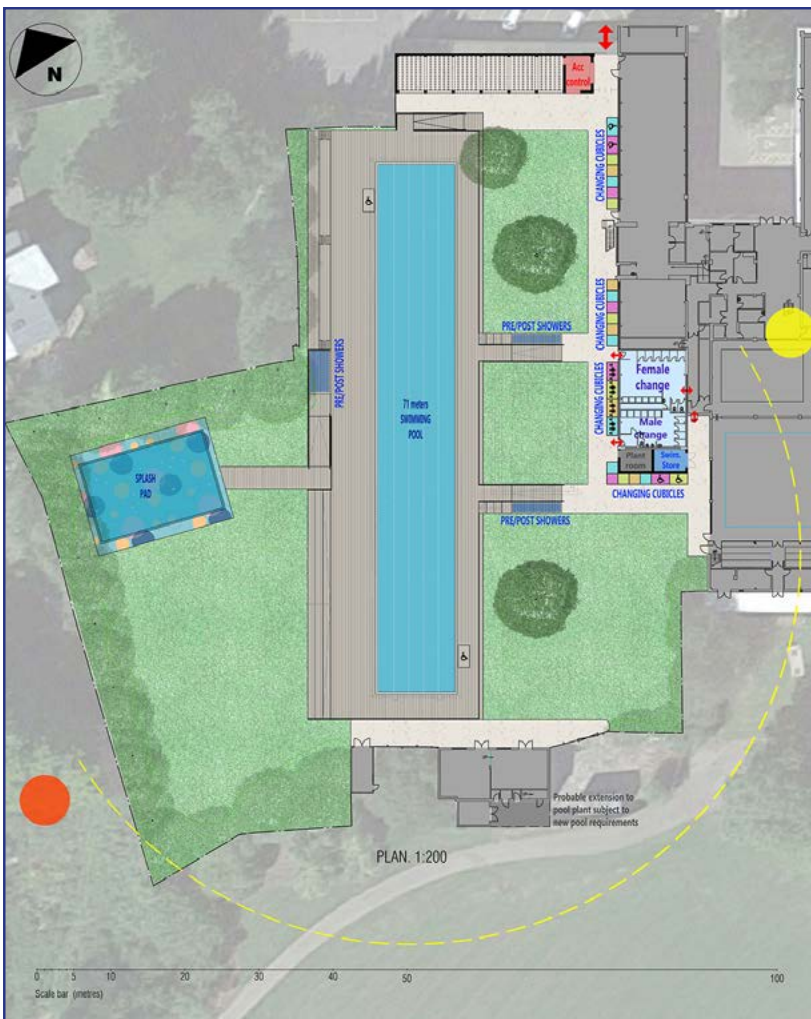
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# Development of the Lido at Northcroft Leisure Centre, Newbury

## Option 3:

71 metre pool with splash pad



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# Agenda Item 8.

## **Overview and Scrutiny Review Matrix**

**Review Topic: Customer Journey – inside and outside office hours, including out of hours emergency response.**

**Timescale**  
**Start:**  
**Finish:**

### **Review Rationale:**

West Berkshire Council strives to deliver the best possible customer experience regardless of the channel chosen to contact us and when they contact the Council.

On two occasions in the past year, elected members have highlighted issues relating to contacting relevant officers and the subsequent escalation process, which has led to OSMC seeking a review of both the Customer Services contact centre and the Emergency Out of Hours Service.

Some considerations of this review may be:

- a. How do residents prefer to interact with the council?
- b. What do residents expect and value when they interact with the Council as customers?
- c. How can both Members and Officers understand and improve understanding of the customer's wants and needs?
- d. What Council Services are provided out of hours and how are they provided?
- e. How has our relationship with customers been impacted by the pandemic and subsequent new work styles?
- f. How can we effectively link an improved customer journey with benefits to communities on the ground?
- g. How can we use our customer service channels to improve community capacity, capability and participation?
- h. Is customer experience consistent across all available channels?
- i. Is there an organisation-wide commitment to good customer experience?
- j. What best practice or learning can we gather from other local authorities?

### **Terms of Reference:**

The Task and Finish Group will:

- **Part 1:** Office hours customer contacts

*Review the customer experience, and how the Council's systems and customer service channels work, to understand if they are effective and delivering a positive and efficient service.*

This element of the review will be undertaken by:

- Holding facilitated meetings with the 5 highest contact volume departments or service areas to understand how enquiries are followed from initial point of contact in Customer Services to other areas of the Council.
- Members will review performance reports for Customer Services, complaints reports, Residents Survey results and other data available in order to analyse effectiveness.

- **Part 2:** Office hours customer contacts

*Consider whether systems and processes can be improved to enhance customer experience, whilst considering cost implications*

This element of the review will be undertaken by having regard to the conclusions of part one and:

- Members will review details of customer experience approaches from other local authority areas. (This information will be collated by the Service Lead- Customer Engagement and Transformation and the Performance, Risk and Consultation Manager.)

- **Part 3:** Out of Hours Emergency Contact Centre and Response

*Consider whether the Council's Out of Hours service offers an effective and consistent customer experience*

This element of the review will be undertaken by:

- Reviewing how customers can contact the council out of hours
- Reviewing the Service areas deemed to require an out of hours response and how this is or could be provided
- Reviewing the on call duty rota arrangements (including budgets) across the Council including those with authority to act on the councils behalf.
- Reviewing how the Emergency Duty Officers escalate an emergency situation out of hours along with key stakeholders.

- **Part 4:**

*Highlight areas of good practice and make recommendations as to how improvements might be made*

Members will collate their findings which will then form the basis of a report to be considered by Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission.

**Review Membership:**

Members of the Task and Finish Group will be agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission on 22 March 2022.

Councillor  
Councillor  
Councillor  
Councillor

**Chairman:****Vice-Chairman:****Scrutiny Officer:****Information Required:**

Contact centre call volume and answering data  
Website visit data  
Service level performance data  
Interviews with officers from service areas within the scope of the review

**Documents/Evidence:**

Residents Survey outcome report (2020 and 2021)  
Quarterly reporting for relevant service areas  
SLA for out of hours service and scope for re-tendering

**Witnesses:** *(Who/Why?)***Measures Available**

Suite of contact centre and website data including survey results, as outlined above

**Desired Outcomes:**

- 1.
- 2.

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OSMC – 22 March 2022

## **Item 9 – Health Scrutiny Committee Update**

Verbal Item

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## WEST BERKSHIRE COUNCIL'S FORWARD PLAN 1 FEBRUARY 2022 - 31 MAY 2022

### The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

1. This document gives 28 clear days' notice of key decisions which the Executive and Individual Executive Members or Officer expect to take.
2. The document is updated as required and is available to the public on the Council's website.
3. The Executive is made up of the Executive Leader, Deputy Leader and seven Executive Members with the following portfolios:

Executive Leader of the Council District Strategy and Communications	Councillor Lynne Doherty
Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing	Councillor Graham Bridgman
Internal Governance, Leisure and Culture	Councillor Howard Woollaston
Finance and Economic Development	Councillor Ross Mackinnon
Planning, Transport & Countryside	Councillor Richard Somner
Children, Young People and Education	Councillor Dominic Boeck
Environment & Waste	Councillor Steve Ardagh-Walter
Adult Social Care	Councillor Joanne Stewart
Housing, Strategic Partnership & Transformation	Councillor Hilary Cole

4. Key decisions are those executive decisions which are likely to result in spending or savings which are "significant" in relation to the budget for the service or function in question, or in terms of the effect on communities living or working in two or more wards or electoral divisions. All contracts above £500,000 require a key decision in accordance with the Constitution.
5. The Regulations and the Council's Constitution provide for urgent key decisions to be made, even though they have not been included in this document in accordance with General Exception and Special Urgency provisions.
6. The Forward Plan will also contain details of intended review activity by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission and its Sub-Committee(s) or another body e.g. Task Group associated with the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission.

7. Copies of the Council's Constitution and agenda and minutes for all meetings of the Council may be accessed on the Council's website.
8. For copies of reports or other documents, and for detailed information regarding specific issues to be considered by the Executive, individual Member or officer please contact the named Lead Officer for the item concerned.
9. For further details on the time of meetings and general information about the Plan please email [executivecycle@westberkshire.gov.uk](mailto:executivecycle@westberkshire.gov.uk) or by writing to the address below.

Publication Date: 1 February 2022

Shiraz Sheikh  
Service Lead  
Legal & Democratic Services  
West Berkshire Council, Council Offices  
Market Street  
Newbury  
RG14 5LD

Decision Due Date	Title	Purpose	Key Decision e.g. Yes/ No	Decision Maker e.g. Executive Individual Decision Officer decision	Consultation e.g. Members including shadow exec members	Background Papers (All Papers are available for inspection via the Lead Officer)	Lead Officer e.g report author	Report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)
10 Feb 2022	Three Year Highway Improvement Plan 2022/23-2024/25	To seek the approval of the Executive member for Planning, Transport and Countryside to implement the draft Three Year Highway Improvement Programme 2022/23 - 2024/25 and proceed with the 2022/23 Improvement Programme.	Yes	Portfolio Holder: Planning, Transport and Countryside	Consultation is not normally undertaken as the programme is based on objective data obtained through technical surveys and developed in accordance with the Council's approved Asset Management Plan. However, any comments received from stakeholders during the previous 12 month period are considered and all Local Ward members and town/parish councils are advised of scheme details in advance of work commencing.		Andrew Reynolds	Open

Decision Due Date	Title	Purpose	Key Decision e.g. Yes/ No	Decision Maker e.g. Executive Individual Decision Officer decision	Consultation e.g. Members including shadow exec members	Background Papers (All Papers are available for inspection via the Lead Officer)	Lead Officer e.g report author	Report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)
					The full approved programme will be published on the Council's website.			
24 Mar 2022	Devolving surplus land adjacent to John O'Gaunt School to Hungerford Town Council	Under the Devolution agenda to transfer surplus land to Hungerford Town Council to develop greater football pitch provision. The decision on the land is important in securing Football Foundation funding of £700k by Hungerford Town Council.	Yes	Executive	Ongoing consultation with Hungerford Town Council on the heads of terms and other aspects of the project.		Richard Turner	Open
24 Mar 2022	Newbury Sports Hub: Provision for replacement	To present the findings from the feasibility studies, options	Yes	Executive	Through the planning process and planning		Jim Sweeting	Open

Decision Due Date	Title	Purpose	Key Decision e.g. Yes/ No	Decision Maker e.g. Executive Individual Decision Officer decision	Consultation e.g. Members including shadow exec members	Background Papers (All Papers are available for inspection via the Lead Officer)	Lead Officer e.g report author	Report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)
	of grass pitch lost at Newbury Rugby Club	for planning and costs for the provision of an additional grass pitch.			notices.			
24 Mar 2022	Pelham House - Supported Living Services for Adults with a Learning Disability	Current contract is due to expire and so a decision is needed to award the new contract.	Yes	Executive	Various meetings have been undertaken with service users and families, existing providers and Adult Social Care.		Rebecca Braithwaite	Fully exempt Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
24 Mar 2022	Northcroft Lido - Award of Contract	To seek agreement for the award of the contract in relation to the Lido project.	Yes	Executive	Full consultations amongst public/local swimming clubs.		Jim Sweeting	Open
24 Mar 2022	Update on the Future Working Arrangements for the Public Protection Partnership	To request members authority to conclude negotiations with Wokingham Borough	Yes	Executive			Sean Murphy	Fully exempt

Decision Due Date	Title	Purpose	Key Decision e.g. Yes/ No	Decision Maker e.g. Executive Individual Decision Officer decision	Consultation e.g. Members including shadow exec members	Background Papers (All Papers are available for inspection via the Lead Officer)	Lead Officer e.g report author	Report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)
		<p>Council and to summarise the financial liabilities for the Council and how they impact on the future operational delivery of the Public Protection Partnership (PPP). To delegate authority to conclude inter authority agreements with Wokingham Borough Council and also separately with Bracknell Forest Council reflecting the updated arrangement of the PPP.</p>						

Decision Due Date	Title	Purpose	Key Decision e.g. Yes/ No	Decision Maker e.g. Executive Individual Decision Officer decision	Consultation e.g. Members including shadow exec members	Background Papers (All Papers are available for inspection via the Lead Officer)	Lead Officer e.g report author	Report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)
24 Mar 2022	West Berkshire Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme (for buses).	To approve West Berkshire's Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme for bus services - in accordance with the National Bus Strategy, Bus Back Better.	Yes	Executive	Monthly Project Team meetings will continue throughout November-March 2021. The Project Team consists of operator representatives , Transport, West Berkshire Learning Disability Partnership Board, Network Management, Environment Delivery and Engaging. TAG meeting - the plan and scheme will be circulated and presented to TAG, prior to the Decision being made. A formal consultation on the proposed EP Plan and		Emma Jameson	Open

Decision Due Date	Title	Purpose	Key Decision e.g. Yes/ No	Decision Maker e.g. Executive Individual Decision Officer decision	Consultation e.g. Members including shadow exec members	Background Papers (All Papers are available for inspection via the Lead Officer)	Lead Officer e.g report author	Report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)
					Scheme will be issued by the Council and open to all residents, bus and non-bus users and organisations.			
24 Mar 2022	Draft Leisure Strategy	To adopt the Council's Leisure Strategy post the consultation exercise.	Yes	Executive			Jude Thomas	Open
31 Mar 2022	Objections received during consultation on speed limit change A4 Bath Road Thatcham	To advise Portfolio Member of Objections received during consultation on proposed speed limit changes.	Yes	Portfolio Holder: Planning, Transport and Countryside	Local ward members, parish and town councils as part of the consultation of draft ID report.		Gareth Dowding	Open
1 Apr 2022	Fostering Allowances Proposal 2022	To propose a new system for foster carer allowances, replacing the existing policy	Yes	Portfolio Holder: Children, Young People and Education			Karl Davis	Open



Decision Due Date	Title	Purpose	Key Decision e.g. Yes/ No	Decision Maker e.g. Executive Individual Decision Officer decision	Consultation e.g. Members including shadow exec members	Background Papers (All Papers are available for inspection via the Lead Officer)	Lead Officer e.g report author	Report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)
		with a new tiered system that includes recognising skill in the remuneration to foster carers.						
7 Apr 2022	Public Rights of Way Case Programmes	To consult on the proposed case programme for public rights of way 2022/23.	No	Portfolio Holder: Planning, Transport and Countryside	Mid		Elaine Cox	Open
28 Apr 2022	Approval to adopt a new First Homes Policy	To brief members on a new affordable housing product 'First Homes' introduced into national policy through a written ministerial statement in May 2021, and to consider West Berkshire policy position on First Homes.	No	Executive	Communicating the draft policy to local stakeholder through the drafting of the policy.		Janet Weekes	Open

Decision Due Date	Title	Purpose	Key Decision e.g. Yes/ No	Decision Maker e.g. Executive Individual Decision Officer decision	Consultation e.g. Members including shadow exec members	Background Papers (All Papers are available for inspection via the Lead Officer)	Lead Officer e.g report author	Report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)
28 Apr 2022	Children & Young Peoples Integrated Therapies (CYPIT)	To award the contract for the supply/provision of the CYPIT Service following a tender process.	Yes	Executive	Procurement has been carried out by Wokingham as lead authority.		Millie Smith	Fully exempt Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

## Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission Work Programme

The following items will be considered in addition to Standing Items (Financial Performance (Quarterly), Key Accountable Performance (Quarterly), New Ways of Working Reviews (ad hoc) and Corporate Programme (annually/ on request))

Last Updated:  
14 March 2022

Item	OSMC Theme	Purpose	Lead Officer	Portfolio Holder/ Lead Member	Pre or post decision?
<b>24 May 2022 (Report Deadline 13 May)</b>					
28	Community Safety	<i>Partnership Effectiveness</i>	Meeting as Crime and Disorder Committee, to receive presentations on and consider: performance of the Building Communities Together Partnership in 2021/22, and their priorities for 2022/23	Nigel Lynn / Zahid Aziz	Applies to all portfolios  OSMC decision
29	Fostering and Adoption Services	<i>Partnership Effectiveness</i>	To consider the effectiveness and value for money of current fostering and adoption services	Pete Campbell / Karl Davis	Children's Services  OSMC decision
30	Effective employee appraisal and the management training and development programme	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To review the Council's current employee appraisal system and management training and development programme.	Sarah Clarke / Paula Goodwin	Internal Governance, Leisure and Culture  OSMC decision
<b>6 September 2022 (Report Deadline 26 August)</b>					
31	Thames Water activities	<i>Partnership Effectiveness</i>	To review Thames Water's investment priorities within West Berkshire for the next five year period.	Thames Water / Jon Winstanley / Stuart Clark	Environment and Waste  OSMC decision
32	Economic Development Strategy - Operational Review	<i>Policy Effectiveness</i>	To review progress in implementing the Economic Development Strategy	Eric Owens / Katharine Makant	Finance and Economic Development  Post decision
33	Covid and Recovery	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To agree Terms of Reference for a Task and Finish Group to look at the lessons learned in response to and recovery from Covid, from the perspectives of residents, service users and businesses.	Joseph Holmes	Leader of the Council  OSMC decision
34	West Berkshire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy	<i>Policy Effectiveness</i>	To review the proposed Flood Risk Strategy for West Berkshire	John Winstanley/ Stuart Clark	Planning and Transport  Pre-Decision
<b>29 November 2022 (Report Deadline 18 November)</b>					
35	Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership	<i>Partnership Effectiveness</i>	To consider the effectiveness of the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership	Eric Owens / Katharine Makant	Finance and Economic Development  OSMC decision
36	Build Back Better	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To consider the anticipated impacts in West Berkshire of the Government's plan for Health and Social Care and the supporting White Paper.	Andy Sharp / Paul Coe	Adult Social Care  Pre-Decision
37	Equalities and Diversity Strategy	<i>Policy Effectiveness</i>	To review the draft Equalities and Diversity Strategy	Sarah Clarke / Pamela Voss	Applies to all portfolios  Pre decision

**7 March 2023 (Report Deadline 24 February)**

**To Be Programmed**

38	Library Review	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To consider the effectiveness of improvements implemented following the review of the Libraries Service.	TBC / Felicity Harrison	Internal Governance, Leisure and Culture	Post-Decision
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**Standing Items**

	Quarterly Capital Financial Performance Report	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	Reports on the under or over spends against the Council's approved capital budget.	Joseph Holmes / Shannon Coleman-Slaughter	Finance and Economic Development	Pre decision
	Quarterly Revenue Financial Performance Report	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To report on the financial performance of the Council's revenue budgets.	Joseph Holmes / Melanie Ellis	Finance and Economic Development	Pre decision
	Annual Key Accountable Performance Measures	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To provide assurance that the core business and council priorities for improvement measures in the Council Strategy 2019-23 are being managed effectively. To highlight successes and where performance has fallen below the expected level, present information on remedial action taken, and the impact of that action	Joseph Holmes / Catalin Bogos	Internal Governance, Leisure and Culture	Pre decision

Key:

- Ensure our vulnerable children and adults achieve better outcomes
- Support everyone to reach their full potential
- Support businesses to start, develop and thrive in West Berkshire
- Develop local infrastructure including housing to support and grow the local economy
- Maintain a green district
- Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnership
- Crime and Disorder Committee