

NOTICE OF MEETING

CABINET

will meet on

Thursday 23 February 2023

at 7.00 pm

in the

Grey Room - York House, Windsor and on [RBWM YouTube](#)

To: Members of Cabinet: Councillors:

Andrew Johnson, Leader of the Council; Growth & Opportunity (Chairman)

Stuart Carroll, Deputy Chairman of Cabinet; Children's Services, Education, Health, Mental Health, & Transformation (Vice-Chairman)

David Cannon, Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime, and Public Protection

David Coppinger, Adult Social Care & Maidenhead

Samantha Rayner, Deputy Leader of the Council; Business, Corporate & Residents Services, Culture & Heritage, & Windsor

Phil Haseler, Planning, Parking, Highways & Transport

David Hilton, Asset Management & Commercialisation, Finance, & Ascot

Donna Stimson, Climate Action & Sustainability

Ross McWilliams, Digital Connectivity, Housing Opportunity, & Sport & Leisure

Gurpreet Bhangra, Environmental Services, Parks and Countryside

Kirsty Hunt – Electoral and Democratic Services - Issued: Wednesday 15 February 2023

Members of the Press and Public are welcome to attend Part I of this meeting. The agenda is available on the Council's web site at www.rbwm.gov.uk or contact **Kirsty Hunt** kirsty.hunt@rbwm.gov.uk

Recording of Meetings – In line with the council's commitment to transparency the Part I (public) section of the virtual meeting will be streamed live and recorded via Zoom. By participating in the meeting by audio and/or video, you are giving consent to being recorded and acknowledge that the recording will be in the public domain. If you have any questions regarding the council's policy, please speak to Democratic Services or Legal representative at the meeting.

AGENDA

Part I

<u>Item</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Page no</u>
1.	<u>Apologies for Absence</u> To receive any apologies for absence	
2.	<u>Declarations of Interest</u> To receive any declarations of interest	5 - 6
3.	<u>Minutes</u> To consider the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 9 February 2023 as a true and accurate record.	7 - 14
4.	<u>Appointments</u> To consider any appointments as appropriate.	
5.	<u>Forward Plan</u> To consider the Forward Plan for the period March to June 2023.	15 - 30

Cabinet Members' Reports

<u>Item</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Page No</u>
6.	<u>Electric Vehicle Chargepoint Implementation Plan</u> Planning, Parking, Highways & Transport To consider the feedback from the public consultation and approve the Electric Vehicle Charge Point Implementation Plan.	31 - 46
7.	<u>Vision for Windsor</u> Growth & Opportunity To approve & adopt the Vision for Windsor, note the progress made within the report and authorises delegation to the Executive Director of Place to proceed with the preparation of a full working plan and Programme Management including a set of task and finish groups.	47 - 138

8.	<u>Achieving for Children (AfC) Reserved Ownership Decisions</u> Children’s Services, Education, Health, Mental Health, & Transformation To approve the following reserved matters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Approval of the Company’s strategic direction through the adoption of the updated Business Plan and Medium-Term Financial Strategy ● Approval of the Company's budget for 2023/24 ● Approval of the Company's arrangements for managing cash flow through the adoption of the Financial Plan (known as the Treasury Plan) for 2023/24 ● To brief the committee on the proposed procurement route for a new temporary worker contract and agree how a new provider will be appointed. 	139 - 208
9.	<u>Datchet Neighbourhood Plan Referendum</u> Planning, Parking, Highways & Transport To agree to act upon the recommendations of the Examiner’s Report on the draft Datchet Neighbourhood Plan, accept the recommended modifications and proceed to a referendum.	209 - 262

MEMBERS' GUIDE TO DECLARING INTERESTS AT MEETINGS

Disclosure at Meetings

If a Member has not disclosed an interest in their Register of Interests, they **must make** the declaration of interest at the beginning of the meeting, or as soon as they are aware that they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) or Other Registerable Interest. If a Member has already disclosed the interest in their Register of Interests they are still required to disclose this in the meeting if it relates to the matter being discussed.

Any Member with concerns about the nature of their interest should consult the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.

Non-participation in case of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI)

Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to one of your DPIs (summary below, further details set out in Table 1 of the Members' Code of Conduct) you must disclose the interest, **not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room** unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest' (as agreed in advance by the Monitoring Officer), you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest. Dispensation may be granted by the Monitoring Officer in limited circumstances, to enable you to participate and vote on a matter in which you have a DPI.

Where you have a DPI on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet Member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it.

DPIs (relating to the Member or their partner) include:

- *Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.*
- *Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses*
- *Any contract under which goods and services are to be provided/works to be executed which has not been fully discharged.*
- *Any beneficial interest in land within the area of the council.*
- *Any licence to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer.*
- *Any tenancy where the landlord is the council, and the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest in the securities of.*
- *Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where:*
 - a) *that body has a place of business or land in the area of the council, and*
 - b) *either (i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body or (ii) the total nominal value of the shares of any one class belonging to the relevant person exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.*

Any Member who is unsure if their interest falls within any of the above legal definitions should seek advice from the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.

Disclosure of Other Registerable Interests

Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to one of your Other Registerable Interests (summary below and as set out in Table 2 of the Members Code of Conduct), you must disclose the interest. **You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.** If it is a 'sensitive interest' (as agreed in advance by the Monitoring Officer), you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Other Registerable Interests:

- a) *any unpaid directorships*
 - b) *any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority*
 - c) *any body*
 - (i) *exercising functions of a public nature*
 - (ii) *directed to charitable purposes or*
 - (iii) *one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)*
- of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management*

Disclosure of Non- Registerable Interests

Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to your financial interest or well-being (and is not a DPI) or a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate, or a body included under Other Registerable Interests in Table 2 you must disclose the interest. **You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting** but otherwise **must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation**. If it is a 'sensitive interest' (agreed in advance by the Monitoring Officer) you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Where a matter arises at a meeting which **affects** –

- a. your own financial interest or well-being;
- b. a financial interest or well-being of a friend, relative, close associate; or
- c. a financial interest or well-being of a body included under Other Registerable Interests as set out in Table 2 (as set out above and in the Members' code of Conduct)

you must disclose the interest. In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied.

Where a matter (referred to in the paragraph above) **affects** the financial interest or well-being:

- a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
- b. a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise **must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation**. If it is a 'sensitive interest' (agreed in advance by the Monitoring Officer, you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Other declarations

Members may wish to declare at the beginning of the meeting any other information they feel should be in the public domain in relation to an item on the agenda; such Member statements will be included in the minutes for transparency.

Agenda Item 3

CABINET

THURSDAY 9 FEBRUARY 2023

PRESENT: Councillors Andrew Johnson (Leader of the Council; Growth & Opportunity) (Chairman), Stuart Carroll (Deputy Chairman of Cabinet; Children's Services, Education, Health, Mental Health, & Transformation) (Vice-Chairman), David Cannon (Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime, and Public Protection), David Coppinger (Adult Social Care & Maidenhead), Samantha Rayner (Deputy Leader of the Council; Business, Corporate & Residents Services, Culture & Heritage, & Windsor), Phil Haseler (Planning, Parking, Highways & Transport), David Hilton (Asset Management & Commercialisation, Finance, & Ascot), Donna Stimson (Climate Action & Sustainability), Ross McWilliams (Digital Connectivity, Housing Opportunity, & Sport & Leisure) and Gurpreet Bhangra (Environmental Services, Parks and Countryside)

Also in attendance virtually: Councillors Bond, Brar, L Jones, Knowles, Larcombe, Price, Sharpe and Tisi

Officers: Adele Taylor, Kevin McDaniel, Andrew Durrant and Andrew Vallance

Officers in attendance virtually: Emma Duncan, Rebecca Hatch and Julian McGowan

Apologies for absence

There were none received.

Declarations of Interest

There were none noted.

Minutes

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY that the minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2023 were approved.

Appointments

There were none to be considered.

Forward Plan

Cabinet noted the Forward Plan for the next four months and there were no amendments to be noted.

Budget 2023-24

Cabinet considered the report regarding the proposed 2023/24 budget.

Councillor Hilton, Cabinet Member for Asset Management & Commercialisation, Finance, & Ascot presented the proposed budget to Cabinet. There were eight appendices that set out the financial plans for the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, its net budget requirement and associated Council Tax level for 2023/24.

Cabinet had considered the draft Revenue Budget and draft Capital programme on the 1 December 2022 and agreed to a public consultation to run until the end of January 2023. The

results of that consultation were included within the report. Councillor Hilton focused on new elements within the report and significant changes to the revenue budget, driven by the final grant settlement that was issued after the draft budget was published:

- He acknowledged that there had been a significant focus on parking charges when Fees and charges were reviewed by Corporate Overview & Scrutiny.
- The Capital budget and Capital strategy were unchanged. He noted the budget, increasingly funded by S106 and CIL, included a full Highways capital programme with £5.2M for Highways including roads resurfacing, patching and pothole repairs, footway repairs, drainage schemes and highway safety.
- There were investments in the borough's schools including £3.4M to increase provision for Special Education Needs.
- The Council was investing in new systems that would improve the management and quality of services. £500K would be invested in a replacement customer relationship management system, £1.1M in a children's social care system and £1M in a new Adult Social Care system which would enable the Council to implement Care Reforms from October.
- The total capital programme was nearly £40m and included slippages from 2022/23, schemes approved by Council in previous years, fully funded schemes and corporately funded essential schemes.
- The Treasury Management Strategy (appendix 4 of the agenda report) had been reviewed and endorsed by the Audit and Governance Committee in October 2022. He highlighted that the capital cash flow report showed that from 2025/26 there was a continuous decline in borrowing.
- The policy set out in appendix 5 of the agenda report covered all aspects of pay from the salary bands of chief officers, the number of employees by salary bands, the ratio of the lowest salary to the highest, expenses and benefits. Councillor Hilton noted that the Council must publish a pay policy statement by 31 March 2023, which had been approved by Council.
- He advised the meeting that the council operates a Local Pay Agreement and determines any pay award annually as part of its budget setting process which was set out in appendix 6. The paper responded to the local pay claim from UNISON and GMB Unions for 2023/24. The proposal for staff, who serve the borough's residents well, was a two-year settlement with a pay award of 4% in 2023 and 3% in 2024. He confirmed that a 4% increase would ensure that the lowest paid staff would be paid above the national living wage.
- Councillor Hilton thanked all residents and businesses who responded to the consultation and Councillors who attended scrutiny sessions for their input.
- He observed that despite roughly 90% of respondents not using Adults, Children's or Housing Services in the past year and 75% saying the proposals would have no impact on their families there was general agreement with the council prioritising care for the most vulnerable in the community.
- He advised that an additional £500K has been allocated to Adult Social Care in order to take out the saving in relation to charging for Meals on Wheels delivery, policies for accessing social care and in Optalis, staff retention.
- He advised an additional £670K has been allocated to Children's services to reduce the saving on Family Hubs by £400K but also to remove the saving in the Youth Offending Team and workforce retention Initiatives.
- He noted that residents had raised concerns over the cost of parking and in response, he confirmed that free Sunday parking would be retained in Maidenhead and an additional £124K had also been made available to expand 1-hour free parking for residents at Victoria Street in Windsor and Hines Meadow in Maidenhead.
- He acknowledged that there had been public concerns, which was shared by the Council, on the impact of air quality in the borough. This would be addressed by allocating an additional £94K for air quality monitoring.
- He addressed the concerns raised over the funding of the Climate Partnership stating they were unfounded. He confirmed that the amount of money being provided to the

- Climate Partnership would remain as previously agreed as climate change continued to be a high priority for residents and the Council. He reflected that the Climate Partnership had been promoted in order to bring many organisations together and collectively achieve much more than the Council alone.
- Councillor Hilton noted a variety of consultation responses that highlighted concerns about the environment, the importance of green spaces in the borough, and the impact of development. There were a smaller number of concerns about the state of roads, the state of shared public spaces, and the need for additional police or community wardens. In response he confirmed that additional investment would be made to ensure the Royal Borough remained a well-maintained community, an additional £100K funding was proposed for fly tipping, an addition £200K would be made available for street cleansing and to better manage the Borough, £200K for the provision of four Environmental Enforcement Officers.
 - He reported that the Council planned to manage concerns over community safety by funding four additional neighbourhood police officers who would be dedicated to the Borough. He stated that this was supported by residents spoken to on the doorstep.
 - Councillor Hilton emphasised that the three main towns of Maidenhead, Windsor & Ascot were critical to the Council's economic growth. He stated that it was essential that a high-quality experience was offered to both residents and visitors and therefore £150K was being invested for a 'face-lift' for those town centres. It was planned to remove street clutter, renew old planters with sustainable planting, clear 'Grot Spots' and improve signage and wayfinding around the towns.
 - He reflected that previous budgets had been constrained by the difficult financial situation caused by Covid but through sound financial management this year it was pleasing to deliver a truly resident's budget.
 - He reported that in the interests of financial prudence £1M would be put into the general reserve.
 - He acknowledged that as many of the Council's services were demand led and the Council was operating within a rapidly changing world which could cause volatility in Council finances. He considered that through the financial competence shown by officers and Cabinet members this had enabled the current administration to manage that volatility.
 - He concluded by thanking all the officers involved but particularly the Director of Resources, Head of Finance and the finance team for their incredible contribution.

Councillor Johnson, Leader of the Council seconded the proposals but reserved the right to speak.

Councillor Cannon commented that this was a resident led budget and within his area residents had raised concerns regarding crime and antisocial behaviour. This had been responded to by additional environmental enforcement officers. He supported the proposal for four additional police officers being funded who would remain within the borough tasked jointly by the Council and Thames Valley Police to address residents' concerns. The additional officers would be seen on borough streets from April dealing with matters raised by residents. He advised that to assist the identification of those tasking priorities a Crime and Antisocial Behaviour Summit was being arranged for residents and businesses to work with Thames Valley Police and officers from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. He reflected that the additional £94K for air monitoring demonstrated the Council listening to concerns of residents and the data collected would help the Council make informed decisions. He concluded that his portfolio had been supported and this was a budget that they could all support.

Councillor Johnson commented that he welcomed the funding of frontline police officers as it was a clear response to the needs and feedback received from residents. He noted that RBWM was one of a number of local authorities who had decided to invest in additional police resourcing.

Councillor Rayner commented that she was proud that final budget was delivering such a budget for residents, endorsed the work and direction the administration had taken in supporting Northern Farm and North Court which provided outstanding culture and arts for residents. She hoped to be able to continue that investment for all ages. In addition to comments already made she reflected that having four additional police officers would support the policing for Windsor which as a tourist destination of Windsor town with a thriving night time economy would give people reassurance and help the local economies grow rather than be an additional policing burden. She welcomed the free parking in the Victoria Street car park from 1 April and hoped this would encourage more people to come to Windsor. She was pleased that more money was being spent on street cleaning and flowers which made such a difference to how people saw and experienced the borough's towns. She emphasised that Windsor had been broadcast around the world and was amazing staging for the country. She was proud that the proposals included 7% pay increase over two years for the council's staff who she considered were hard working, passionate people delivering amazing services and changing the organisation through its services, transformation and digital. She reiterated that the collection of air quality monitoring data would support future decision making. She concluded by thanking Councillor Hilton as this was his last budget and the finance officers.

Councillor Bhangra agreed with comments made by his Cabinet colleagues and referred to the proposals as being a residents' budget. He added that within his own portfolio he'd been pleased to see the continuation of weekly food waste and recycling collections and biweekly waste collection. He reported that the Council was setting up a reuse shop in Recycling and Refuse Centre to help cut down waste and was pleased to see the visual environment was being improved with street cleaning. He concluded by thanking the finance officers and Councillor Hilton for putting the budget together, listening to residents and proposing a fully costed balanced budget.

Councillor Coppinger commented that he was always surprised by the amount of money spent on Adult Services, 38.2% of total income, yet acknowledged it was an unknown area by the majority of residents who only became aware of it when affected by its services. He stated that the Council continued to provide amazing services with its partner Optalis across the whole borough and he was proud to be responsible for his portfolio.

Councillor Haseler comments focused on the budget headlines within his portfolio. He noted that funding was being made available for car parking improvements to make the experience more pleasurable including free Sunday parking to continue in Maidenhead and extending residents' car parking discount scheme. He noted that there were investments in highways for a comprehensive resurfacing programme of roads and pavements with replacement of streetlights, street signs and street furniture. He stated that there would be funding for road safety schemes with continued investment in local cycling, walking and infrastructure schemes. He reiterated the addition of four environmental enforcement officers to deliver a zero-tolerance approach towards those crimes. He highlighted funding for proactive tree work to ensure that the borough's trees were maintained and safe for residents. He reiterated the visual improvements in the three town centres. He was really pleased that officers working within his portfolio had pushed for this funding and thanked finance officers for delivering a balanced budget.

Councillor Johnson commented that it was fantastic to be able to finally invest funding in Councillor Haseler's portfolio including planning capacity, highways, parking and broader sustainable transport.

Councillor McWilliams reflected that the administration had repeatedly delivered balanced budgets and surpluses each year, building up the Council's reserves whilst investing in services and keeping council tax low. He noted that near neighbours had seen an increase of 10 and 15% to council tax costs. He reiterated the plans to reduce borrowing and debt levels whilst delivering key services which were important to residents as previously listed. He had been proud of the work officers had done and of the difficult decisions the administration had made to ensure the financial stability of the council whilst maintaining services.

The Chair advised that there were two members of the public who had registered to address Cabinet and he welcomed them to speak.

Andrew Hill addressed the meeting focusing on the top priorities arising from the residents' budget consultation which were parking, climate partnership funding and the environment. He commented that these top priorities were receiving less revenue funding than those lower down in the priorities identified. He suggested that if opposite parties were able to they would switch the budget allocations around. He stated that the budget indicated that the Police and Crime Commissioner had failed to deliver safe streets under his Crime Plan and queried why additional Community Wardens were not being invested in as promised in previous elections. He queried the continued expenditure for the River Thames scheme set out on page 147 of the agenda report. He sought clarification of the medium-term risk set out on page 59 of the agenda relating to Council's partners and contractors. He asked how much had been set aside to manage repairs and maintain the Nicholsons Car park. In relation to the additional air quality monitors he asked why Maidenhead was not having one installed. He highlighted the use of the phrase 'review of savings' stating that this was uncosted. He asked if the Council had budgeted for the skillset the Council needed such as contract managers. As the budget had changed since it was discussed at scrutiny he queried whether opposition members would be given the opportunity to ask questions.

The Chair thanked Andrew Hill for his political speech and questions but was concerned to hear his comments on the proposals for fully warranted officers to deal with crimes. He stated that the budget contained service led savings, the Council had responded and reflected on numerous conversations with residents, businesses and partners. He reflected that the Chief Executives appointment and salary was a cross party basis. He concluded that the Council would have had more money to spend on those priority areas if it had not needed to respond to unnecessary legal challenges.

Paul Hinton addressed the meeting on behalf of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Climate Emergency Coalition. He raised concerns about the proposed savings of £180K achieved by using the carbon offsetting and biodiversity net gain fund or S106 payments rather than the revenue budget and included 'PLA17S' which is £100K saving against the support of the Climate Partnership. The S106 payments are meant to remedy damage made by developments in addition to not instead of projects delivered by the Climate partnership or the Council. He stated that the savings equated to a reduced commitment of £180k to environment and climate change, to the Council's own Environment and Climate Strategy and to its Corporate Plan. The Coalition had asked at scrutiny meetings what had been done to provide additional resources to avoid the need for the savings and did not consider they had received satisfactory answers. The Coalition had been encouraged to see £3.5M in additional funding being reported and had written to Councillor Johnson to ask if the savings could be reversed but had not received a response. He concluded by asking the Cabinet to reject the proposed budget in favour of one where savings were not achieved by using S106 funding but instead by the additional funding received. He stated that this only required 5% of the additional funding and the environment and climate change were supposedly one of the Council's top three priorities.

The Chair thanked Paul Hinton for his speech and for articulating the concerns of the people he was representing. He confirmed that his email had been read and discussed. He acknowledged that Cabinet was having to make some difficult decisions, reflecting fact was created by this council, to the detriment of other, given the other priorities we are comfortable will enable partnership some opportunities and leverage private sector funding and enable us to achieve that

Due to technical issues the meeting was adjourned at 19:44

The meeting recommenced at 19:46

Councillor Johnson, reiterated his initial response to Paul Hinton and thanked him again for his contribution.

Councillor Stimson commented that it was a difficult budget. She thanked Cabinet colleagues for the reduction in her portfolio scope to reflect the magnitude of Climate Action & Sustainability. She noted that the development of the energy efficiency statement had resulted in significant funding. She considered that the Council was working closely with partners to deliver above and beyond existing standards. She reflected that she was being pragmatic about the requirements within the budget to deliver what residents' want and met fundamental statutory responsibilities such as adult social care, schools funding and children's social care. She responded to the comments made by concluding that the Council was doing an extraordinary amount including delivering against the single use action plan, holding suppliers to account and had increased the number of officers working in this area.

Councillor Carroll thanked Councillor Hilton stating that it was an excellent budget in difficult international circumstances and the consequences from the pandemic. He reiterated the principles behind the budget which was putting residents first. He commented that public consultation was not just responses through the formal consultation but all councillors listening to residents, replying to social media and discussions held on the doorstep. He acknowledged those discussions were not captured in the statistics data but stated they were just as valid when looking at themes. He stated that it was important to remind themselves of the challenges that people were going through. He reflected that the balanced budget demonstrated that the administration's financial strategy had been one of sound money and sometimes making tough choices and that this had delivered competency and rigorous focus. He asked the meeting to consider adult social care, improved look at health, preventative activities and transparency. He commented that this was a credit to officers and Councillor Hilton. He stated it was not fair to say that the local police force was failing adding that he worked closely with Matthew Barber, met with range of officers and responded to issues. He commented that within his ward residents wanted officers who had the legal warranted ability to respond to issues. He reported that he had asked the Police and Crime Commissioner what the police were doing to restore national trust and said they were facing the recurrent issues of organised crime, domestic abuse and felt he deserved support for the approach rather than criticism. He stated that lobbying and advocacy had been undertaken to receive additional funding and it would be used to ensure that the Early Hub was restored, Youth Offending Service was restored and have business support staff. He concluded that if £1 was spent in one area then it could not be spent elsewhere and considered the Council was collectively doing the right thing for residents.

Councillor Johnson thanked Councillor Hilton for all his hard work and support over the last three and a half years while he had acted as Leader of the Council. He reflected that they had made progress and made a significant difference to the financial future of the Council. He reiterated the repeated delivery of underspends and setting of balanced budgets with reserves being nearly doubled during his time as Leader and nearly in the position of having optimum levels of reserves. He noted it was the third year in a row when hard working staff would be given a much-needed pay rise. He stated that they had consulted, engaged and listened to residents. He noted that four budget scrutiny meetings had been held over 16 hours of in depth scrutiny with lead officers and elected members being held to account. He commented that the Council was retaining car parks rather than developing flats, were investing in the climate partnership, focused on attracting and retaining business partnerships as acknowledged the growth potential of the borough was significant. He acknowledged that within the residents' survey only 52% of respondents thought the Council offered value for money and he wanted to drive this forward. He considered that the budget made huge commitments to protecting the most vulnerable and the new approach to tackling crime through investment in additional neighbourhood police officers. He noted the investment in the highways infrastructure and road safety, cracking down on environmental crimes and tackling congestion. He recognised the future housing opportunities and deployment of resources to tackle rogue landlords and deliver local housing for local people. Extending the residents parking discount scheme was highlighted now it was financially possible to do so. He was

aiming for the Council to be a vanguard authority for public engagement. He commented on the commitment to tackling climate change and investing heavily for extreme weather events such as flooding. He concluded by stating this was an investment budget of opportunity and ready to take the Council forward for the next 4 years. He thanked everyone that had contributed to the consultation and members of Overview and Scrutiny for their time and considerations at those meetings.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

Appendix 1 – Revenue Budget

That Cabinet considered and recommends that Council approves:

- i) The 2023/24 Net Budget of £108.075m, consisting of:
 - a. The proposed new growth in service budgets of £10.558m as set out in Annex C to Appendix 1;
 - b. The proposed new opportunities and savings of £10.923m as set out in Annex D to Appendix 1;
 - c. The associated contribution from Earmarked Reserves of £0.165m, and the level of contingency as £2.380m as set out in paragraph 5.23
- ii) Council Tax:
 - a. A Council Tax Requirement of £87.222m.
 - b. A Band D charge of £1,223.11 for the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead in 2023/24, reflecting an overall increase of 4.99%, based on:
 - i. A 2.99% increase in base Council Tax taking the charge to £1,060.73 for 2023/24;
 - ii. An additional 2% to reflect an increase in the Adult Social Care Precept which is proposed as £162.38;
 - c. The Special Expenses Precept increases by £1.03 (2.98%) to £35.60 for 2023/24 for the unparished areas of Windsor and Maidenhead in accordance with Section 35 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as set out in Annex E to Appendix 1;
- iii) Schools Budget:
 - a. The allocation of the £152.201m Dedicated Schools Grant as set out in Annex F to Appendix 1, and delegated authority be given to the Executive Director of People and the S151 officer in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Finance and for Children’s Services, Education, Health, Mental Health and Transformation to amend the total schools’ budget to reflect the actual Dedicated Schools Grant levels once received;
- iv) Delegated authority to the Grants Panel to award community grants (capital and Kidwells Trust) for the 2023/24 annual round and publish the decisions following the Grants Panel.

Appendix 2 – Fees and Charges

That Cabinet considers and recommends that Council approves:

- i) The Fees and Charges for 2023/24 as set out in Annex A to Appendix 2.
- ii) Delegated authority is extended to the Executive Director for People, in liaison with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Maidenhead, to set the Direct Payments Standard Rate.

Appendix 3 – Capital

That Cabinet considers and recommends that Council approves:

- i) The Capital Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26 as set out in Annex A to Appendix 3 of this

report. A draft was considered by Audit and Governance Committee on 20th October 2022.

- ii) The consolidated Capital Programme for 2022/23 – 2025/26 in Annex B1-3 to Appendix 3 of this report, including previously approved schemes and proposed new schemes as set out in Annexes B4 & B5 to Appendix 3 of this report.
- iii) Capital programme slippage to date from 2022/23 to 2023/24 as detailed in Annex B6 to Appendix 3.

Appendix 4 – Treasury Management

That Cabinet considers and recommends that Council approves:

- i) The Council’s Treasury Management Strategy for 2023/24 as set out in Appendix 4 of this report, including
 - a. The proposed Lending Counterparty Criteria;
 - b. the continuation of the current Minimum Revenue Provision Policy for 2023/24. A draft was considered by Audit and Governance Committee on 20th October 2022.
- ii) The Council’s Treasury Management Policies as set out in Annex B to Appendix 4 of the agenda report;
- iii) The Council’s Prudential Indicators as set out in Annex C to Appendix 4 of the agenda report

Appendix 5 – Pay Policy Statement

That Cabinet considers and recommends that Council approves:

- i) The Council’s updated Pay Policy Statement Strategy for 2023/24 as set out in Appendix 5 of this report.

Appendix 6 – Proposed Pay Award

That Cabinet considers and recommends that Council approves:

- i) Pay awards of 4% from 1 April 2023, and 3% from 1 April 2024, for all staff paid on RBWM local pay scales.
- ii) An increase in Members’ Allowances of 4% from 1 April 2023, and 3% from 1 April 2024, in line with the employee pay award, as required by Section 17 of the Members’ Allowances Scheme.

Appendix 7 – Feedback from Public Consultation/Overview and Scrutiny Panels

That Cabinet considers and has due regard to the contents of Appendix 7 and recommends that Council also gives it due regard.

Appendix 8 – Equalities Impact Assessments

That Cabinet considers and has due regard to the contents of Appendix 8 and recommends that Council also gives it due regard.

The meeting, which began at 7.00 pm, finished at 8.12 pm

CHAIR.....

DATE.....

FORWARD PLAN OF CABINET DECISIONS


All enquiries, including representations, about any of the items listed below should be made in the first instance to Democratic Services, Town Hall, St Ives Road, Maidenhead. Email: democratic.services@rbwm.gov.uk

FORWARD PLAN

ITEM	Private Meeting - contains exempt/confidential information? See categories below.	Short Description	Key Decision, Council or other?	REPORTING MEMBER (to whom representations should be made)	REPORTING OFFICER / DIRECTOR (to whom representations should be made)	Consultation (please specify consultees, dates (to and from) and form of consultation), including other meetings	Date and name of meeting	Date of Council decision (if required)
Electric Vehicle Chargepoint Implementation Plan	Open -	Presents a plan for scaling up electric vehicle chargepoint provision in the borough, to keep ahead of growing consumer demand for electric vehicles and to help bring down carbon emissions. This final plan reflects the feedback from a public consultation. The report seeks approval for the policies in the plan to be adopted, and the actions implemented.	Yes	Cabinet Member for Planning, Parking, Highways & Transport (Councillor Phil Haseler)	Chris Joyce	Public consultation	Cabinet 23 Feb 2023	
A Vision for	Open -	A review of current	Yes	Deputy Leader of the		Public engagement	Cabinet	

Agenda Item 5

N.B. All documents to be used by the decision maker to be listed in the report to Cabinet

ITEM	Private Meeting - contains exempt/confidential information? See categories below	Short Description	Key Decision, Council or other?	REPORTING MEMBER (to whom representations should be made)	REPORTING OFFICER / DIRECTOR (to whom representations should be made)	Consultation (please specify consultees, dates (to and from) and form of consultation), including other meetings.	Date and name of meeting	Date of Council decision (if required)
Windsor		progress featuring end stage summary of vision statement engagement process. Potential options and recommendations for next steps will be presented and approval sought to proceed to next stage.		Council & Cabinet Member for Business, Corporate & Residents Services, Culture & Heritage, & Windsor (Councillor Samantha Rayner)	Andrew Durrant	through several workshops, drop-in sessions and public survey	23 Feb 2023	
 Achieving for Children Annual Reserved Ownership Decisions	Open -	As a joint owner of Achieving for Children CIC the Royal Borough is responsible for agreeing the 2023/24 budget for Achieving for Children, the refresh of the Business Plan, the 2023/24 Treasury Plan and a number of procurement decisions.	Yes	Deputy Chairman of Cabinet & Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education, Health, Mental Health, & Transformation (Councillor Stuart Carroll)	Kevin McDaniel	Discussions with key councillors, officers and budget consultation	Cabinet 23 Feb 2023	
Datchet Neighbourhood Plan Referendum	Open -	This report seeks approval for the Datchet Neighbourhood	No	Cabinet Member for Planning, Parking, Highways & Transport (Councillor Phil Haseler)	Andrew Durrant, Ian Motuel, Adrien Waite	Internal process	Cabinet 23 Feb 2023	

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		Plan to proceed to referendum at the earliest practicable opportunity.						
17	Open -	To complete the delegation from Cabinet on 26 November 2020 which approved the release of land and delegated authority to Executive Director of Place, to negotiate draft agreement for lease, for 999 years at a peppercorn rent.	Yes	Cabinet Member for Planning, Parking, Highways & Transport (Councillor Phil Haseler)	Andrew Durrant	Public consultation under Section 123(2A) of the Local Government Act 1972	Executive Director of Place Services 9 Mar 2023	
Customer Relationship Management software - procurement and award process	Fully exempt - 3	To request approval to commence procurement and delegate authority to award the contract to the Executive Director of Resources in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member for the customer relationship	Yes	Deputy Leader of the Council & Cabinet Member for Business, Corporate & Residents Services, Culture & Heritage, & Windsor (Councillor Samantha Rayner)	Nikki Craig, Adele Taylor	Internal process	Cabinet Transformation Sub Committee 15 Mar 2023	

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		management software.						
18 Building Height and Tall Buildings Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)	Open -	There is a requirement within the adopted Borough Local Plan for the preparation of a new Building Height and Tall Building Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to support Policy QP3a. This report seeks approval for the adoption of the draft Building Height and Tall Buildings SPD.	Yes	Cabinet Member for Planning, Parking, Highways & Transport (Councillor Phil Haseler)	Andrew Durrant, Adrien Waite	Internal process	Cabinet 30 Mar 2023	
Disabled Facilities Grant Policy	Open -	Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's) provide funding to improve accessibility and enable people to remain living independently in their own homes. This policy will set out the mandatory	No	Cabinet Member for Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime, and Public Protection (Councillor David Cannon), Cabinet Member for Digital Connectivity, Housing Opportunity, & Sport & Leisure (Councillor Ross McWilliams)	Emma Congerton, Tracy Hendren	Formal consultation with all partner agencies	Cabinet 30 Mar 2023	

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ITEM	Private Meeting - contains exempt/confidential information? See categories below	Short Description	Key Decision, Council or other?	REPORTING MEMBER (to whom representations should be made)	REPORTING OFFICER / DIRECTOR (to whom representations should be made)	Consultation (please specify consultees, dates (to and from) and form of consultation), including other meetings.	Date and name of meeting	Date of Council decision (if required)
		legal framework for DFGs, and how the Council intends to use its powers under the RRO to provide interventions to promote independent living and wellbeing.						
2023/24 School Condition Works Programme	Open -	This report proposes the schemes to be funded in 2023/24 using the School Condition Allocation. This funding is used to maintain the sites and buildings of community and voluntary controlled schools.	No	Deputy Chairman of Cabinet & Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education, Health, Mental Health, & Transformation (Councillor Stuart Carroll)	Kevin McDaniel	Internal process	Cabinet 30 Mar 2023	
Allocations Policy	Open -	The allocation policy sets out our priorities for how social rented housing in The Royal Borough will be allocated, and the guidelines which determine entitlement and	No	Cabinet Member for Digital Connectivity, Housing Opportunity, & Sport & Leisure (Councillor Ross McWilliams)	Tracy Hendren	Formal consultation with all partner agencies	Cabinet 30 Mar 2023	

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20		eligibility to that housing for people living in the borough. It also explains what help people can expect from us in meeting their housing needs and sets out the system and processes by which we make nominations for housing owned and managed by our partner registered providers.						
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Capital Strategy	Open -	This report provides a draft SEND and AP Capital Strategy, following public consultation on a number of proposals to be included.	No	Deputy Chairman of Cabinet & Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education, Health, Mental Health, & Transformation (Councillor Stuart Carroll)	Kevin McDaniel	Internal process	Cabinet 30 Mar 2023	
Standards and Quality of Education in Royal Borough schools	Open -	Annual report on progress against the outcomes set by cabinet that highlights overall performance of all	No	Deputy Chairman of Cabinet & Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education, Health, Mental Health, & Transformation	Kevin McDaniel	Internal process	Cabinet 30 Mar 2023	

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		pupils in the academic year including the attainment of disadvantaged pupils		(Councillor Stuart Carroll)				
21 RBWM Sport and Leisure Strategy - Update and Refresh 2022-23	Open -	To present the draft updated Sport and Leisure Strategy for RBWM, following the work undertaken with a range of stakeholders to inform the refresh strategy.	Yes	Cabinet Member for Digital Connectivity, Housing Opportunity, & Sport & Leisure (Councillor Ross McWilliams)	Andrew Durrant	TBC	Cabinet 30 Mar 2023	
Finance Update	Open -	Latest finance update	Yes	Cabinet Member for Asset Management & Commercialisation, Finance, & Ascot (Councillor David Hilton)	Andrew Vallance	Internal process	Cabinet 30 Mar 2023	
Lower Mount Farm (Cannondown Road) Stakeholder Masterplan Document	Open -	The report explains the adopted Borough Local Plan requirement for the preparation of Stakeholder Masterplan Documents and summarises the process and outcomes specifically in relation to the	No	Cabinet Member for Planning, Parking, Highways & Transport (Councillor Phil Haseler)	Andrew Durrant, Adrien Waite	Internal process	Cabinet 30 Mar 2023	

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ITEM	Private Meeting - contains exempt/confidential information? See categories below	Short Description	Key Decision, Council or other?	REPORTING MEMBER (to whom representations should be made)	REPORTING OFFICER / DIRECTOR (to whom representations should be made)	Consultation (please specify consultees, dates (to and from) and form of consultation), including other meetings.	Date and name of meeting	Date of Council decision (if required)
22		Stakeholder Masterplan Document for Lower Mount Farm (Cannondown Road), Cookham. The report recommends that Cabinet approves the Lower Mount Farm (Cannondown Road) Stakeholder Masterplan Document.						
Swayer's Close Stakeholder Masterplan Document	Open -	The report explains the adopted Borough Local Plan requirement for the preparation of Stakeholder Masterplan Documents (SMD) and summarises the process and outcomes specifically in relation to the Stakeholder Masterplan Document for Sawyer's Close,	No	Cabinet Member for Planning, Parking, Highways & Transport (Councillor Phil Haseler)	Andrew Durrant, Adrien Waite	Internal process	Cabinet 30 Mar 2023	

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		Windsor. The report recommends that Cabinet approves the Sawyer's Close Stakeholder Masterplan Document.						
New Shared Service Agreement for the commissioning of Joint Legal Services (JLT)	Open -	A new Shared Service Agreement (a recommendation from the 2019 review) will form the basis on which Joint Legal Team (JLT) is provided by Reading and purchased by the Partners, including the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead	Yes	Deputy Chairman of Cabinet & Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education, Health, Mental Health, & Transformation (Councillor Stuart Carroll)	Lin Ferguson, Kevin McDaniel	Internal process	Cabinet 30 Mar 2023	
Borough Wide Heritage Strategy and Action Plan Update	Open -	On 25th April 2019 Cabinet approved a brief for the project and the appointment of a consultant. Locus, a specialist consultancy, was engaged and commenced work	Yes	Cabinet Member for Planning, Parking, Highways & Transport (Councillor Phil Haseler)	Victoria Goldberg, Adrien Waite	Internal process	Cabinet 30 Mar 2023	

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24		on the project. Work, however, stopped as a result of Covid, the public consultation as required by the brief proved impossible and the consultant also encountered resourcing issues. Work can now recommence; however, the situation has changed, particularly as concerns Council Policy and as Locus is now part of a larger company. As a result, the project brief and contract need to be updated.						
John West House Redevelopment	Open -	Requesting additional funds to redevelop the former warehouse at John West House to provide a place of change for former rough	Yes	Cabinet Member for Digital Connectivity, Housing Opportunity, & Sport & Leisure (Councillor Ross McWilliams)	Emma Congerton, Tracy Hendren	Internal process	Cabinet 30 Mar 2023	

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		sleepers. £1.2m in funding is already agreed, however due to escalating costs a further £796k is required for the project to go ahead.						
Household Support Fund, Tranche 4 allocation 25	Open -	This report sets out the council's recommendations for allocating Tranche 4 of the DWP Household Support Fund, for Cabinet decision.	Yes	Cabinet Member for Asset Management & Commercialisation, Finance, & Ascot (Councillor David Hilton), Leader of the Council & Cabinet Member for Growth & Opportunity (Councillor Andrew Johnson)	Rebecca Hatch, Kevin McDaniel	Consultation with stakeholders, including HSF distribution partners and key services.	Cabinet 30 Mar 2023	
Award of RBWM Leisure Management Contract	Fully exempt - 3	To consider the appointment of the approved bidder in the re-tendering of the Borough's Leisure Management Contract for the next contract period, which is a 12 + 5 year term commencing with effect from 1 August 2023.	Yes	Cabinet Member for Digital Connectivity, Housing Opportunity, & Sport & Leisure (Councillor Ross McWilliams)	Andrew Durrant, Alysse Strachan	Internal process	Cabinet 30 Mar 2023	

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ITEM	Private Meeting - contains exempt/confidential information? See categories below	Short Description	Key Decision, Council or other?	REPORTING MEMBER (to whom representations should be made)	REPORTING OFFICER / DIRECTOR (to whom representations should be made)	Consultation (please specify consultees, dates (to and from) and form of consultation), including other meetings.	Date and name of meeting	Date of Council decision (if required)
26 DFG New Build	Fully exempt - 1,2	To request £210k in s106 funding to enable a contribution to be made to Housing Solutions for the development of a large disabled adapted property for a household with a severely disabled child whose current accommodation cannot be adapted and who alternative accommodation cannot be found for.	No	Cabinet Member for Digital Connectivity, Housing Opportunity, & Sport & Leisure (Councillor Ross McWilliams)	Emma Congerton, Tracy Hendren	Internal process - Presented at Capital Review Board on 02/02/2023	Cabinet 30 Mar 2023	
Business Rate Write Off	Fully exempt - 3	To consider writing off three Business Rate debts in line with the RBWM constitution as they each exceed £50,000.	No	Cabinet Member for Asset Management & Commercialisation, Finance, & Ascot (Councillor David Hilton)	Louise Freeth, Adele Taylor	Internal process	Cabinet 30 Mar 2023	
Broadband Digital Lines	Open -	The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM) is seeking to replace its site to site broadband	Yes	Deputy Leader of the Council & Cabinet Member for Business, Corporate & Residents Services, Culture & Heritage, & Windsor	Nikki Craig	Internal process	Cabinet 27 Apr 2023	

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		circuits and wide area network connections.		(Councillor Samantha Rayner)				
Home to School Transport Policy	Open -	To seek approval for consultation on the policy	No	Deputy Chairman of Cabinet & Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education, Health, Mental Health, & Transformation (Councillor Stuart Carroll)	Kevin McDaniel	External consultation	Cabinet 27 Apr 2023	
Award of Contract for Adult Social Care Case Management system	Fully exempt - 3	Report to Cabinet requesting approval to award contract for the supply of a case management system	Yes	Deputy Chairman of Cabinet & Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education, Health, Mental Health, & Transformation (Councillor Stuart Carroll)	Kevin McDaniel	Internal	Cabinet 27 Apr 2023	
Contract for Parking Enforcement, Moving Traffic Enforcement, Environmental Enforcement and Highways Enforcement	Fully exempt - 3	A report to set out future options for the contracts across the Borough.	Yes	Cabinet Member for Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime, and Public Protection (Councillor David Cannon), Cabinet Member for Planning, Parking, Highways & Transport (Councillor Phil Haseler)	Alysse Strachan	Internal	Cabinet 27 Apr 2023	

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DESCRIPTIONS OF EXEMPT INFORMATION: ENGLAND

- 1 Information relating to any individual.
- 2 Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.
- 3 Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
- 4 Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.
- 5 Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
- 6 Information which reveals that the authority proposes:
 - (a) to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
 - (b) to make an order or direction under any enactment.
- 7 Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

N.B. All documents to be used by the decision maker to be listed in the report to Cabinet

Cabinet Forward Plan - changes made since publication on 01.02.23:

Item	Scheduled date	New date	Reason for change
Business Rate write off	30.03.23		New item
Household Support Fund, Tranche 4 allocation	30.03.23		New item
Datchett Neighbourhood Plan Referendum	23.02.23		Following receipt of examiners report this is seeking approval rather than delegation in relation to the NPR

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Report Title:	Electric Vehicle Chargepoint Implementation Plan
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	No - Part I
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Haseler, Cabinet Member for Planning, Parking, Highways & Transport
Meeting and Date:	Cabinet – 23 February 2023
Responsible Officer(s):	Andrew Durrant, Executive Director of Place Services, and Chris Joyce, Head of Infrastructure, Sustainability and Economic Growth
Wards affected:	All

REPORT SUMMARY

A ten-year Electric Vehicle Chargepoint Infrastructure Plan was drafted setting out the actions the council will need to take to enable the transition to electric vehicles. To make sure that the plan accurately reflects the experience, needs and circumstances of those that will use it, the draft plan underwent a public consultation between 1 December 2022 and 9 January 2023.

There were 194 responses to the consultation and high overall support for its approach to on-street charging, car park charging and rapid charging. 77% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that, if implemented, the plan would give them the confidence that an electric vehicle would meet their daily needs.

Feedback from the consultation has been used to revise the plan and produce a final version. This version is recommended for adoption and implementation.

Enabling the delivery of electric vehicle charging infrastructure to meet growing demand through a new EV implementation plan is a goal in the borough's Corporate Plan. Moreover, the plan will fully support our overarching commitment to create a sustainable borough of opportunity and innovation and our priorities for quality infrastructure and to take action on climate change.

1. DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

RECOMMENDATION: That Cabinet notes the report and:

- i) Approves the Electric Vehicle Chargepoint Implementation Plan**

2. REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Options

Table 1: Options arising from this report

Option	Comments
<p>Approves the Electric Vehicle Chargepoint Implementation Plan</p> <p>This is the recommended option</p>	<p>Work will commence to identify preferred commercial partners to deliver the programmes of on-street and car park chargepoint rollout, allowing delivery to commence next financial year.</p> <p>Officers will additionally commence work on all other actions in the plan, and the policies contained within the plan will be adopted by the council.</p>
<p>Discontinue development of an Electric Vehicle Chargepoint Implementation Plan (i.e. do nothing)</p> <p>This is not recommended</p>	<p>Without a plan, chargepoints will not be installed at the pace or in the locations that many of our residents, businesses and visitors will need, if they are to make their next vehicle electric.</p>
<p>Further review the plan with a view to making substantial changes.</p> <p>This is not recommended</p>	<p>The draft plan received significant public support at consultation, and has benefitted from useful revisions arising from that process.</p> <p>Substantially reviewing the report further will delay the start of rollout of further chargepoints.</p>

Context

- 2.1 The sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans in the UK will end in 2030, as set out in the national Decarbonising Transport strategy. Last year, in Taking Charge: The Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy, the government tasked local authorities with developing local strategies for ensuring the necessary infrastructure will be in place to support this transition, with a particular responsibility for developing the needed network of chargepoints on local authority streets.
- 2.2 It is projected that half of all cars and vans in the borough will be electric by 2035 (based upon University of Oxford's SCATE tool), rising to virtually all such vehicles by 2040, as a result of both growing consumer demand and the incoming national bans on the sale of petrol and diesel vehicles, just seven years away. Increasingly, the borough's residents, businesses and visitors will need and expect the infrastructure to be in place to support electric vehicles.
- 2.3 Faced with the climate emergency, transitioning to electric vehicles is essential to efforts to decarbonise transport, which is the largest source of the borough's carbon emissions accounting for one third of the borough's total. Our Environment and Climate Strategy identifies that the pathway to net zero will need to involve a substantial drop of 75% emissions reduction by 2030 and an 88% reduction by 2035. Infrastructure, particularly chargepoints, has a vital role

to play in enabling people to make their next vehicle electric by providing the charging opportunities that people need.

- 2.4 The introduction of chargepoints as a prominent new feature of our roads and car parks also serves to accelerate the transition by demonstrating that driving electric is set to become a normal part of everyday life, and offering reassurance to non-users that they will be able to find chargepoints when they need them if they switch to electric.
- 2.5 It is projected that the majority of electric vehicle charging will take place overnight on private residential driveways and in depots, which will often be the cheapest and most convenient place to charge. Residents and businesses will have chargepoints installed on their properties for their own use, linked to the purchase of their electric vehicle.
- 2.6 This will be supported by a growing nationwide privately-run network of premium 'rapid' and 'ultra-rapid' chargepoints that recharge a vehicle in 15 to 30 minutes, particularly suited to service station locations along main roads. On longer journeys, drivers will be able to recharge their vehicles on route, usually as part of the rest stops they would make along the journey anyway.
- 2.7 The role for local authorities to fill is the provision of chargepoints on streets and in council car parks. Residents without off-street parking will need to be able to charge near their home. The times that cars spend parked in car parks will often be a convenient time to top a battery up too, and having our car parks offer charging facilities will ensure our towns continue to meet public expectations and attract shoppers and day-trippers.
- 2.8 Local authority involvement is needed in on-street and car park provision firstly because these are public spaces that we manage, and secondly because typically these types of sites are not commercially viable for chargepoint operators in the near-term. These sites are expected to become commercially viable as the number of electric vehicles on the road increases with time, but local authorities are being encouraged by government to accelerate the transition to electric vehicles by beginning to provide these facilities now. The government are supporting this through their On Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS) and Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) funding pots. Some chargepoint suppliers are willing to take these sites on commercially too, in return for a long concession period for the site.

Development of the plan

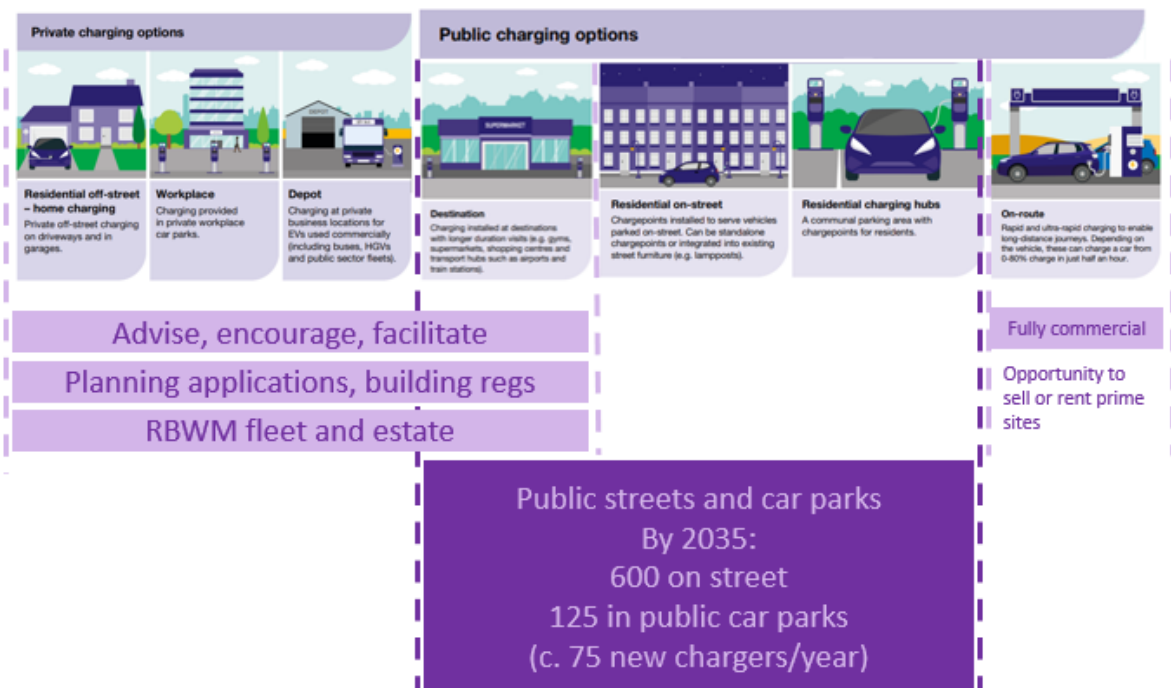
- 2.9 A draft Electric Vehicle Chargepoint Implementation Plan was developed following a review of existing chargepoint trials within the authority, as well as learning and best practice from other local authorities. An early supplier engagement exercise with 12 chargepoint suppliers representing the breadth of business models and technology solutions available enabled us to develop a plan against which the market can deliver. The council additionally benefited from expert support offered by the Energy Saving Trust through their government-funded Local Authority Support Programme.
- 2.10 In October 2022, Cabinet approved that the draft plan undergo a public consultation exercise. The objective was to ensure that the infrastructure that is rolled out will give people the ability and confidence to switch, and to be sure

that our plan accurately reflects the experience, needs and circumstances of those who will use it.

- 2.11 The final plan, which this report recommends is adopted, has incorporated feedback received through the public consultation process. The consultation process identified that the plan was widely supported overall.

Proposed approach

- 2.12 In a typical week, an electric vehicle will need charging once based on average mileage. Combined with projections of the rate of EV take-up in the borough, the plan identifies that by 2033 the borough will need approximately 600 on-street chargepoints, and a further 125 chargepoints in council car parks. The plan proposes that the borough look to deliver approximately 75 chargepoints per year for the next 10 years to meet this demand, which will offer a manageable delivery programme that spreads the investment over time, whilst ensuring that provision remains ahead of demand and stimulates confidence that there is good availability of charging opportunities.



- 2.13 The majority of demand for on-street charging will be in Windsor and Maidenhead, as a result of both the concentration of the borough's population in these towns and also in that away from the towns homes are considerably more likely to have their own driveways where people will choose to charge. The plan recognises that it will be critical to avoid 'not spots' in provision, however, and will provide a greater concentration of chargepoints where there is more demand whilst also ensuring there is suitable geographic coverage.

- 2.14 The plan has looked to understand and incorporate known consumer needs and preferences with regards the positioning and design of chargepoints and the facilities that they offer. This includes ensuring chargepoints are short walks from the homes they serve, availability of contactless payment, live data on chargepoint availability, and simple transparent per unit pricing that is prominently displayed.

- 2.15 It additionally has sought to understand and mitigate the impact of introducing new infrastructure into public spaces, including ensuring accessibility and safety of other users of the space by keeping footways clear of cables and obstructions, utilising existing assets where possible. Additionally, care will be taken to avoid adding to parking pressure on streets by recommending placement near to the ends of streets (but a safe distance from the junction) where parking demand tends to be lower, which will often make it possible to dedicate the bays or the use of charging EVs only (subject to local circumstances).
- 2.16 The plan offers general principles for an approach to chargepoint provision, but all sites will need to be individually designed and consulted on with the local communities they are designed to serve.
- 2.17 Following adoption of the plan, an exercise will be undertaken to identify one or more chargepoint operators that the council will partner with to deliver the plan (in whole or part). The details of any contract would be presented for approval at the appropriate level at the time they are proposed to be taken forward.
- 2.18 The plan also acknowledges other activities for the council to take in supporting the transition to electric vehicles, including making information available and promoting electric vehicles by embedding these into the council's communications and activities, ensuring new developments incorporate adequate chargepoint provision through compliance with new national building regulations (Building Regulations Approved Document S) and developing plans to transition our own fleet and estate to electric.
- 2.19 As a landowner, the plan also proposes that the council investigate opportunities to identify land that may be suitable for rent or sale to companies seeking land near main roads for new rapid and ultra-rapid charging stations, to both generate income or receipts and facilitate the introduction of these facilities around the borough.

3. KEY IMPLICATIONS

Table 2: Key Implications

Outcome	Unmet	Met	Exceeded	Significantly Exceeded	Date of delivery
Proportion of cars and vans in the borough that are electric (and the figure is still growing)	<50%	50% - 59%	60% - 69%	70%+	31 December 2035

- 3.1 Helping residents and businesses to switch to electric vehicles will reduce the borough's carbon emissions, contributing towards our net zero target.

- 3.2 Electric vehicles contribute to improved air quality in relation to reducing the release of nitrous oxides, which can exacerbate symptoms of lung and heart conditions, increase susceptibility to respiratory infections and allergens, and has a harmful effect on biodiversity. (Electric vehicles do however still emit particulate matter pollution from tyre and brake wear.)

4. FINANCIAL DETAILS / VALUE FOR MONEY

- 4.1 The recommendation of this paper to approve the plan does not commit the council to any new spending. However, it is made in the context of the plan recommending the introduction of new infrastructure in the future.
- 4.2 With regards on street and public car park chargepoints, it is estimated that the plan will require an investment of c. £5 million in chargepoint infrastructure, over the 10-year plan period, funded in the first instance by chargepoint operators and government ORCS and LEVI grants, rather than by the council. Early supplier engagement has confirmed that the plan could broadly be delivered without new capital investment from the borough, and with existing staff resources.
- 4.3 Optionally, the borough could invest capital from CIL or other sources in on street and car park chargepoints. Chargepoint operators typically offer a share of profits if local authorities invest some of their own capital. Returns for the council would initially be very modest, but by 2033 a combination of increased chargepoint profitability from there being more electric vehicles on the roads and the significant number of chargepoints that will be in the borough by that time create an opportunity for the council to benefit from a significant new income stream.
- 4.4 Whether the council chooses to invest or not, the plan proposes that the operation and maintenance costs of the chargepoint would be met by the chargepoint operator, as is standard UK practice.
- 4.5 The plan proposes awarding concessions in annual batches over the plan period, with a target of introducing around 75 chargepoints per year. This will give flexibility each year for the council to decide whether, and to what extent, it will invest capital in that financial year. The concessions awarded will be subject to an evaluation of options and best value at the time they are made. It is not necessary for the council to commit to a single chargepoint supplier for the full plan period. Any decision to invest would be subject to a business case at the time, as well as the usual capital project and budget approval process for the year.
- 4.6 Separately to the introduction of on street and public car park chargepoints, there is an opportunity to generate income or capital receipts from the rent or sale of council land to businesses looking for locations for new rapid and ultra-rapid charging stations. The plan proposes that the council investigates sites with surplus land that may be suitable to make available for this purpose.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The recommendation of this paper to adopt the plan to public consultation does not have direct legal implications.

5.2 Providing chargepoints on street and in car parks would involve contracts with chargepoint operators. There is considerable flexibility about the type of contract the council enters into, which would be made with input from the council's procurement team. The details of any contract would be presented for approval at the appropriate level at the time they are proposed to be taken forward.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

Table 3: Impact of risk and mitigation

Threat or risk	Impact with no mitigations in place or if all mitigations fail	Likelihood of risk occurring with no mitigations in place.	Mitigations currently in place	Mitigations proposed	Impact of risk once all mitigations in place and working	Likelihood of risk occurring with all mitigations in place.
There is a risk that infrastructure installed in the near term may be made obsolete because electric vehicles are an emerging technology which could result in early obsolescence of assets	Moderate 2	Medium	Public EV chargepoint infrastructure is restricted to a few closely controlled trials	Deliver a wider rollout with commercial chargepoint operators, who would take appropriate level of risk and reward	Minor 1	Medium
There is a risk that chargepoint operators do not deliver a level of service that meets resident expectations or that the chargepoint operator goes out of business because this is an inherent risk in working with another party which could result in residents not being able to charge their vehicles easily	Moderate 2	Medium	Public EV chargepoint infrastructure is restricted to a few closely controlled trials	Award concessions in batches and work with multiple chargepoint operators	Minor 1	Low

There is a risk that projections of demand for electric vehicle charging either prove to cautious or too optimistic because there is uncertainty in the rate at which petrol and diesel vehicles will be replaced by EVs which could result in an over or under provision of EV charging points	Moderate 2	Medium	Public EV chargepoint infrastructure is restricted to a few closely controlled trials	The speed of delivery can be reviewed on an annual basis based upon actual take up and amended accordingly	Minor 1	Low
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7. POTENTIAL IMPACTS

- 7.1 Equalities. An Equality Impact Assessment is available as Appendix A.
- 7.2 Climate change/sustainability. This plan will contribute to the lowering of carbon emissions from travel in the borough and is consistent with the Borough's Environment and Climate Strategy.
- 7.3 Data Protection/GDPR. No impact.

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1 The development of the draft plan was informed by:
- Technical support from the Energy Saving Trust's Local Government Support Scheme
 - Early supplier engagement with 12 chargepoint suppliers representing the breadth of business models and technology solutions available
 - Resident expressions of interest for future chargepoint locations
 - Participation in the Energy Saving Trust's national LA-EV Forum and Transport for the South East's Regional Decarbonisation Forum, where local authorities share knowledge and experience
- 8.2 A consultation on that draft plan ran from 1 December 2022 to 9 January 2023, inclusive. The consultation was based on the council's online engagement platform RBWM Together, with documents also available to view in libraries and responses also accepted by mail. The consultation was widely promoted across a spectrum of council communication channels, and through direct contact with key stakeholder groups.

- 8.3 In total, 194 responses were received. 89% of responses were from local residents. Some local business owners, people employed locally, visitors to the area and chargepoint operators also commented.
- 8.4 Overall, there was a high degree of support for the plan.
- 83% agreed or strongly agreed with the Vision
 - 77% agreed or strongly agreed that, if implemented, the plan would give them confidence an electric vehicle would meet their daily needs
 - 81% agreed with the proposed approach to car park chargepoints and 73% agreed with the proposed approach to on-street charging
- 8.5 The consultation invited written comments, for respondents to expand upon their answers to the survey questions. 124 respondents supplied written comments. The most common comments related to:
- A desire for EV charging spaces to be reserved for charging EVs only
 - A desire for the plan to be as ambitious as possible
 - A variety of views on whether charging cables should be allowed to cross over roads and paths
 - A desire for investment in EV chargepoints to be accompanied by continued investment in cycling, walking and public transport
 - A desire for new chargepoints not to block footways that are narrow
- 8.6 As a result of the suggestions and views expressed in the written comments, the plan has been amended to an improved, final version. Key changes include:
- Where grid connection works are required, passive provision will be introduced where cost-effective to expand chargepoint provision at a later date, and works will be coordinated with other street works where possible to reduce the volume of road works
 - Ongoing trials taking place in some other local authorities of allowing cables to cross over roads and paths will be monitored to understand the long-term implications of allowing this
 - We have removed specific ratios for how many chargepoint locations the council will specify the location of compared with those determined by market forces, to free the council to negotiate the best ratio it can through contract negotiations
 - We will investigate options in our negotiations with chargepoint suppliers for businesses in the borough that are interested in privately introducing chargepoints on their own properties to easily partner with the same chargepoint operators that we work with, and other initiatives that support residents and businesses introduce their own chargepoints
 - We will investigate whether 'off-peak' charging tariffs could be offered in council car parks overnight
 - We will specify that we would prefer chargepoints to be compatible with ISO 15118 Vehicle2Grid standard
 - We will identify a trial site for a taxi charging facility

9. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- 9.1 Implementation date if not called in: Immediately. The full implementation stages are set out in table 4.

Table 4: Implementation timetable

Date	Details
1 April 2023	Rollout begins in new financial year, beginning with procurement work
31 March 2026	Phase 1 delivery complete
31 March 2029	Phase 2 delivery complete
31 March 2034	Phase 3 delivery complete

10. APPENDICES

10.1 This report is supported by two appendices:

- Appendix A – Equality Impact Assessment
- Appendix B – Electric Vehicle Chargepoint Implementation Plan

11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

11.1 This report is supported by five background documents:

- [Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead Corporate Plan 2021-26](#)
- [Environment & Climate Strategy \(Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead\)](#)
- [Decarbonising Transport \(Department for Transport\)](#)
- [Taking Charge: The Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy \(HM Government\)](#)
- [The Building Regulations 2010 – Approved Document S– Infrastructure for the charging of electric vehicles](#)

12. CONSULTATION

Name of consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
<i>Mandatory:</i>		<i>Statutory Officer (or deputy)</i>	
Adele Taylor	Executive Director of Resources/S151 Officer	13/01/23	27/01/23
Emma Duncan	Director of Law, Strategy & Public Health/ Monitoring Officer	13/01/23	17/01/23
<i>Deputies:</i>			
Andrew Vallance	Head of Finance (Deputy S151 Officer)		
Elaine Browne	Head of Law (Deputy Monitoring Officer)		
<i>Mandatory:</i>		<i>Procurement Manager (or deputy) - if report requests approval to go to tender or award a contract</i>	
Lyn Hitchinson	Procurement Manager		

Mandatory:		<i>Data Protection Officer (or deputy) - if decision will result in processing of personal data; to advise on DPIA</i>	
Samantha Wootton	Data Protection Officer		
Mandatory:		<i>Equalities Officer – to advise on EQiA, or agree an EQiA is not required</i>	
Ellen McManus-Fry	Equalities & Engagement Officer	13/01/23	26/01/23
<i>Other consultees:</i>			
<i>Directors (where relevant)</i>			
Tony Reeves	Interim Chief Executive		
Andrew Durrant	Executive Director of Place	13/01/23	17/01/23
Kevin McDaniel	Executive Director of People Services		
Stuart Lines	Director of Public Health		
<i>Heads of Service (where relevant)</i>			
Chris Joyce	Head of Infrastructure Sustainability and Economic Growth	13/01/23	
Alysse Strachan	Head of Neighbourhood Services	13/01/23	27/01/23
<i>External (where relevant)</i>			
N/A			

Confirmation relevant Cabinet Member(s) consulted	Cabinet Member for Planning, Parking, Highways & Transport	Yes
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REPORT HISTORY

Decision type:	Urgency item?	To follow item?
Key decision First entered into the Cabinet Forward Plan: 16 November 2022	No	No

Report Author: Dug Tremellen, Transport Policy Manager, 01628 796220
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Equality Impact Assessment

For support in completing this EQIA, please consult the EQIA Guidance Document or contact equality@rbwm.gov.uk

1. Background Information

Title of policy/strategy/plan:	<u>Electric Vehicle Chargepoint Implementation Plan</u>
Service area:	<u>Infrastructure, Sustainability and Economic Growth</u>
Directorate:	<u>Place</u>

Provide a brief explanation of the proposal:

- What are its intended outcomes?
- Who will deliver it?
- Is it a new proposal or a change to an existing one?

The aim of the Electric Vehicle Chargepoint Implementation Plan is to set out how the council will play its role in ensuring chargepoints are provided around the borough to enable a transition away from petrol and diesel cars and vans, and to meet resident needs and expectations relating to their provision.

Chargepoints will ordinarily be delivered by third parties under contract. The plan includes confirming the council's expectations around standards these chargepoints will need to adhere to including ensuring that the chargepoints are widely accessible and don't impede accessibility within the wider street environment.

This is a new plan, and will be delivered by the council's Transport team and through future contracts with chargepoint operators. (The specifics of these contracts will be the subject of future decisions.)

2. Relevance Check

Is this proposal likely to directly impact people, communities or RBWM employees?

- If No, please explain why not, including how you've considered equality issues.
- Will this proposal need a EQIA at a later stage? (for example, for a forthcoming action plan)

Yes

If 'No', proceed to 'Sign off'. If unsure, please contact equality@rbwm.gov.uk

3. Evidence Gathering and Stakeholder Engagement

<p>Who will be affected by this proposal? For example, users of a particular service, residents of a geographical area, staff</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drivers of motor vehicles • People walking, wheeling and cycling
<p>Among those affected by the proposal, are protected characteristics (age, sex, disability, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, marriage/civil partnership) disproportionately represented? For example, compared to the general population do a higher proportion have disabilities?</p>
<p>No</p>
<p>What engagement/consultation has been undertaken or planned?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How has/will equality considerations be taken into account? • Where known, what were the outcomes of this engagement?
<p>The draft plan was developed with expert input from chargepoint operators, other local authorities who have trialled chargepoints more extensively and the Energy Savings Trust. The draft plan underwent a public consultation, which included specifically inviting comments from the borough’s Disability & Inclusion Forum.</p> <p>As a result of engagement, we are committing in the plan to act on key feedback:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chargepoints won’t be allowed to block footways that are narrow • Chargepoints will need to comply to new British Standard PAS 1899 (chargepoint accessibility standard, developed nationally by Motability) • Chargepoints won’t reduce the availability of disabled parking
<p>What sources of data and evidence have been used in this assessment? Please consult the Equalities Evidence Grid for relevant data. Examples of other possible sources of information are in the Guidance document.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive Mobility - A Guide to Best Practice on Access to Pedestrian and Transport Infrastructure (Department for Transport 2021) • PAS 1899:2022 Electric vehicles – Accessible charging – Specification

4. Equality Analysis

Please detail, **using supporting evidence**:

- How the protected characteristics below might influence the needs and experiences of individuals, in relation to this proposal.
- How these characteristics might affect the impact of this proposal.

Tick positive/negative impact as appropriate. If there is no impact, or a neutral impact, state 'Not Applicable'

More information on each protected characteristic is provided in the Guidance document.

	Details and supporting evidence	Potential positive impact	Potential negative impact
Age	<p>Impact of a fall resulting from trip hazards associated with vehicle charging. Older people are more likely to fall including as a result of a trip hazard, and more likely to experience extended or ongoing impacts following a fall if it results in a physical injury or a loss of confidence. Source: https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/falls/</p> <p>Drivers under 49 are more likely than older drivers to switch to electric vehicles over the next decade so may initially benefit more from the improvements, although ultimately all drivers will be required to switch. Source: https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/environmentalaccounts/articles/overhalfofyoungerdriverslikelytoswitchtoelectricinnextdecade/2021-10-25</p>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Disability	<p>Introduction of charging infrastructure not designed with the needs of disabled persons in mind. Across the UK, many early examples of chargepoint installations have proved to be inaccessible to some disabled people through their design and positioning. Additionally, some have reduced the accessibility of street environments through poor positioning, eg. blocking footways. Source: PAS 1899:2022 Electric vehicles – Accessible charging – Specification</p>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Sex	<p>Introduction of charging infrastructure in isolated locations where women may not feel safe, particularly at night. Across the UK, many early examples of chargepoint installations did not consider personal safety and security, at the chargepoint and on walking routes between the chargepoints and people's homes. Source: discussion at Energy Savings Trust's Local Authority EV Forum</p>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Race, ethnicity and religion			
Sexual orientation and gender reassignment			

Pregnancy and maternity			
Marriage and civil partnership			
Armed forces community			
Socio-economic considerations e.g. low income, poverty	Cost of vehicle purchase is currently a barrier to adoption of EV and so initially benefits of more public chargepoints may initially not be felt as much by persons on lower incomes. However, in the longer-term purchase prices will come down as the cost of batteries is expected to dramatically fall and as a second-hand EV market becomes better established, and the sale of new internal combustion engine vehicles ends. Further, persons on lower incomes may be less likely to have their own private off-street parking and so may benefit more from public chargepoint provision. Source: https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/environmentalaccounts/articles/overhalfofyoungerdriverslikelytoswitchtoelectricinnextdecade/2021-10-25	Neutral / not applicable	Neutral / not applicable
Children in care/Care leavers			

5. Impact Assessment and Monitoring

If you have not identified any disproportionate impacts and the questions below are not applicable, leave them blank and proceed to Sign Off.

What measures have been taken to ensure that groups with protected characteristics are able to benefit from this change, or are not disadvantaged by it?

For example, adjustments needed to accommodate the needs of a particular group

- The plan commits the borough to not allowing trailing cables across footways or carriageways at this time to substantially reduce risk from trips and falls
- The plan commits the borough to ensuring chargepoints meet PAS 1899 accessibility standards so that they met the needs of a wide range of disabled users
- The plan commits the borough to not further constricting the width of narrow footways to ensure footways remain accessible
- The plan commits to locating chargepoints in highly visible locations and distributing chargepoints around the borough such that chargepoints are available within 5 minutes of 90% of homes without driveways for personal safety and security in particular that of women and girls

Where a potential negative impact cannot be avoided, what measures have been put in place to mitigate or minimise this?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For planned future actions, provide the name of the responsible individual and the target date for implementation.
Mitigations are in place as above.
<p>How will the equality impacts identified here be monitored and reviewed in the future?</p> <p>See guidance document for examples of appropriate stages to review an EQIA.</p>
There will be public consultations on the specific proposals for each item of new infrastructure (e.g. a new chargepoint) and opportunities for each to be scrutinised including through an EqlA process and through consultation/engagement with the public

6. Sign Off

Completed by: Dug Tremellen	Date: 26/01/23
Approved by:	Date:

If this version of the EQIA has been reviewed and/or updated:

Reviewed by:	Date:
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Report Title:	Vision for Windsor
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	No - Part 1
Lead Member:	Councillor Andrew Johnson - Leader of the Council and Chairman of Cabinet, Business, Economic Development and Property Councillor Samantha Rayner - Deputy Leader of the Council, Corporate & Resident Services, Culture & Heritage and Windsor
Meeting and Date:	Cabinet – February 23, 2023
Responsible Officer(s):	Andrew Durrant - Executive Director of Place
Wards affected:	Windsor (Eton and Castle)

www.rbwm.gov.uk



REPORT SUMMARY

The report sets out the Council’s draft Vision for Windsor, following a programme of stakeholder and resident engagement, working in Partnership with the Princes Foundation Trust (PFT). PFT is an independent body that was commissioned by the Council in March 2022 to implement their well-established Enquiry by Design (EbD) approach to engagement when developing Placemaking vision statements.

The Council is committed to establishing a series of ambitious vision statements, that ultimately support growth in the Windsor economy, whilst ensuring local connections to our residents and businesses. The full report is set out in Appendix A, which incorporates existing strategies and plans for the area whilst drawing on the many strengths and assets that exist, the Windsor Vision is an opportunity to set out what the next 20 years might look like including the transformation of the centre of our historic town, all of which has been informed by resident feedback and professional advice.

The project was also initiated to recognise the important role the council needs to play in bringing together several strategic players, key stakeholders, members of the council, residents and local leaders in order to understand key interests regarding the future of Windsor. It proposes that the Vision for Windsor document be finalised and adopted to provide a clear process for prioritising and managing the ambitions and opportunities for Windsor town centre and central Windsor riverside locations, set between Eton, Datchet, Old Windsor & Clewer East over the next 20 years.

OBJ:

The Cabinet Report presents the progress made and various stages of the approved EbD work by the Princes Foundation Trust. The main objective for this work is also explored by outlining the process and strategic pillars that identify some of the ambitions and how they will revitalise Windsor Town Centre. This will result in a strengthening of the resilience of the local economy, enhancements to the quality of place, and provision for the needs of the local community in line with the Council’s

Corporate Plan and economic growth plan. It will also incorporate the various public realm improvement projects already in progress. It highlights the progress to date of stakeholder engagement workshops over a 9-month period, between April 2022 – December 2022, with the consultation feedback being largely positive.

1. DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION

That Cabinet;

1.1 Approves and adopts the Vision for Windsor outline report produced independently by the Princes Foundation Trust (Appendix A) and notes that there will be full preparation of a set of milestones and main objectives for the next 12 months.

1.2 Notes the progress made within the report.

1.3 Authorises delegation to the Director of Place, (in consultation, where relevant, with responsible Cabinet members) with responsibility for the Vision for Windsor Project to proceed with preparation of a full working plan and Programme Management including a set of task and finish groups.

2. CONTEXT AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

2.1 On 1st April 2022 Princes Foundation Trust was appointed to deliver a stakeholder engagement plan for the Windsor Vision Project approved by Cabinet on 31st March 2022. A detailed project report has been produced by the Princes Foundation Trust and a copy is attached as Appendix A.

2.2 Following stage one of the project initiation plan, the team engaged with stakeholders to prepare a final draft report – details in Figure 1 below: (Internal briefings with members were held within this period).

The Vision for Windsor has been developed through a stakeholder engagement programme that took place over the course of several months, consisting of a number of opportunities for in-person and digital engagement.

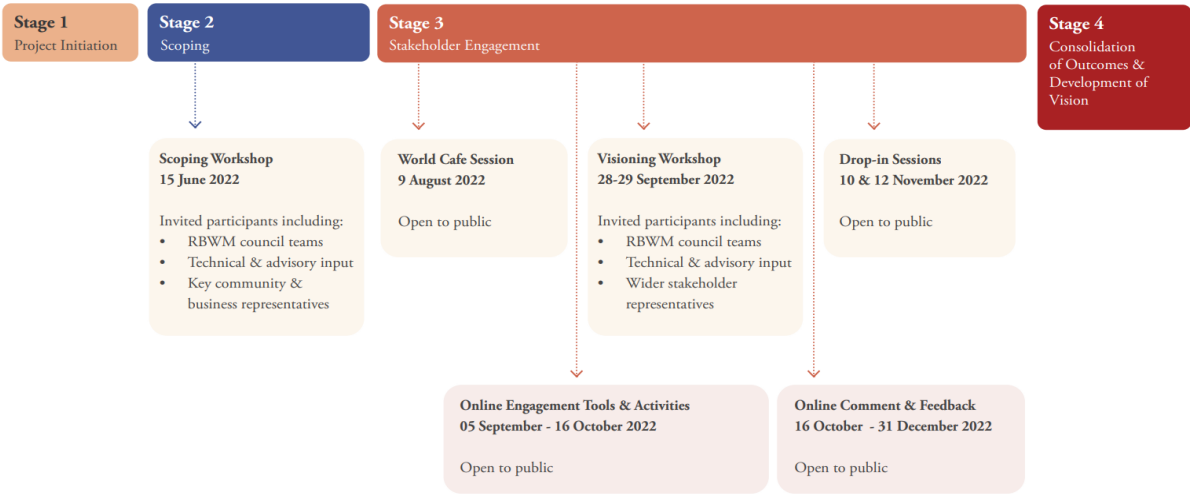


Figure 1: Vision for Windsor Timeline (appendix A report, page 6)

2.3 The workshops created an open and positive environment for residents to give the feedback on the co-design plans for the Windsor Town, together with the Princes Foundation Trust and it created a one stop shop for residents to discuss opportunities and concern directly with officers from the council. The project will further enhance the opportunities to coproduce by fully engaging the residents and stakeholders going forward.

2.4 Points raised at all of the sessions and briefings have been incorporated within the main report. From the outset, officers have been conscious of existing plans that should be incorporated within intelligence gathering. These include the Windsor Neighbourhood Plan .

2.5 The work of the Princes Foundation has resulted in the following vision statement for Windsor:

‘A Vibrant Future for Windsor – An attractive, thriving and welcoming town for the local and global community.’

2.6 Additionally, the report details five key themes or ‘vision statements’ that significantly contribute to and are aligned to the goals of the Corporate Plan:

2.7 Corporate Goal 1: Thriving Communities.

- **Theme 1.** The Local Community – Create a thriving local economy of business and community partnerships that benefit from Windsor’s global brand. Business tourism and engagement are a key strand, and the Council is seeking to maximise economic benefits for residents. The emerging impact from COVID 19 on the national economy shows that this is an opportunity in Windsor to enhance its unique heritage. It is, therefore, vital that we move forward to ensure that our town will not only attract visitors to it but also create local opportunities for employment and workspace opportunities especially for our younger age groups, by encouraging them to stay or settle within Windsor.
- **Theme 2.** The Global Community – Deliver a world class visitor experience supported by a strong, diverse, and resilient hospitality sector. There is an opportunity to deliver a vibrant mixed-use scheme in line with the objectives and aspirations of the Windsor Vision, which includes provision of creative and cultural spaces, creating opportunities for independent businesses, supporting a vibrant daytime local economy and stimulating and enhancing the evening economy. The limited night time economy has contributed to a lack of over-night tourism which can drive 9 times the spend of a day only visitor. This must change to support a sustainable community in the future, and to ensure the town continues to attract people to live, shop and work.

2.8 Corporate Goal 2: Inspiring Places:

- **Theme 3.** Transport and Movement - Develop sustainable, convenient, and affordable travel options to travel into Windsor town centre for both residents and visitors. Keeping residents local as well as new job opportunities by growing the local economy , positively impacting on a greater sense of community and sustainability. In addition, sustainable transportation within the Windsor Vision project (particularly increased cycling and walking), will have both financial and carbon reduction benefit to the council. This will contribute to the climate change priorities within our Corporate Plan.
- **Theme 4.** The Built Environment - Protect and enhance the heritage, character and identity of Windsor. Windsor has a substantial amount of heritage buildings including the Crown Estate, The Guildhall and local listed buildings that are of special architectural or historic interest. The immensely rich and varied architecture and history of the town are of national and international interest. Our historic environment is an important and essential community benefit, contributing many tangible and intangible benefits to wellbeing, culture, and the sense of place and identity. We must consider and protect these and find a balance between our commitment to the historic environment and any development ambitions of the Windsor Vision project over the next 20 years.
- **Theme 5.** The Natural Environment – Promote, activate, and improve access to natural assets and resources. The natural environment, like the historic environment, makes a positive contribution to community life by boosting wellbeing, increasing mutual understanding and cohesion, and encouraging a stronger sense of place.

3. GOVERNANCE

At this stage, officers have managed the project within a small working group alongside PFT, however the future success and progress of each vision statement and the associated activity needs careful resourcing and overarching programme management. Therefore, it is proposed to:

- Review existing groups & forums with involvement in Windsor before establishing any new stakeholder groups
- Form a Programme Board to monitor and steer progress across all vision statements and key priorities within each
- Form task and finish groups to wrap-around the key priorities, with adequate subject matter experts to drive these forward

The project will consider its regional positioning and emerging work with neighbouring Berkshire authorities, to ensure that it can leverage a global brand for corporate and community benefits.

4. COMMUNICATIONS AND CO-PRODUCTION

Our Corporate Plan makes a commitment to consult, listen and communicate with the public and our stakeholders to ensure services are driven by their needs and priorities.

The project will incorporate a continued **communication campaign** to underpin the key priorities of continual improvements and achievements, as well as integrating planned public realm improvements and other initiatives taking place in Windsor that fit within the strategic umbrella of the Windsor Vision.

The ambitions of embedding and building **co-production and ownership of solutions** by the wider stakeholder community, as a central part of the vision is critical to success. This will be delivered through the establishment of start-finish groups to drive some of the actions, that will be designed and delivered with our communities. This will explore community led approaches to and a commitment to work alongside residents to enable them to develop the tools and knowledge they need to influence, own and co-produce the key deliverables developed as a result of this project.

5. DELIVERY PLANS AND PRIORITIES

As with all vision work and when attempting to look ahead over a period of 20 years there is an acute need to prioritise each strand of work. Indeed, there are more immediate tasks to action in the short term and also more detailed work to understand the opportunities that are outlined in the report to take forward during the medium to longer term.

In early 2023 Windsor will see several projects go live, all of which are designed to improve the public realm, attractiveness and ultimately enhance our 'Welcome to Windsor', these include:

- Castle Hill pedestrian improvement scheme
- Platinum Jubilee Fountain
- Windsor Footbridge (Coach Car Park)
- Welcome to Windsor – a scheme of improved public realm, signage and wayfinding to enhance our resident and visitor experience

Access & transport, which includes Windsor's existing parking arrangements, continued to come through strongly at each stage of the engagement process. In conclusion to these findings, officers will be recommending these aspects are prioritised as they have the potential to truly unlock many other aspects of the Vision.

6. KEY IMPLICATIONS

The Vision for Windsor is a key priority for the council and supports the Council Plan priorities by working to deliver vibrant, thriving and inspiring communities.

The project outcomes will support elements of the Corporate Plan such as 'creating a sustainable borough of opportunity and innovation through thriving communities and inspiring places.' In addition, the project will contribute to many of the goals outlined within the plan, such as: an increase in footfall in Windsor between 2021-2026 and the Master Planning exercise for central Windsor by 2023.

Through our partnership working we will create a coherent narrative and concept for the Town which is consistent. We will also make the best use of the Towns assets and create opportunities for investment and addressing local challenges.

The Council declared a Climate Emergency in June 2019 and is committed to tackling climate change. Our Environment and Climate Change Strategy 2020 ensures all council activity is undertaken with a view to supporting our commitment to achieving net zero carbon emissions. We will be working with partners to ensure that development in the Windsor Vision is undertaken sustainably. The future developed programmes would align to this ambition.

7. FINANCIAL DETAILS / VALUE FOR MONEY

The current programme of activity was supported by CIL & S106 investment to facilitate the work, a Joint Delivery Plan with stakeholders following the approval of the recommendations for the project will be financially viable by accessing external funding opportunities, including support by Local Enterprise Partnership funding that is already secured, based on the information at the time of writing this report.

However, future resourcing & investment will be an obvious but essential requirement to take all of this work forward. The council is committed to supporting its overall programme management and support through the Project Management Office, however more substantial funding and inward investment will be part of ongoing discussion with Berkshire authorities who are considering a Berkshire Devolution Deal in the future and therefore raising the town's profile and opportunity directly with Government. Equally the project set out to consider council assets and stock within Windsor and the riverside locations that are possibly underutilised at the moment and access is poor. Each of these present a longer term opportunity to realise investment and possible regeneration of these areas.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Section 1(1) of the Localism Act 2011 introduced the “general power of competence” for local authorities, defined as “the power to do anything that individuals generally may do” and which expressly includes the power to do something for the benefit of the authority, its area or persons resident or present in its area”. The generality of the power conferred by subsection (1) is not limited by the existence of any other power of the authority which (to any extent) overlaps the general power. Therefore, this power may be relied on to carry out the Windsor of Vision programme as recommended in this report.

The Council also has a general power under section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972, “to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to the discharge of its function”, including enter into the arrangements proposed in this report.

The council’s objectives for the Vision of Windsor described in Appendix A of this report and its main purpose is not investment within the meaning of section 12 of the Local Government Act 2003. The purpose is the advancement of the Windsor of Vision project, which is a long-term public benefit. As such, the council is not under an obligation to have regard to statutory guidance on the exercise of investment powers under the Local Government Act 2003. Likewise, the council is not pursuing a commercial purpose requiring it to set up a company (pursuant to section 4 of the Localism Act 2011).

In reaching a decision, Cabinet members should consider whether resultant expenditure (and other financial consequences) is prudent, having regard to the Council’s general fiduciary duties. It must also reach a decision by reference to all relevant considerations, disregarding irrelevant ones, and be satisfied that the recommended course of action is a rational course of action for the Council.

9. RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk	Level of uncontrolled risk	Controls	Level of controlled risk
Insufficient resource and budget to progress proposals	MEDIUM	Staffing levels will be reviewed, costed and sufficient resource / capacity will be assessed before commitments are made.	MEDIUM
Insufficient budget to progress proposals	MEDIUM	Funding applications will be submitted particularly for LEP funding	MEDIUM

Lack of resident and stakeholder support/buy-in	MEDIUM	Encouragement of co-production approach. Working with stakeholder groups to own solutions	LOW
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10. POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Equalities. Equality Impact Assessments are published on the Council’s website.

Climate change/sustainability. There is no potential impact of the recommendation in relation to climate change / sustainability.

Data Protection/GDPR. No personal data is being processed by RBWM.

11. ORGANISATIONAL IMPACTS

Environmental – The Vision for Windsor future programme will continue to consider the council’s Climate Change Emergency and Environmental and Climate Change Strategy 2020.

Health – Projects within the programme will be designed to consider addressing issues within the community, with the community and build on resilience as well as social and cultural life.

Corporate Parenting - The programme (where relevant) will continue to support corporate parenting outcomes, to include children and young people in care within any relevant consultations.

Responsible Procurement – The Windsor for Vision project will continue to follow Public Contracts Regulations 2015, over the lifetime of the project. It will plan on the approach to sustainability, resident engagement and social investment.

12. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The timetable below details the stages and deadlines for implementing the recommendations

Project Start	01 April 2022
Scoping stage	April-June 2022
Stakeholder Engagement stage	Sept – Dec 2022
Cabinet	23 rd Feb 2023
Next stage planning	30 th April 2023

13. APPENDICES

This report is supported by three appendices:

- Appendix A: The Prince’s Foundation report
- Appendix B: Equality Impact Assessment Form
- Appendix C: Original Cabinet Paper (March 2022)

14. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

This report is supported by 4 background documents:

Windsor Neighbourhood Plan (WNP Home (windsorplan.org.uk))

Corporate Plan (Corporate Plan 2021-2026 | Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (rbwm.gov.uk))

<https://www.rbwm.gov.uk/home/council-and-democracy/strategies-and-policies/corporate-plan-2021-2026>

Borough Local Plan ([Adopted local plan](#)) Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

Environment and Climate Change Strategy [Environment and climate strategy Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead](#)

15. CONSULTATION (MANDATORY)

Name of consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
<i>Mandatory: Statutory Officers (or deputy)</i>			
Adele Taylor	Executive Director of Resources/S151 Officer	17/01/23	20/01/23
Emma Duncan	Director of Law and Strategy / Monitoring Officer	17/01/23	20/01/23
<i>Deputies:</i>			
Andrew Vallance	Head of Finance (Deputy S151 Officer)	17/01/23	25/01/23
Elaine Browne	Head of Law & Governance (Deputy Monitoring Officer)	17/01/23	
<i>Other consultees:</i>			
<i>Directors (where relevant)</i>			
Tony Reeves	Interim Chief Executive	17/01/23	18/01/23
Andrew Durrant	Executive Director of Place	17/01/23	17/01/23
Kevin McDaniel	Executive Director of People Services	17/01/23	25/01/23
<i>Deputies:</i>			
Chris Joyce	Head of Service ISEG	17/01/23	

Confirmation relevant Cabinet Member(s) consulted	Councillor Andrew Johnson - Leader of the Council and Chairman of Cabinet, Business, Economic Development and Property	Yes
	Councillor Samantha Rayner - Deputy Leader of the Council, Corporate & Resident Services, Culture & Heritage and Windsor	Yes

REPORT HISTORY

Decision type:	Urgency item?	To follow item?
Key decision First entered into the Cabinet Forward Plan: 26 th July 2021.	No	No

Report Authors: Jesal Dhokia



Stakeholder Engagement & Vision Report

December 2022



Executive Summary

The Need for a Vision

Windsor has witnessed a series of major shocks in its recent history. The Covid pandemic in particular has had a severe impact on the local economy and exposed the extent of its reliance on a narrow strand of tourism.

As visitors return, and now with the passing of Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, there is a need to review and consider a vision for the future of Windsor, in context with the needs of the local community and future challenges such as climate adaptation.

Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead council enlisted The Prince's Foundation to undertake a stakeholder engagement process to comprehensively uncover the assets, challenges and opportunities and articulate a vision that can guide Windsor for its next 20 years.

A Community-Led Process

This Vision for Windsor document has been developed through a stakeholder engagement programme that took place over the course of several months, consisting of a number of opportunities for engagement through in-person events and online resources.

An Emerging Consensus

Outcomes of the stakeholder engagement process highlighted some key issues and common themes.

Movement & Access

Access to the town centre has emerged as a central issue, affecting wider Windsor residents and town centre staff in particular who note the cost and lack of available parking, as well as limited public transport options.

Heritage, Character & Identity

Core to Windsor's sense of place is the heritage and built qualities of the town, something which many are keen to ensure is protected and conserved.

Richness of Natural Resources

The parks, gardens, river and riverside have frequently been acknowledged as assets, with the possibility to activate and enhance these areas for greater use and benefit.

Uses, Commercial Diversity & Local Amenities

A lack of variation and diversity in the retail and commercial options, alongside a lack of amenities for local residents has been highlighted. There is a need to nurture a varied economy, so that the town can provide enough diversity of amenities for all, whilst giving a collective voice to stakeholders in local decision-making.

Global Windsor

There is recognition of the wide-reaching benefits of national and international tourism, and the opportunities it presents. At the same time may be a need to resolve some of the conflicts between visitor and resident needs and rebalance priorities.

Local Governance

The representation of resident, business and community interests is needed to guide and support decision-making at the local level.

Defining & Delivering the Vision

Throughout a process of stakeholder workshops, public events and feedback, a Vision has been developed to address overarching and persistent issues and build on the opportunities identified. The Vision, along with 5 Vision Statements, speak to specific core aspects and recurring themes that are key to Windsor's future.

To support the delivery and actualisation of the Vision, a number of strategies and actions have been explored and presented as potential avenues, options and next steps.

Executive Summary

A Vibrant Future for Windsor

An attractive, thriving and welcoming town for the local and global community.

Vision Statements

Transport & Movement

Develop sustainable, convenient & affordable options to travel into Windsor town centre.

The Built Environment

Protect and enhance the heritage, character and identity of Windsor.

The Natural Environment

Promote, activate and improve access to the natural assets and resources.

The Local Community

Create a thriving local economy of business and community partnerships that benefit from Windsor's global brand.

The Global Community

Deliver a world-class visitor experience supported by a strong, diverse and resilient hospitality industry.

5 Strategies & Actions

A number of strategies and actions have been suggested, with each intended to deliver against some or all aspects of the vision and vision statements.

Gateways & Arrival

1. Develop Satellite Parking Sites
2. Celebrate Arrival into Windsor
3. Invest in Improving Public Transport Connections
4. Encourage a Shift to Active Travel

Town Centre Movement

5. Discourage Unnecessary Vehicle Movement and Through-Traffic in the Town Centre
6. Improve Cycling & Walking Connections
7. Take Advantage of the River Thames for Access and Movement
8. Consolidate Town Centre Parking
9. Maintain Priority Parking and Access

Character & Uses

10. Invest in the Riverside to Create an Attractive Entrance into Windsor
11. Employ Guidelines and Regulations to Maintain the Character of the Heritage Core
12. Diversify Town Centre Uses
13. Nurture the Local Culture, Arts and Retail

Public Realm

14. Apply and Maintain a High-Quality Materiality of the Public Realm
15. Improve Engagement with the River and Riverfront
16. Develop a Framework for Regeneration of Riverside Parking Sites

Local Governance & Community Partnerships

17. Build a Directory of Community Groups and Partnerships
18. Establish a Collective Voice of Stakeholder Representation Across Windsor
19. Create a Register of Ownerships and Landlords
20. Engage with Windsor Castle and The Crown Estate
21. Capitalise on Royal Warrants and the Windsor Brand

This document is created by The Prince's Foundation representing and recording the activities and outcomes of the Vision for Windsor project by Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead (RBWM) and The Prince's Foundation.

The Prince's Foundation provides holistic solutions to challenges facing the world today. We champion a sustainable approach to how we live our lives and build our communities.

The work of The Prince's Foundation is inspired by His Majesty The King Charles III: that by understanding the balance, the order and the relationships between ourselves and the natural world we can create a more sustainable future.



THE
PRINCE'S
FOUNDATION

www.rbwm.gov.uk



Royal Borough
of Windsor &
Maidenhead



Contents

4	Project Overview	40	A Vision for Windsor
5	Introduction	41	Preface
6	Programme	42	The Vision & Vision Statements
7	Stakeholder Engagement Approach	43	Transport & Movement
8	Methodology	44	The Built Environment
9	Project Area	45	The Natural Environment
10	Scoping	46	The Local Community
11	The Scoping Workshop	47	The Global Community
12	Baseline Information	48	Strategies & Actions
18	Strategic Opportunities	49	Delivering the Vision
22	Conclusions	50	Gateways & Arrival
24	Engagement Outcomes	53	Town Centre Movement
25	Stakeholder Engagement Overview	54	Character & Uses
26	Vision for Windsor Survey	56	Public Realm
32	Mapping Quality of Place	58	Local Governance & Community Partnerships
34	Community Capital Assessment	59	Implementation
39	Conclusions		

Project Overview

The Vision for Windsor project sets out to consider what the next 20 years could look like for this town, and to articulate a vision for its future.

Part 1: Project Overview

- Introduction
- Programme
- Stakeholder Engagement Approach
- Methodology
- Project Area



Project Overview

Introduction

Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead council have enlisted The Prince's Foundation to lead a stakeholder engagement process, in order to uncover Windsor's assets, challenges and opportunities, leading to the development of a Vision and a number of strategies.

63

Project Aims & Objectives

1. Establish baseline information to understand the site and context.
2. Engage with a wide range of relevant stakeholders and provide appropriate opportunities for the public to inform the vision.
3. Facilitate a series of workshops with invited participants to collaborate on the development of the vision and strategies.
4. Review the outcomes of the engagement process and information gathered into a vision document.

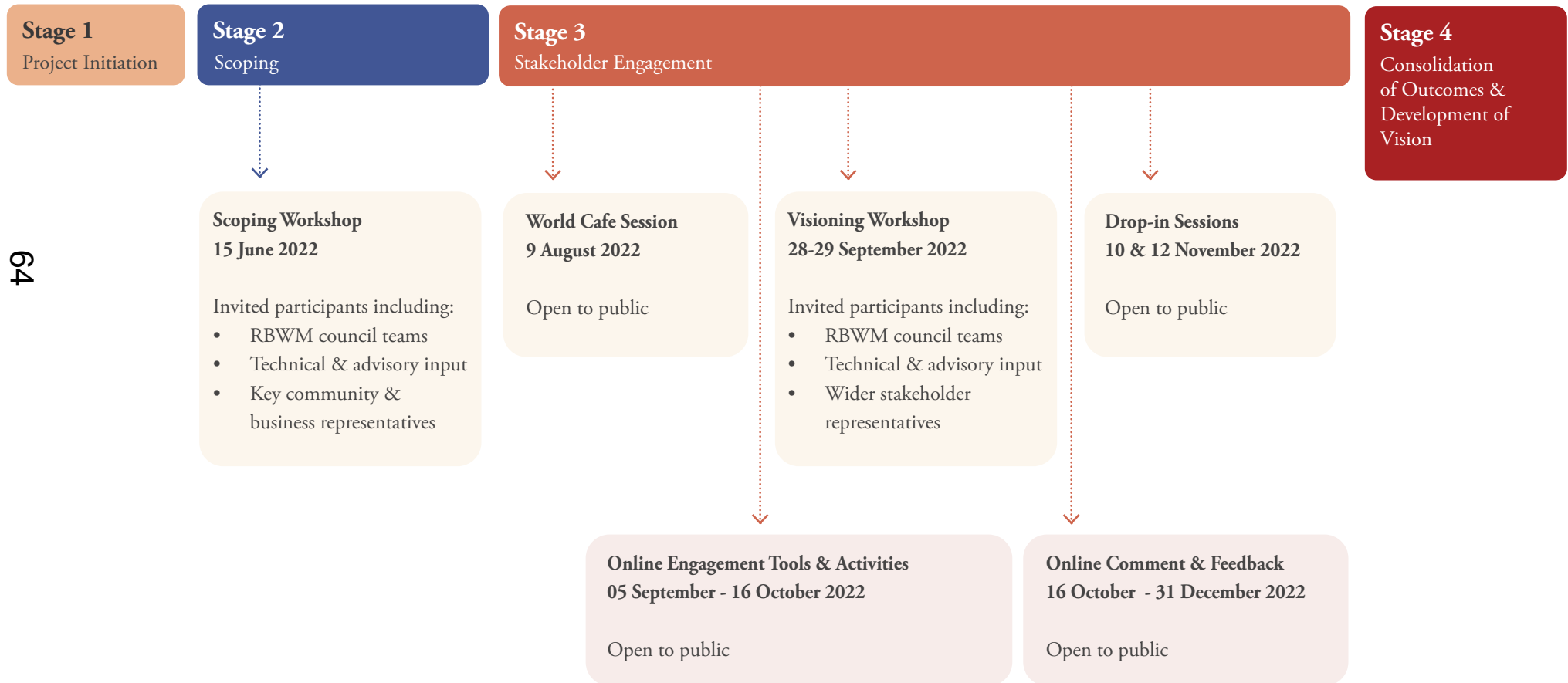
Method

- The Prince's Foundation have facilitated a programme of stakeholder engagement based on our experience of our Enquiry-by-Design process of community-led planning.
- The Prince's Foundation Community Capital Framework has been employed to assess the quality of place in order to develop a complete and holistic understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of Windsor as a place to live, work and visit.

Project Overview

Programme

The Vision for Windsor has been developed through a stakeholder engagement programme that took place over the course of several months, consisting of a number of opportunities for in-person and digital engagement.



64

Project Overview

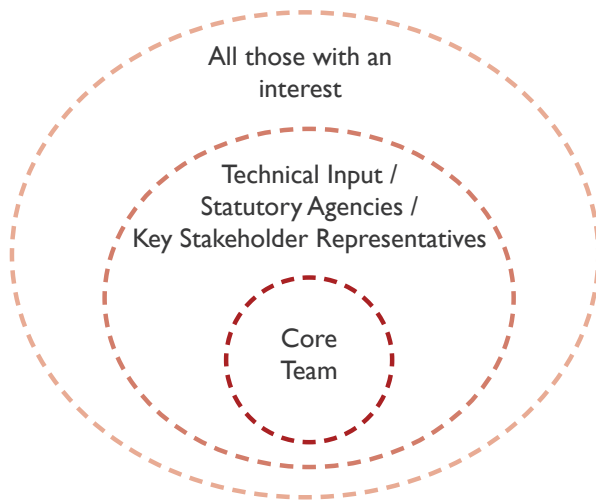
Stakeholder Engagement Approach

Strategy for Stakeholder Involvement

A stakeholder can be defined as any person with an interest or concern in the matter at hand. Stakeholders may fall under many different categories, and be affected in different ways. The engagement process aims to capture a spread of interests and concerns from a wide representation of stakeholders.

The stakeholder engagement strategy begins with a core team at the outset of the programme, and at each stage reaches out to widen the degree of participation.

65



Core Team (Stage 1 - Project Initiation)

The core team is formed of the central facilitating team and key decision makers, who have been involved from project inception. These include council leaders and strategic members of the council, and the project and facilitating team. These participants have been involved from Stage 1 of the project.

Second Tier (Stage 2 - Scoping)

The secondary tier of engagement reaches out to some of the key stakeholder representatives to input technical and strategic knowledge. This included local business representation, community knowledge and essential service providers, alongside relevant expert input. The scoping workshop at Stage 2 engaged with this second tier of stakeholder to understand the core issues and emerging themes.

Third Tier (Stage 3 - Stakeholder Engagement)

The third tier engages the general public that may have an interest or stake in the project. Residents, visitors, the working population and anyone that simply has an interest in Windsor town centre development are all relevant stakeholders. Stage 3 of the project engages widely to build a consensus on key issues and identify common themes across sectors and communities.

Project Overview

Methodology

The Prince's Foundation Community Capital Framework:

Every place is endowed with different natural, financial, social and built assets, which we call the 'Four Pillars of Sustainability'. These form the basis of The Prince's Foundation Community Capital Framework, a tool that we have implemented to holistically assess the quality of place for Windsor.

	NATURAL	SOCIAL	FINANCIAL	BUILT
ROOTED	<p>NATIVE</p> <p>The incorporation of species and materials adapted or suited to the area. <i>e.g. reflection of the local environment in the gardens and landscaping.</i></p>	<p>BELONGING</p> <p>Identification between people and place expressed through friendship, culture and local traditions. <i>e.g. community events held in public buildings and spaces.</i></p>	<p>STEWARDSHIP</p> <p>Secure and diverse forms of tenancy and community management of assets. <i>e.g. the possibility for the community to create housing and services suited to their needs.</i></p>	<p>PLACE MAKING</p> <p>Delightful places that people love and want to be in. <i>e.g. architecture that is mindful of local materials, climate and character.</i></p>
CONNECTED	<p>ECOSYSTEMS</p> <p>Local ecosystems remain whole by retaining and creating links. <i>e.g. maintaining wildlife habitats, natural corridors and watercourses.</i></p>	<p>SOCIAL EXCHANGE</p> <p>A network of social and community organisations that promote connections between people. <i>e.g. existence of support clubs, sports teams and volunteer opportunities.</i></p>	<p>INTEGRATED</p> <p>Accessible capital and local goods as well as supported commercial hubs and local trading. <i>e.g. facilitation of local markets and supply chains.</i></p>	<p>INTER-CONNECTED</p> <p>Neighbourhoods with connected walkable streets allowing access to public spaces and transportation. <i>e.g. logical routes to enable access to daily needs within walking distance of residential areas.</i></p>
BALANCED	<p>BIODIVERSE HABITAT</p> <p>A sustainable relationship between humans, animals and plants. <i>e.g. local crop production that contributes to food security.</i></p>	<p>MIXED</p> <p>An inclusive, diverse and mixed population that is tolerant and respectful. <i>e.g. diversity in housing stock that is affordable and suitable to various demographics.</i></p>	<p>DIVERSE</p> <p>A mixed and local economy and a mixed profile of investment <i>e.g. existence of local goods and services that are affordable.</i></p>	<p>PROPORTIONAL</p> <p>Places with beautiful and well-scaled architecture and a mix of building types. <i>e.g. a high street with coherent shop fronts.</i></p>
RESILIENT	<p>REGENERATIVE</p> <p>The ability for the natural environment to respond and adapt to changes in climate and human activity. <i>e.g. sustainable drainage systems that minimise flood risks.</i></p>	<p>LOCAL GOVERNANCE</p> <p>Local planning and organising frameworks and lifelong education opportunities. <i>e.g. promoting educational and training opportunities to utilise and develop local skills.</i></p>	<p>ADAPTABLE</p> <p>A flexible economic framework with a broad range of economic activities at different scales. <i>e.g. sustainable growth model of housing provision and other amenities.</i></p>	<p>DURABLE</p> <p>Building types, spaces and uses that are suited for the region and which can adapt and change over time. <i>e.g. buildings that can adapt into smaller or larger units or accommodate a change of use.</i></p>
PRUDENT	<p>CONSERVATION</p> <p>The protection, management and enhancement of natural resources. <i>e.g. using sustainably produced and harvested materials.</i></p>	<p>ACCESS TO SERVICES</p> <p>Safe community facilities and amenities for people. <i>e.g. accessible libraries, health facilities and job centres within the community.</i></p>	<p>REINVESTMENT</p> <p>Careful financial planning with a vision for quality long term returns. <i>e.g. Incorporating timely maintenance and community investment.</i></p>	<p>PRESERVATION</p> <p>A priority to refurbish and renovate with recycled and lasting materials from renewable sources. <i>e.g. well - insulated building stock that uses passive methods of cooling and heating.</i></p>

Project Overview

Project Area

Area of Focus

The Vision for Windsor will focus predominantly on the area of the town centre. This includes the railway and bus arrival points, shopping streets, the Castle surroundings and sites near the riverside.

Buffer Zone

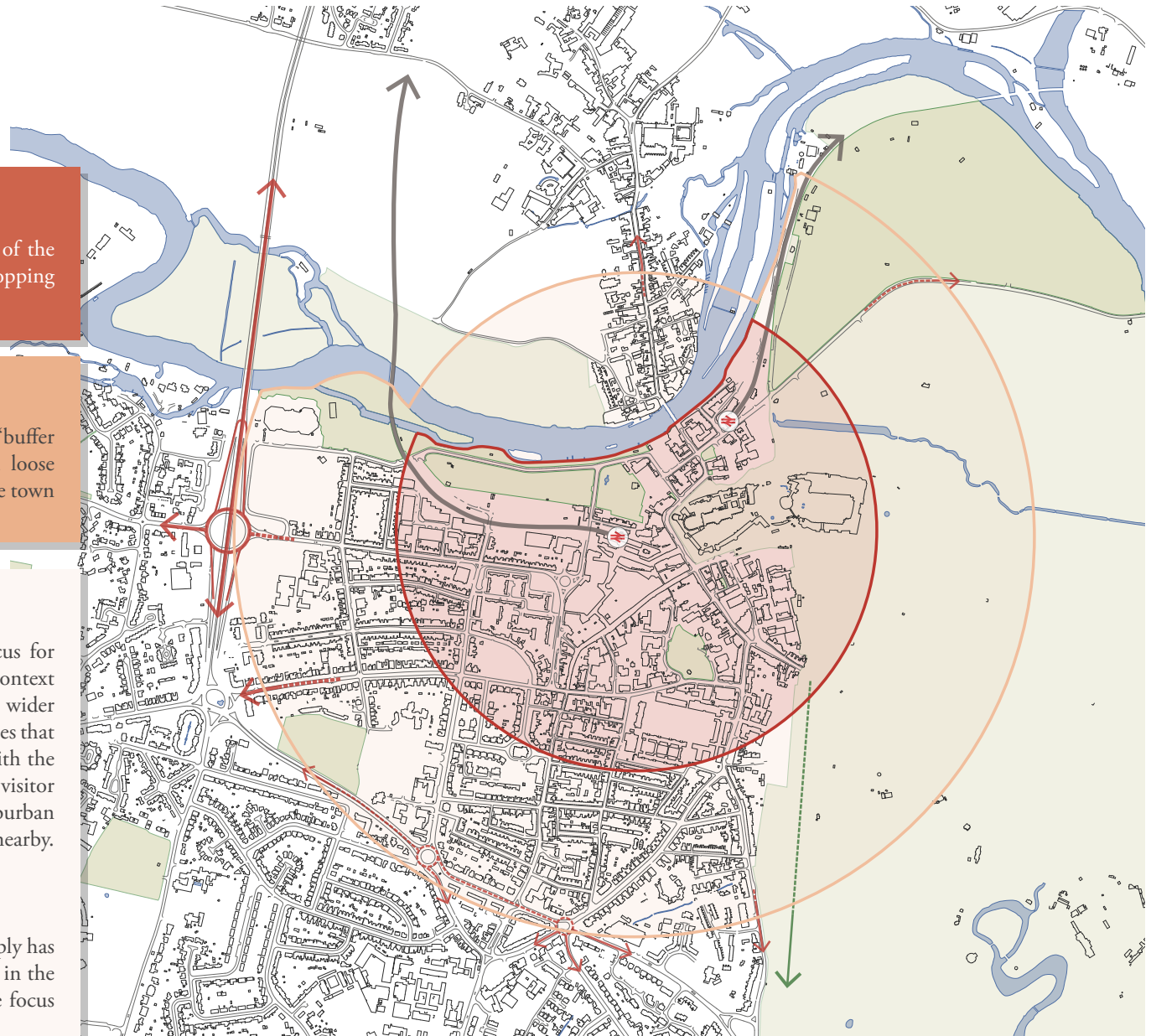
A walkable catchment surrounding the town centre forms a 'buffer zone' of impact and influence. This catchment represents a loose boundary that includes areas within a ~15 minute walk from the town centre.

Wider Context

Areas beyond the buffer zone are likely to sit outside the focus for this project, however we will nevertheless consider the wider context strategically and contextually, particularly when addressing wider movement and transportation links. There are also many other sites that are important to recognise and to consider their relationship with the town centre, as well as their impact on the resident, working and visitor population. These may include other visitor destinations, suburban and residential communities, and other towns and institutions nearby.

Who can get involved?

Residents, visitors, the working population and anyone that simply has an interest in Windsor town centre are all invited to participate in the workshops, regardless of whether or not they reside within the focus and buffer areas.



Scoping

A Scoping Workshop was held to collect a foundation of preliminary information and develop an initial understanding of the constraints and opportunities.

Part 2: Scoping

- The Scoping Workshop
- Baseline Information
- Strategic Opportunities
- Conclusions



Scoping

The Scoping Workshop

A Scoping Workshop took place on the 15th of June 2022 in order to scope out initial opportunities and constraints, whilst developing a foundation of contextual information.

The purpose of this Scoping Workshop was to bring together a core team of stakeholders, members of the council and local leaders to understand some of the key interests regarding the future of Windsor, at an early stage of the Vision for Windsor project.

69

Attendance & Representation

Project & Consultant Team

- Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead
- The Prince's Foundation
- Andrew Cameron Associates

Council Representatives

- Economic Growth
- Sustainability and Climate
- Planning
- RBWM Property Company
- Housing Services
- Highways
- Neighbourhood Services

Community Representatives

- Council Leaders & Cabinet Members
- Local Ward Councillors
- Windsor, Eton and Ascot Town Partnership
- Thames Valley Police

Business Representatives

- Visit Windsor
- Royal Windsor Shopping Centre
- Windsor Chamber of Commerce
- Legoland Windsor Resort
- Windsor Castle

Workshop Agenda

Session 1: 15th Morning

- Welcome
- Stakeholder Statements
- Technical Briefings
- Q&A
- Tour of Area & Sites

Session 2: 15th Afternoon

- Workshop Groups & Discussion
- Feedback & review

References

- [Borough Local Plan 2013 – 2033](#)
- [Windsor 2030](#)
- [Windsor Neighbourhood Plan](#)
- [Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead](#)

Scoping

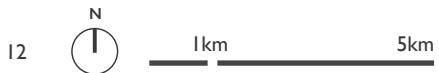
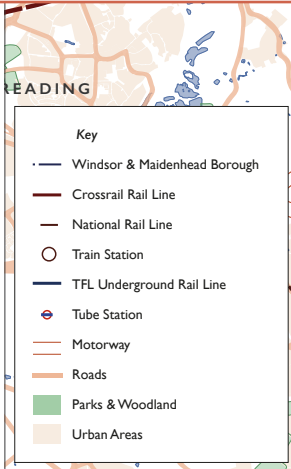
Baseline Information

Wider Context

Windsor's location benefits from its proximity to London, strategic rail and motorway connections and a major international airport, providing national and international access to its valuable cultural, heritage and environmental assets.

Windsor is surrounded by a rich natural environment including The River Thames and Jubilee River, The Chiltern Hills AONB and other green spaces and waterways such as the Colne Valley Regional Park.

Eton, Slough, Bracknell and Maidenhead are Windsor's closest neighbouring towns and cities, that provide additional access to transport connections, retail and cultural amenities.



Scoping

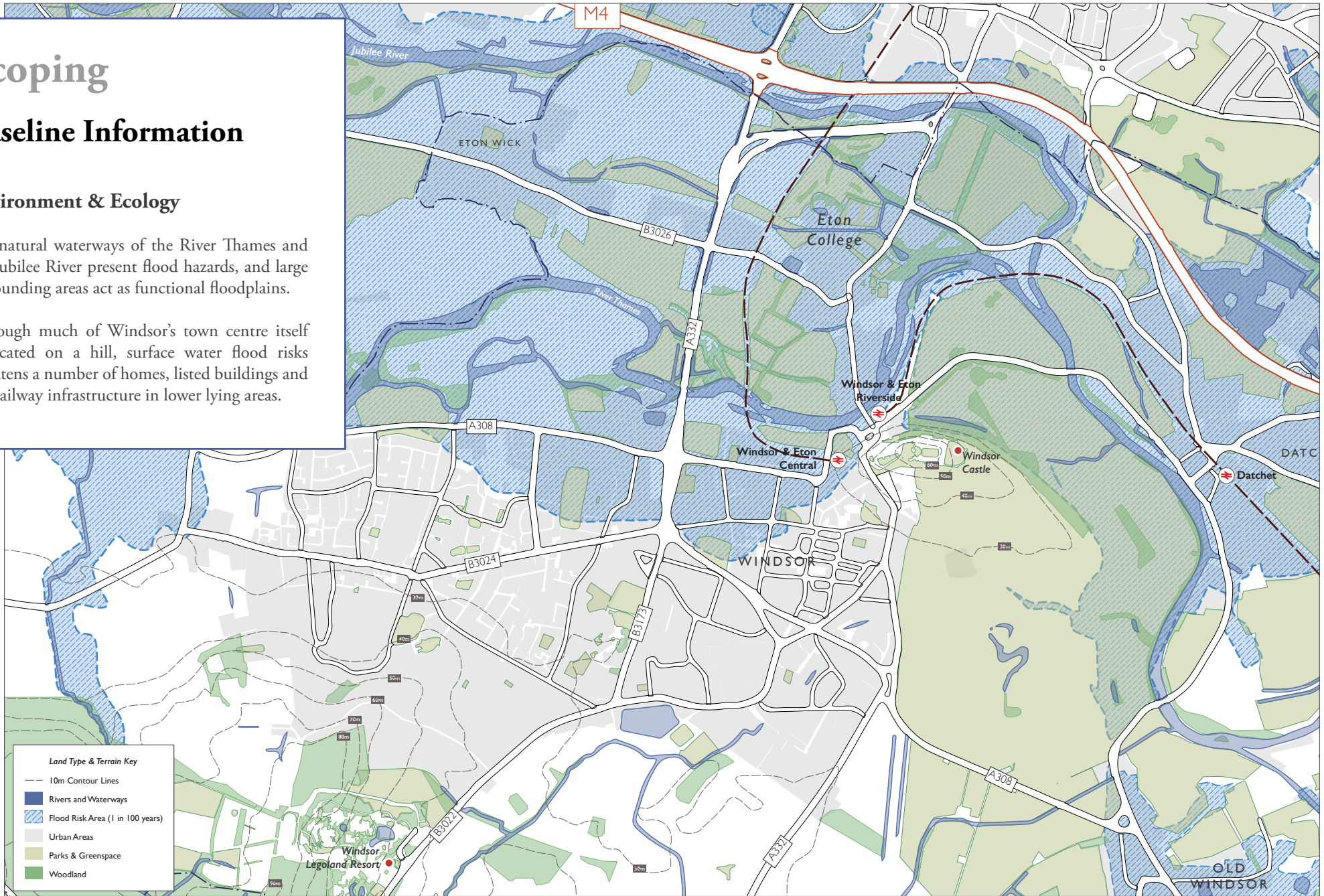
Baseline Information

Environment & Ecology

The natural waterways of the River Thames and the Jubilee River present flood hazards, and large surrounding areas act as functional floodplains.

Although much of Windsor's town centre itself is located on a hill, surface water flood risks threatens a number of homes, listed buildings and key railway infrastructure in lower lying areas.

71



Scoping

Baseline Information

Movement & Access

Windsor is located in a strategic position near junction 6 of the M4 - connecting to the South West of the UK and the M25 surrounding London, and only 6 miles from Heathrow International Airport.

Windsor is served by two train stations: Windsor & Eton Central and Windsor & Eton Riverside, both within a 10 minute walking distance of each other. London Paddington is accessible within 30 minutes from W&E Central, and London Waterloo is accessible within 1 hour from W&E Riverside.

72



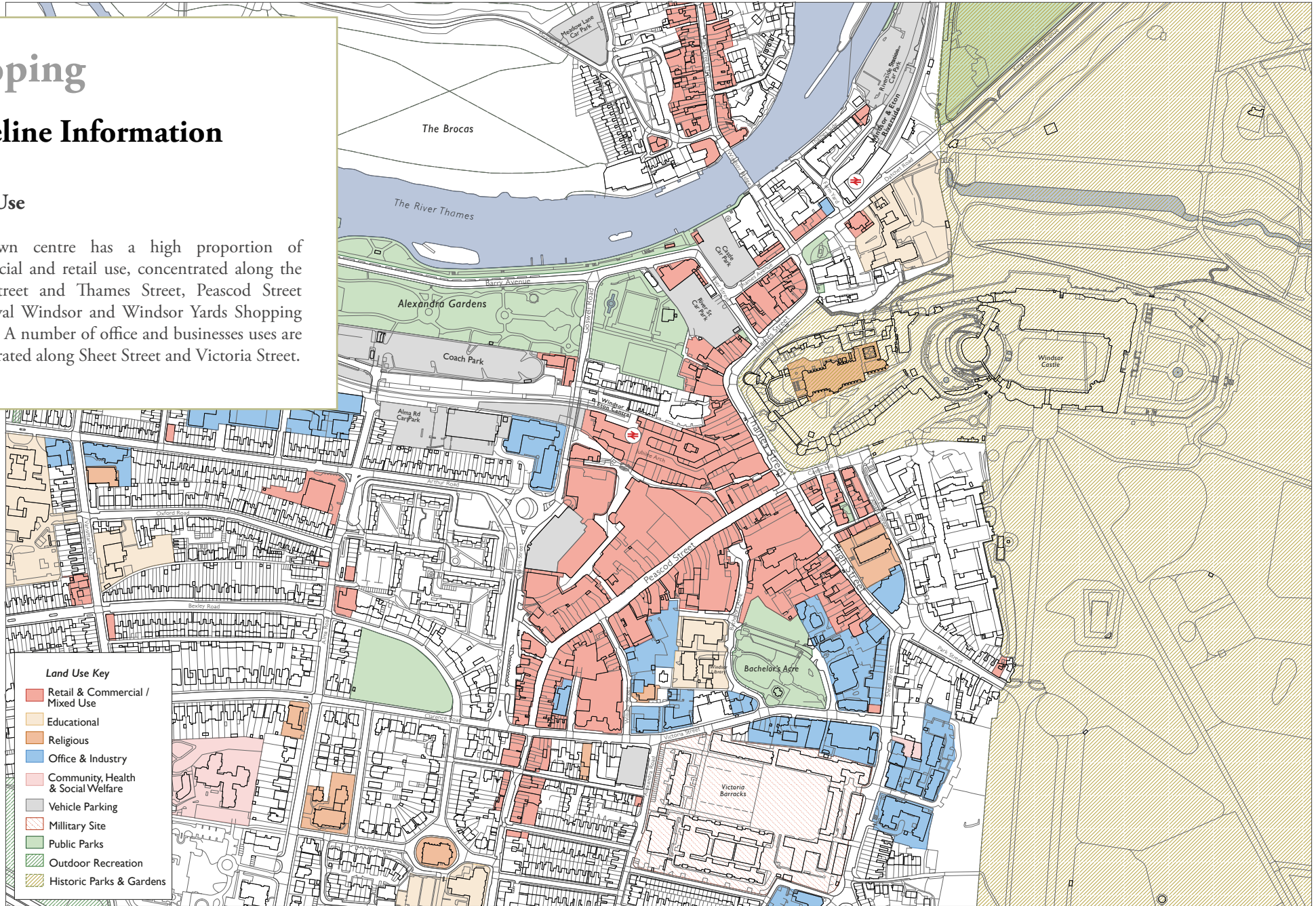
Scoping

Baseline Information

Land Use

The town centre has a high proportion of commercial and retail use, concentrated along the High Street and Thames Street, Peascod Street and Royal Windsor and Windsor Yards Shopping Centres. A number of office and businesses uses are concentrated along Sheet Street and Victoria Street.

73

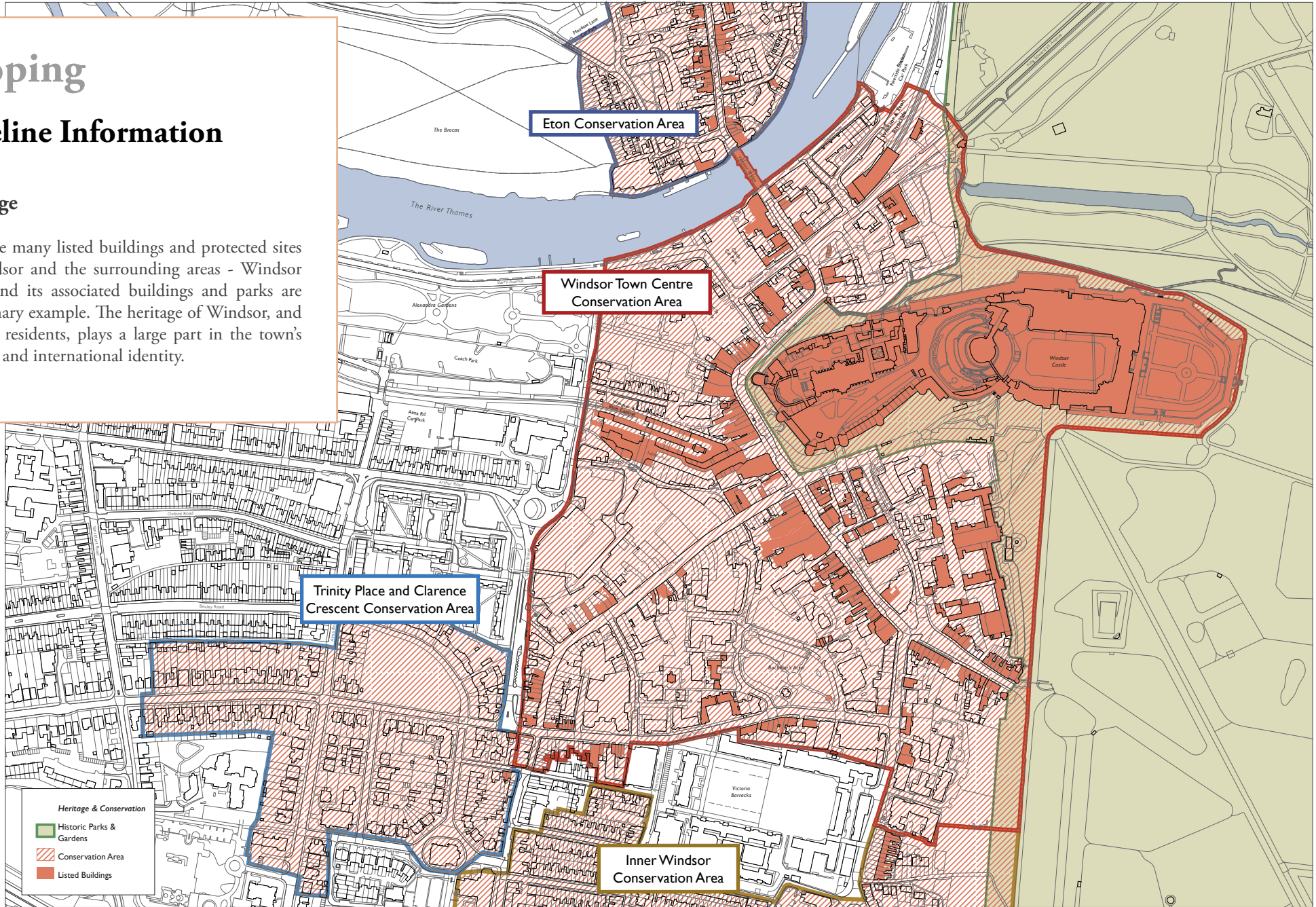


Scoping

Baseline Information

Heritage

There are many listed buildings and protected sites in Windsor and the surrounding areas - Windsor Castle and its associated buildings and parks are the primary example. The heritage of Windsor, and its royal residents, plays a large part in the town's national and international identity.



Scoping

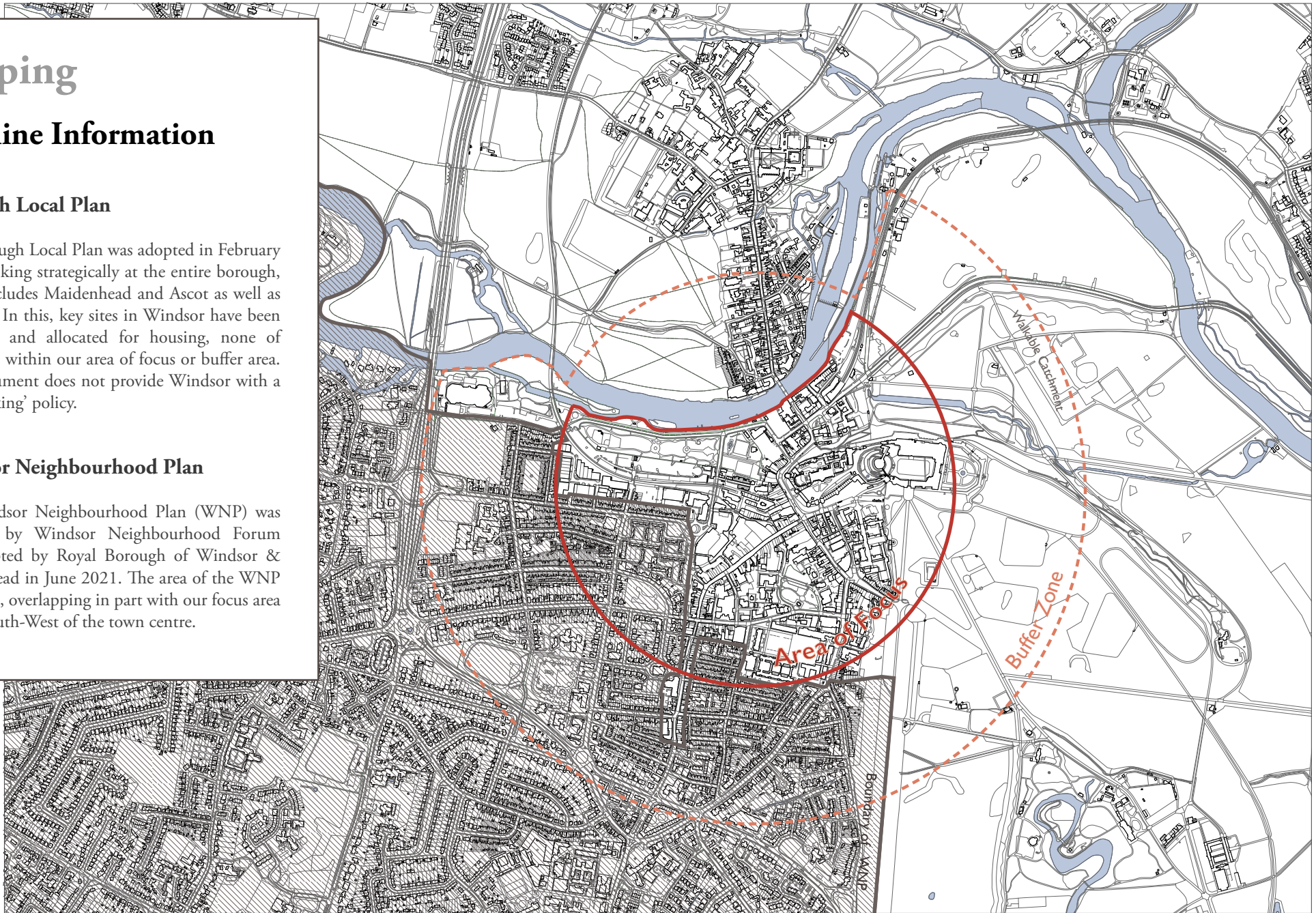
Baseline Information

Borough Local Plan

The Borough Local Plan was adopted in February 2022, looking strategically at the entire borough, which includes Maidenhead and Ascot as well as Windsor. In this, key sites in Windsor have been identified and allocated for housing, none of which are within our area of focus or buffer area. This document does not provide Windsor with a 'placemaking' policy.

75 Windsor Neighbourhood Plan

The Windsor Neighbourhood Plan (WNP) was prepared by Windsor Neighbourhood Forum and adopted by Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead in June 2021. The area of the WNP is marked, overlapping in part with our focus area to the South-West of the town centre.



Scoping

Strategic Opportunities

The following council-owned assets have been identified as opportunity sites that could be strategically enhanced and activated with new or additional uses, in order to contribute to improving Windsor for residents and visitors.

The Riverfront Area

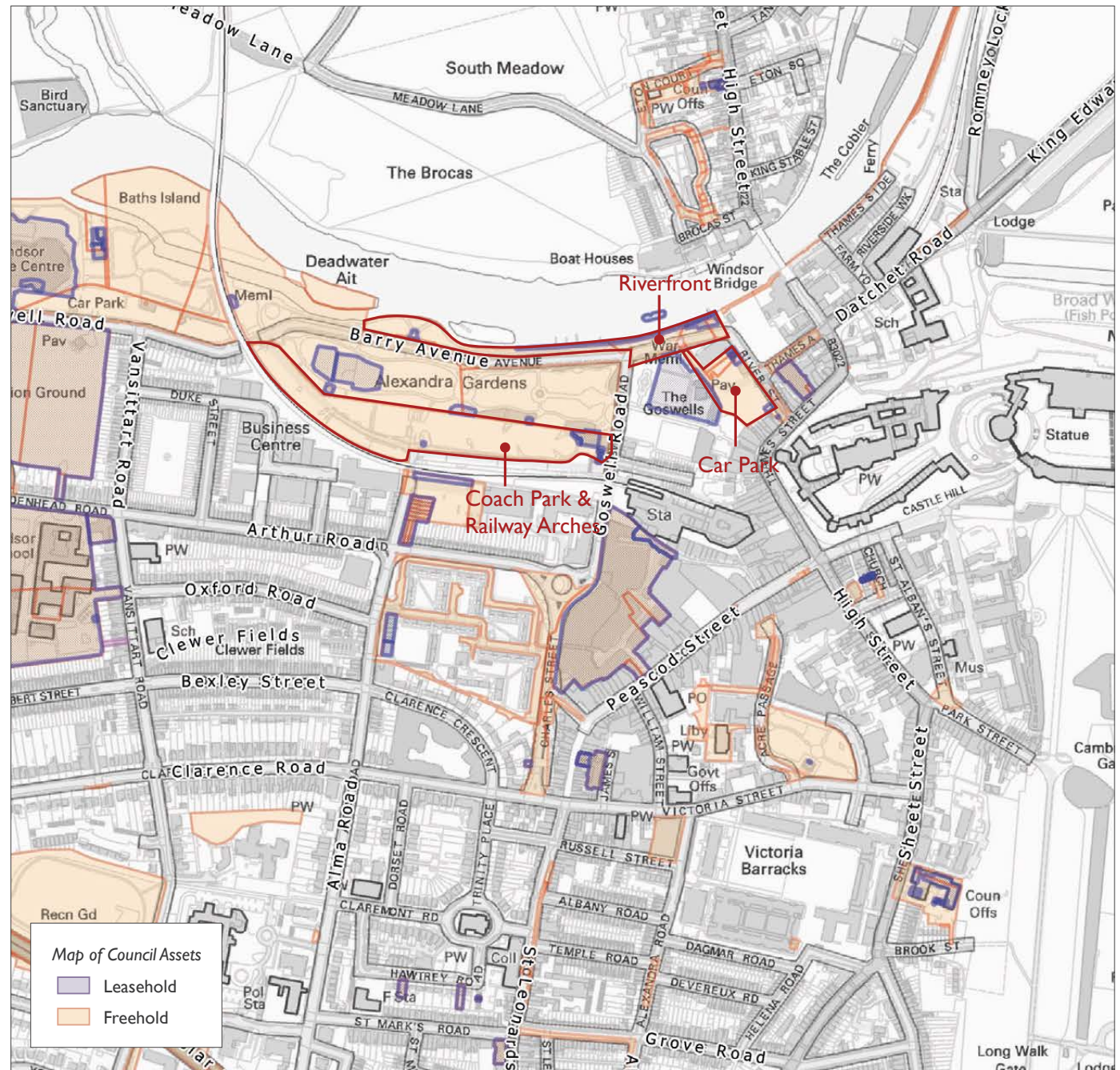
The riverside could be activated as a connection between Alexandra Gardens and other green spaces, as well as establishing as an alternative route to the town centre and Castle.

7 Railway Arches

The railway viaduct currently acts as a barrier between Windsor and the riverside. Opening connections could improve linkages to Barry Avenue, the parking areas and the riverfront and create more pedestrian movement in this area.

Parking Sites

The council-owned car parking and coach parking sites have potential for investment and regeneration to provide a mix of other uses, integrating parking requirements whilst also creating improved connections with the train platform and to the town centre.



Scoping

Strategic Opportunities

Walkability and a Walkable Central Catchment

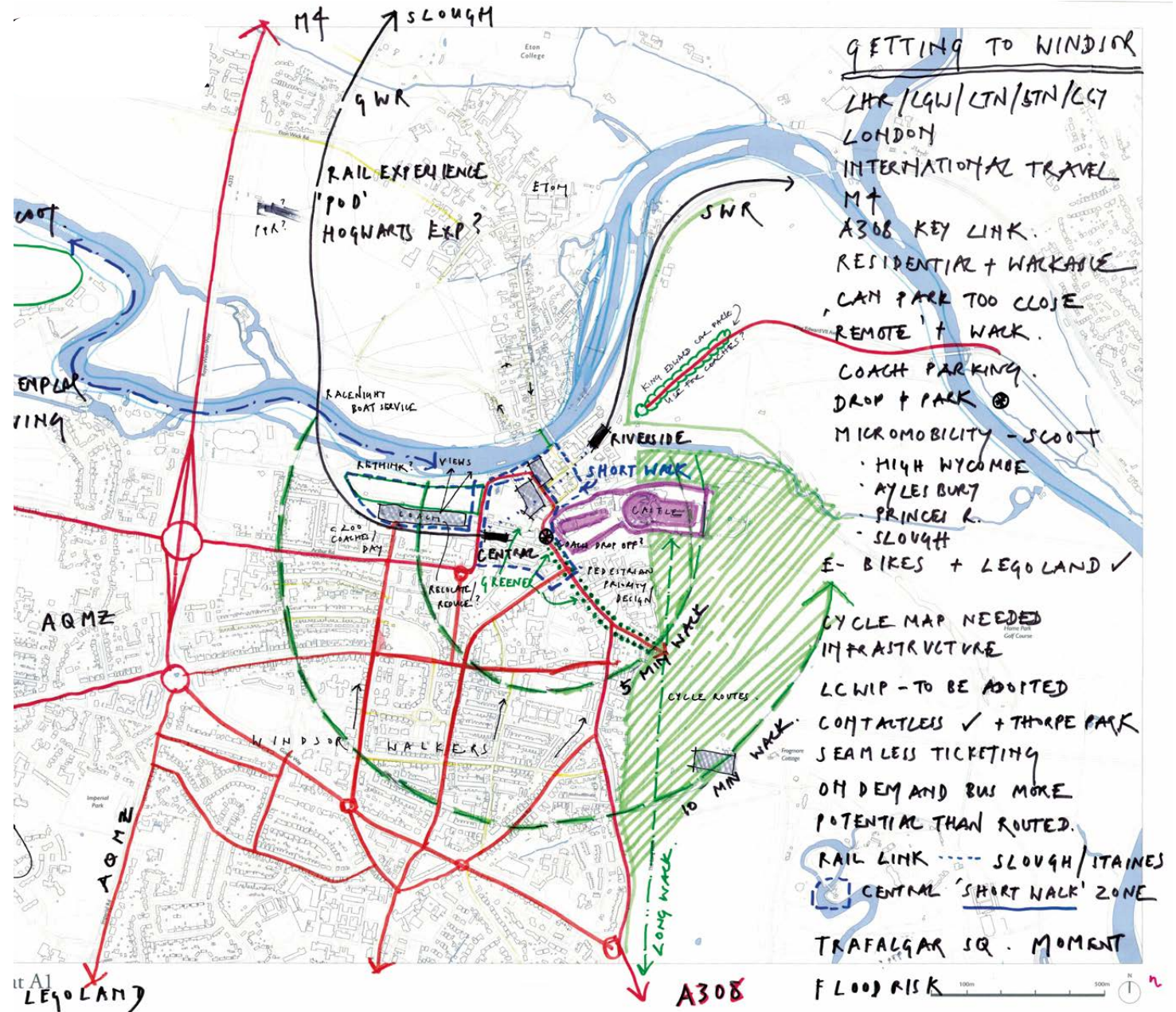
The town centre is highly walkable - it features interesting and historical streetscapes, many pedestrianised and pedestrian-friendly streets and main areas of activity are in close proximity.

Whilst transit is needed to gain access to the centre of Windsor, vehicle parking could be placed more remotely, as it is currently occupying space in central areas and creating high volumes of traffic. There is potential to develop a 'drop & park' system to manage volumes of coaches and visitors.

A significant catchment of local residents can also access Windsor within a short walk. Affordable and accessible public transport options could be developed to create sustainable means of travel from further residential areas, increasing accessibility whilst reducing parking and traffic demands.

A Sustainable Core

A strategy of prioritising pedestrian and cyclist movement over vehicle movement could form a sustainable core for Windsor's centre - a concept that has been given the title of 'The Short Walk'.



Scoping

Strategic Opportunities

Stakeholder Groups

There are a number of communities in and around Windsor and the town centre is a central asset to all of them. This means engaging across multiple political wards and community groups, with a number of businesses and a working population also invested in the town centre.

Previous consultations have taken place that have lead to actions such as the development of the Neighbourhood Plan. However, the last instance of this took place before Covid, and therefore won't have captured the context of the post-pandemic future.

The following stakeholder and stakeholder groups were identified as part of an initial stakeholder mapping exercise, which was developed and expanded throughout the engagement process.

POLITICAL & LOCAL INTEREST

- Residents groups
- Local community groups
- Windsor Neighbourhood Forum
- Eton Town Council
- Eton Community Association
- [Windsor and Eton Society](#)

COMMUNITY

- Schools, parents & families
- Youth council representing young people
- Disability & Inclusion Forum
- Faith groups
- Windsor College
- Windsor Library
- Thames Valley Police
- Eton Community Association

TRANSPORT PROVIDERS

- South Western Rail
- Great Western Railway
- Bus Companies
- Tour operators - national & international
- Cycle Hire Schemes

BUSINESS GROUPS

- Town Centre Group
- Visit Windsor Partnership
- Riverboats
- Windsor Racecourse
- Windsor Legoland
- Hotels and accommodation
- Chamber of Commerce
- Retailers and traders

LANDOWNERS & INVESTORS

- Windsor Yards & Windsor Royal Shopping Centres
- Crown Estate
- Royal Collection
- Victoria Barracks & Combermere Barracks
- The Arch Company

CULTURE

- Festivals
- Museums
- Leisure Centre
- Theatre Royal
- The Old Court Artspace

Scoping

Conclusions

NATURAL CAPITAL

There are many green and blue assets to Windsor that are a key aspect of health, wellbeing and enjoyment of the town, such as the parks, gardens, the river and riverside. These could be better connected and integrated into the cultural offer of the town centre, particularly as connecting routes between the train stations, town centre and other destination points.

The surface water flood risks for Windsor threatens a number of homes, listed buildings and essential infrastructure. Planning and adaptation for changes in the climate is necessary to ensure environmental resilience against natural hazards such as this.

SOCIAL CAPITAL

There is a lot of social activity that takes place in Windsor, with local resident communities as well as large numbers of national and international visitors. Visitors are an important resource to the town, but a large transient population can also present challenges. Managing these points of tension is important to maintain a balanced relationship.

A varied evening and night-time economy in the town centre is somewhat lacking, with limited offers of evening activities. The evening economy needs to broaden its offer to cater to wider groups and different demographics, including differing age ranges, local residents and overnight visitors. It also needs to have a harmonious relationship with its neighbourhood population. Improvements to street lighting, managing anti-social behaviour outside clubs, and developing a more varied night-time offer could address this.

FINANCIAL CAPITAL

Businesses are facing new challenges with changes in customer and visitor trends taking hold, including the post-Covid recovery of tourism amongst other economic shocks. Businesses feel the need to build future resilience and security.

There is a real desire to invest in the quality of the experience of Windsor for local and visitor populations alike. There are a number of strategy and vision plans already established or taking shape, with many invested stakeholders. 'The Windsor Experience' ties together the variety and quality of retail, commercial and tourist provision that makes the town a vibrant destination and place to live and work.

BUILT CAPITAL

Movement and access in and around Windsor centre could be made easier and more convenient, with particular attention needed on managing the volume of private vehicles and supporting sustainable means of travel including public transport, cycling and walking. The public realm is a key opportunity area to improve the local and visitor experience, in terms of access, safety and enjoyment.

Net-zero carbon by 2050 is a target for the borough. To achieve this, it is necessary to consider improving sustainable transport choices as well as energy efficiency in buildings, a challenge for a city with a high number of older heritage buildings.



Engagement Outcomes

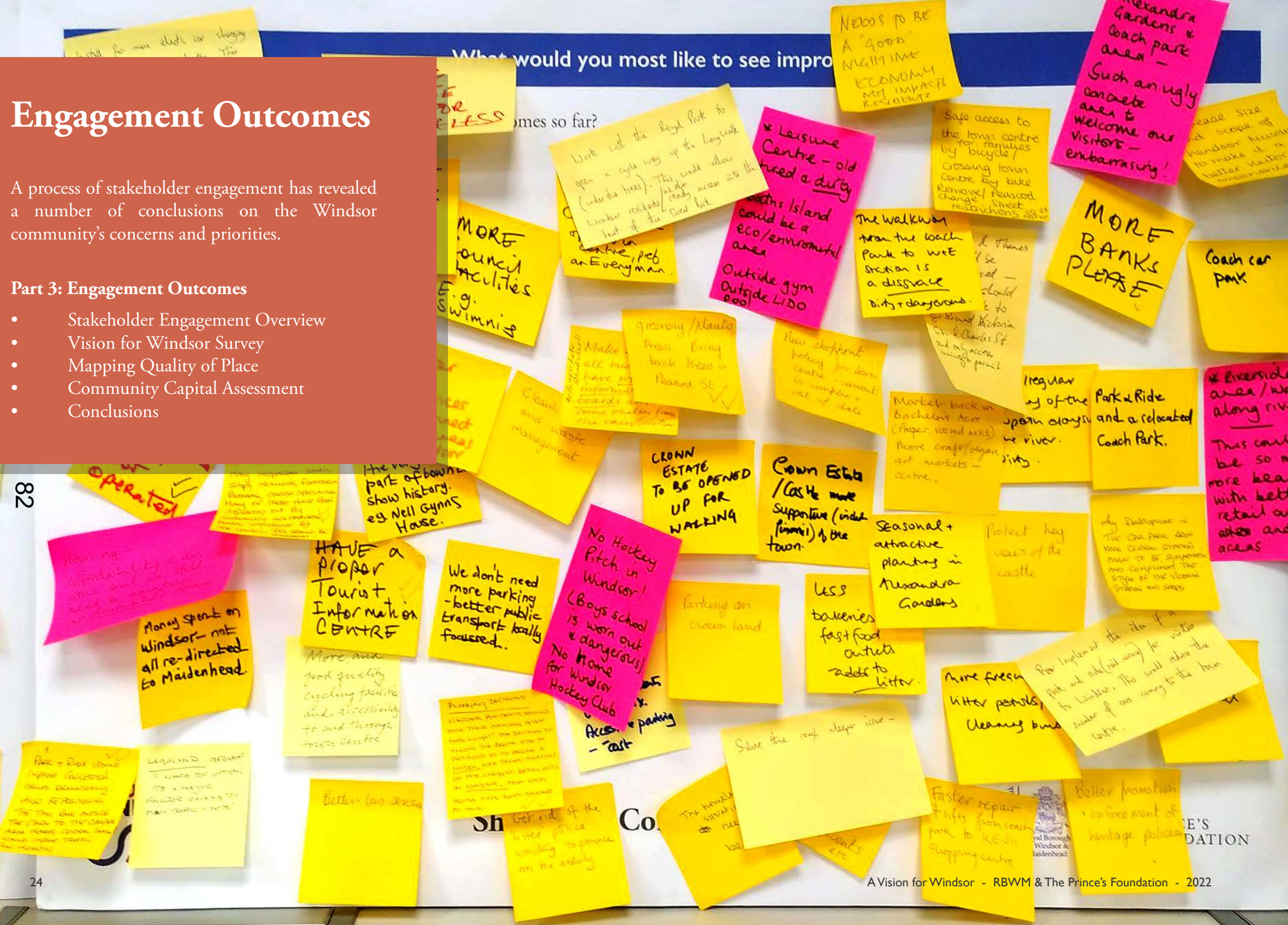
A process of stakeholder engagement has revealed a number of conclusions on the Windsor community's concerns and priorities.

Part 3: Engagement Outcomes

- Stakeholder Engagement Overview
- Vision for Windsor Survey
- Mapping Quality of Place
- Community Capital Assessment
- Conclusions

82

What would you most like to see improved in Windsor?



Engagement Outcomes

Stakeholder Engagement Overview

A programme of stakeholder engagement has been undertaken to inform the Vision for Windsor. The objective of these events was to develop an in-depth and holistic analysis of Windsor's assets, opportunities and threats, and to understand the key concerns and priorities of Windsor's community and users.

83

Elements of Stakeholder Involvement

World Cafe in Clewer and Dedworth West

The World Cafe held a session on 9th August 2022 which asked: "What do you want to see in Windsor Town Centre?". The World Cafe is a youth community event and this session was attended by a total of 28 people, with a high proportion of under-30s. A report on the outcomes of the session have been reviewed and fed into these outcomes.

Visioning Workshop

Community and business representatives were invited to a two-day workshop that was held on the 28th and 29th September 2022. Approximately 35 people attended the Visioning Workshop, including RBWM council teams, local councillors, business owners and operators, and community group representatives. This was an opportunity to collaborate across multiple stakeholder groups to develop an understanding of key issues and emerging themes regarding the aspirations for Windsor.

Vision for Windsor Online Engagement

The RBWM online webpage was used as an opportunity for wider public engagement. The webpage hosted The Vision for Windsor survey, and an interactive map for participation in the Mapping Quality of Place exercise, as well as other opportunities for the public to submit ideas and comments throughout the process.

Public Engagement Sessions

Members of public were invited to attend a drop-in session to review the outcomes in draft and contribute their responses. 279 comments were received in total across 2 drop-in events.

Activities & Assessments

Community Capital Assessment

The Visioning Workshop was an opportunity to form a collective assessment of the Natural, Built, Social and Financial aspects of Windsor.

Mapping Quality of Place

We asked stakeholders to identify areas, places or spaces that represent positive aspects, negative aspects or opportunities. This was conducted as part of the Visioning Workshop and via an interactive map online on the webpage.

Vision for Windsor Survey

The Vision for Windsor survey was hosted on the RBWM website between the 5th September and 16th October 2022 and was also available in print at request from Windsor Library. The survey was completed by 411 members of the public.

Comment & Feedback

The webpage was routinely updated with materials, with an option for viewers to submit comments via a feedback tool. This was closed on 31st December 2022. 47 comments were received through this feedback tool.

Engagement Outcomes

Vision for Windsor Survey

Most Commonly Mentioned **Positive Aspects**

- 84
- 1 GREENSPACE**
By far, most of the positive comments related to the greenspace, including mentions of the numerous parks and recreation grounds in and around Windsor as well as the wider greenspace. These include mentions of Home Park, the Long Walk, Alexandra Park, the Great Park, to name just a few.
 - 2 WINDSOR CASTLE**
Numerous comments mentioned Windsor Castle specifically as an important landmark and asset to the town. There were also many comments made regarding Windsor's role in history following the funeral of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.
 - 3 COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY**
Many comments mentioned the retailers, restaurants and eating places that contribute to the liveliness and vibrancy of the town.
 - 4 THE RIVERS & THE RIVERSIDE**
The Thames and Jubilee Rivers are frequently mentioned as positive aspects of Windsor.
 - 5 HERITAGE, ARCHITECTURE & THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT**
The heritage architecture of Windsor is cited as an important part of the town's identity and contributes to the feeling of a historic place.
 - 6 LOCATION**
There were many mentions of Windsor's location within picturesque areas of countryside as well as its strategic proximity to London and Heathrow airport. Access to the motorways and railway services were also frequently mentioned.
 - 7 COMMUNITY**
Comments mention that there is a strong community in Windsor and that many people feel a sense of belonging where they live and work.



Engagement Outcomes

Vision for Windsor Survey

Most Commonly Mentioned **Negative Aspects**

- 1 CAR PARKING**
A large majority of comments relate to the cost and availability of car parking in Windsor town centre. Many people say this deters them from visiting Windsor centre, particularly as other centres in the region are easier to access by car.
- 2 LOSS OF BUSINESSES**
Another important issue that many are concerned about is the number of empty retail units, and the fact that businesses appear to be struggling or under threat of closure.
- 3 RETAIL DOMINATED BY TOURISM**
An additional recurring comment relates to the number of businesses in Windsor that cater specifically to the tourist market, and a lack of businesses that benefit the local population.
- 4 LACK OF LOCAL SERVICES & AMENITIES**
Many further comments noted the lack of local amenities and facilities, particularly cinema, entertainment, sport and leisure, as well as the lack of local or independent retail.
- 5 TRAFFIC & VEHICLE NUMBERS**
The traffic congestion and pollution due to the numbers of cars, coaches and other vehicles accessing the town centre is mentioned frequently as a negative.
- 6 APPEARANCE**
Concerns regarding appearance relates to both graffiti, litter and overall cleanliness in certain areas of the public realm, as well as the appearance and maintenance of buildings.
- 7 HOMELESSNESS**
Numerous comments mention that there is a high degree of homelessness and concern regarding access to affordable or sheltered housing.



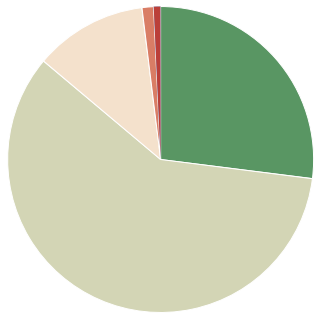
Aspects that were rated highly...

SAFETY

On the whole, do you feel safe when going about your usual activities in Windsor town centre?

Question options

Always Most of the time Sometimes Rarely Not at all

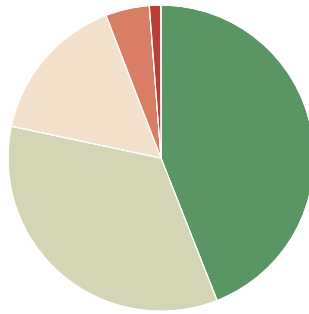


ACCESS TO GREENSPACE

How would you rate the quality of green space and natural environments in Windsor?

Question options

Very Good Good Ok Poor Very Poor



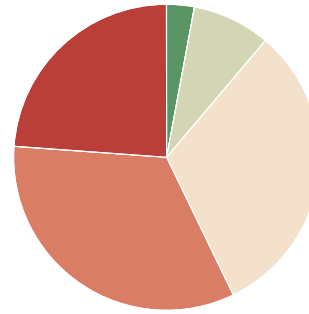
Identified weakness...

LOCAL GOVERNANCE

Do you feel that you are able to get involved in influencing and affecting positive change in Windsor town centre?

Question options

Always Most of the time Sometimes Rarely Not at all

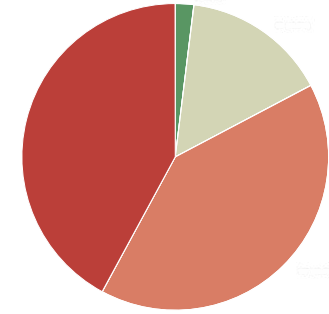


RESILIENCE & STABILITY

Have the types of traders, vendors & service providers that you regularly frequent in Windsor remained stable in the last few years during periods of crisis?

Question options

Highly resilient, most businesses retained Some resilience, many businesses retained Some loss of businesses Loss of many businesses

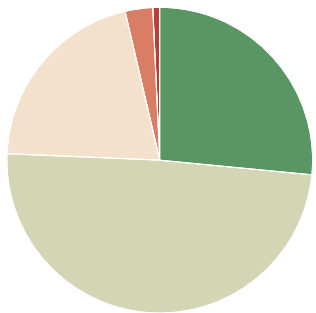


URBAN ENVIRONMENT & LEGIBILITY

How do you find navigating the town and finding your way around?

Question options

Very Good Good Ok Poor Very Poor

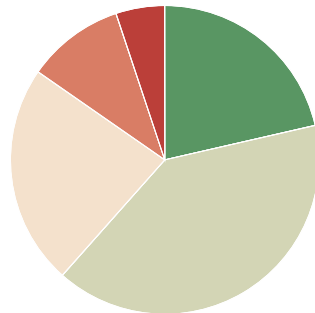


SUSTAINABLE LIVING

Do you agree that Windsor is a place where you can live, work, spend leisure time, do business, and meet your daily needs sustainably, being conscious of your environmental impact?

Question options

Strongly agree Slightly agree Neutral Slightly disagree Strongly disagree

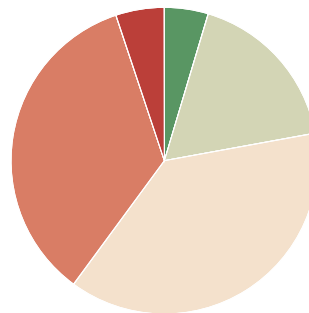


COMMERCIAL DIVERSITY

Thinking about the things you normally spend money on, is there variety in the range of activities and commercial offers for you in Windsor?

Question options

Lots of variety Enough variety Some variety Limited variety No variety

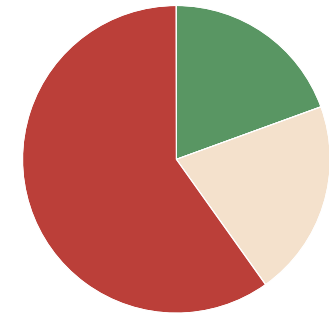


ACCESS TO SERVICES AND AMENITIES

As a resident, worker, or visitor, do you feel there are enough services, facilities and retail provision for you?

Question options

Yes Unsure No



Access to services and amenities

ACCESS TO SERVICES

Do you feel that you have access to the following facilities and amenities in Windsor?

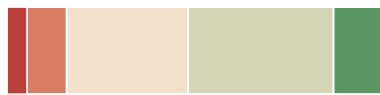
Question options

Very Good Good Ok Poor Very Poor

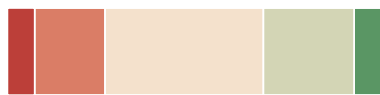
Places to meet with people you know



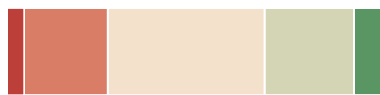
Facilities for sport & recreation



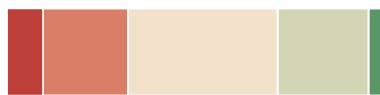
Places to meet the wider community



Opportunities for employment



Opportunities for learning



ACCESS TO SERVICES

How do you rate the access to goods, services or amenities in Windsor Town Centre?

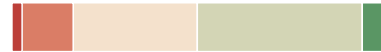
Question options

Very Good Good Ok Poor Very Poor

Restaurants



Leisure & Sport



Hotels & Accommodation



Arts & Culture



Nightlife



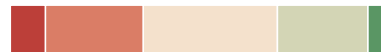
Events



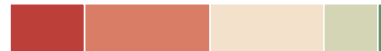
Branded Retail



Entertainment



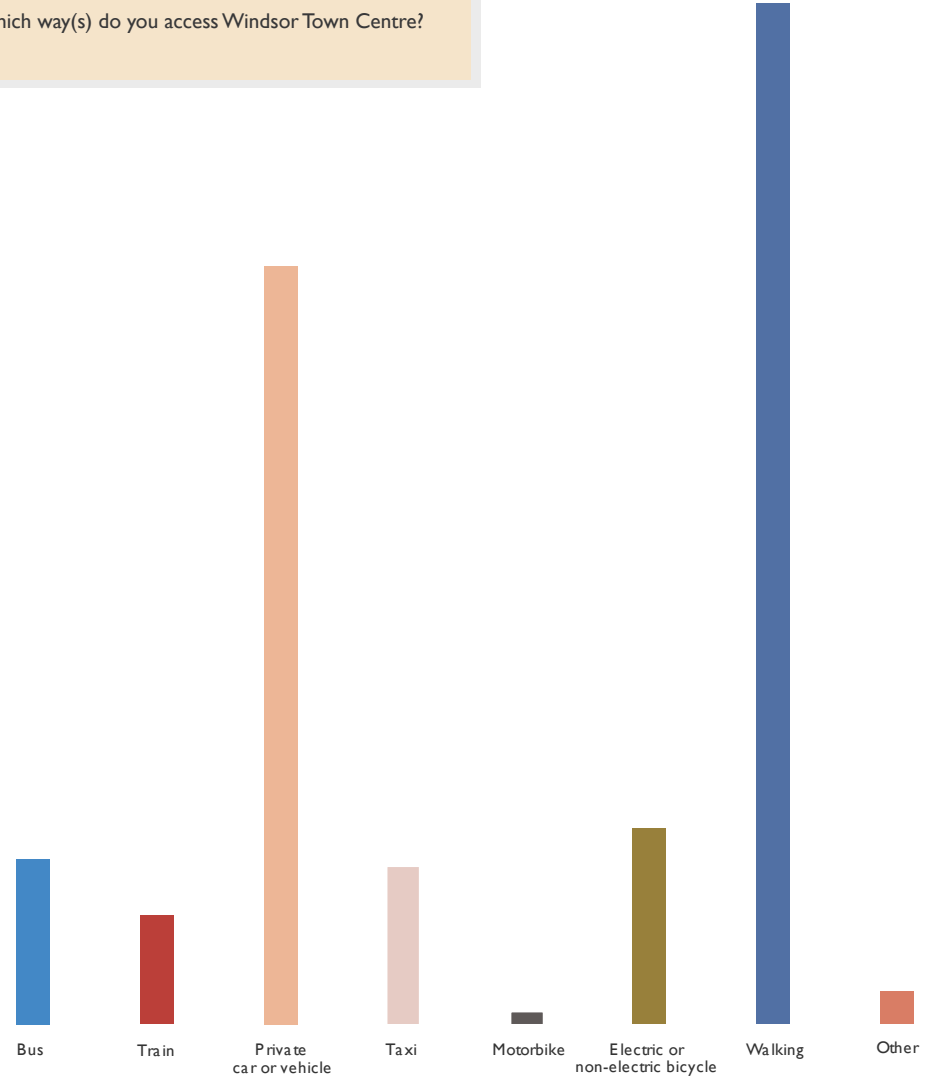
Independent Retail



Movement patterns

TRANSPORT

Which way(s) do you access Windsor Town Centre?



87

Engagement Outcomes

Vision for Windsor Survey

Most Commonly Mentioned Areas for Improvement

1 IMPROVE THE DIVERSITY & QUALITY OF RETAIL

The clear priority is indicated as improving the diversity and quality of the retail and commercial offer. Most comments related to a lack of retail options in various regards - affordable, independent, local or artisan etc. It is clear that the retail and commercial offer does not provide enough variety and choice for its community.

2 IMPROVE ACCESS

Many comments suggested improvements to bus services, cheaper parking or more parking available for specific users. It is clear that most people find access to the town centre extremely difficult and very limited. Many feel that their only option to access the centre is by car, leading to enormous pressure on the roads and car parks. Some comments have mentioned a Park & Ride option would be welcomed to avoid having to navigate congested roads in the centre. Overall, there are many indicators that movement and access into the town centre needs to be resolved to provide efficient and convenient access for all types of users including residents, workers and customers, according to their various needs.

3 REDUCE THE NUMBERS OF VEHICLES

Many commenting would like to see reduced vehicles numbers into Windsor town centre overall, for reasons such as congestion, pollution and to create a safer environment for both cyclists and pedestrians - particularly in areas of heavy footfall.

4 MORE AMENITIES FOR THE LOCAL POPULATION

It is felt that there should be more facilities for local residents, and that some specific demographics, such as adolescents and young adults, have little offered in the way of amenity, entertainment and leisure.

5 IMPROVE CYCLING & PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE

A lot of comments related to the poor infrastructure for cyclists and pedestrians, which include secure bike parking and pleasant cycle and walking routes. Many people would like to see improvements so that they feel it is safe, convenient and pleasant to cycle or walk into and around Windsor.

6 IMPROVE THE PUBLIC REALM

Many people would like to see improvements to the appearance, maintenance and cleanliness of the public realm. The riverside area is one particular example where it is felt there could be a more pleasant and accessible public space that takes advantage of the river, one of Windsor's main assets.

7 MAINTAIN THE HERITAGE QUALITIES OF WINDSOR

The heritage architecture of Windsor is a highly valued aspect of the town centre and there are some concerns that the current maintenance and use of buildings or possible future development may threaten this quality. There is a strong consensus that any improvement to the centre must conserve and enhance its heritage identity.

Engagement Outcomes

The Visioning Workshop

A wide range of stakeholder representatives were invited to a two-day workshop that was held on the 28th and 29th September. This was an opportunity to collaborate across multiple stakeholder groups and users to develop an understanding of key issues and emerging themes regarding the aspirations for Windsor.

The workshop consisted of a number of sessions and attendees were encouraged to participate in the full programme. On the first morning, Session 1 was intended as an opportunity for all participants to develop a common understanding of relevant issues. In Session 2, that afternoon, participants formed groups of mixed representation to take part in engagement activities and group discussion, the outcomes of which are collated and presented in the next few pages.

Sessions 3 and 4 provided the opportunity for the development of strategies and actions, which are presented in the final chapter (Part 5) of this document.

Attendance & Representation

Project & Consultant Team

- Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead
- The Prince's Foundation
- Alan Baxter Ltd

Council Representatives

- Economic Growth
- Planning
- Transport & Infrastructure
- Neighbourhood Services
- Heritage & Conservation

Community Representatives

- Local ward councillors & council leaders
- Windsor, Eton and Ascot Town Partnership
- Windsor Neighbourhood Plan
- Windsor & Eton Society

Business & Investor Representatives

- Windsor Yards & Windsor Royal Shopping Centres
- Windsor Chamber of Commerce
- Legoland Windsor Resort
- Development interests
- Retail & hospitality businesses

Workshop Agenda

Session 1: 28th Morning

- Welcome
- Stakeholder Statements
- Technical Briefings
- Vision for Windsor Outcomes so far
- Q&A
- Tour of Area & Sites

Session 2: 28th Afternoon

- Workshop Groups: Analysis
 - Community Capital Assessment
 - Mapping Quality of Place
- Workshop Groups: Opportunities & Vision Statements
- Feedback & review

Session 3: 29th Morning

- Welcome & Summary of Day 1
- Vision for Windsor Objectives
- Q&A
- Workshop Groups: Actions

Session 4: 29th Afternoon

- Workshop Groups: Actions (cont')
- Feedback & review
- Closing Statements & Next Steps

Engagement Outcomes

Mapping Quality of Place

The participants of the workshop took part in two initial engagement activities to form an assessment of Windsor town centre. They were done in groups of 8-10 participants each and the results of these activities have been consolidated in the following pages.

Activity 1: Mapping Quality of Place

In activity 1, participants were asked to place coloured dots on a map of Windsor and the immediate area, indicating positive assets and attributes in green, problem spots in red, and opportunity areas in blue.

Activity 2: Community Capital Assessment of Place

In activity 2, participants were consulted on both the positive and negative aspects of the 4 key pillars of sustainable communities; Natural, Social, Financial and Built.

Positive

Green dots denote 'positive areas, spaces or features that people like and work well'. Where the green dots accumulate, these signify areas that should be retained, preserved or enhanced.

There are a number of areas that contain multiple green dots, most of these being natural environments or heritage features:

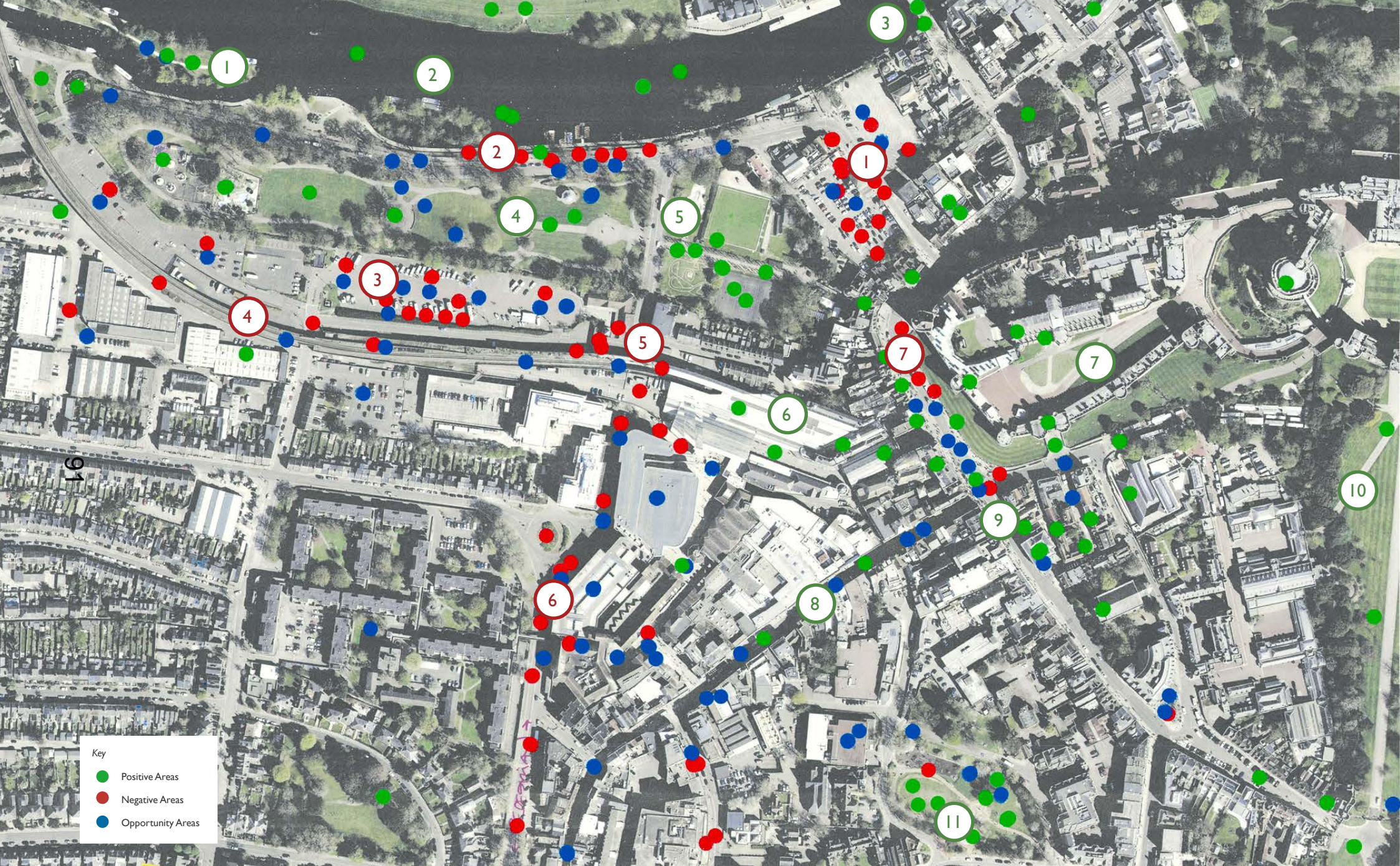
1. Bath Island
2. River Thames
3. Bridge to Eton
4. Alexandra Park
5. Jubilee Fountain, Royal Windsor Maze, Tennis Courts & Bowls
6. Windsor Royal Shopping Centre
7. Windsor Castle
8. Peascod Street
9. The Guildhall, Museum and areas of the High Street
10. Bachelors Acre
11. Home Park / Long Walk

Negative / Opportunity

Red dots denote areas that people dislike, and blue dots where people see potential. Where these colours are clustered together indicate areas that should primarily be looked at for improvement or regeneration.

There are a number of areas that contain multiple red and blue dots together, and these seem to focus on the service and access needs of Windsor:

1. Riverside car parking sites
2. Riverside public realm
3. Coach parking site
4. Railway arches
5. Pedestrian bridge to coach park
6. Charles Street and service areas for Windsor Yards, Royal Windsor and Peascod Street retail units.
7. Thames Street Road including junction at statue of Queen Victoria.



Engagement Outcomes

Community Capital Assessment

NATURAL CAPITAL

Positives

- *Good access to parks, recreational areas & green space in the urban centre.*
- *The greenbelt and wider areas.*
- *Protected sites of special scientific interest and historic parks.*
- *The river and riverside.*
- *Biodiversity and ancient trees.*

Negatives

- *Lack of soft landscaping in town.*
- *Some areas of greenspace are underused.*
- *Flooding presents a hazard.*
- *The riverside is not well connected to the town centre.*
- *The riverside has poor public realm.*
- *Lack of green public space near Windsor Castle.*
- *Charges for access to Great Park.*
- *Lack of cycle routes along riverside and through parks.*

Opportunities

- *Creating better connections between amenity spaces.*
- *Activating river and riverside with new uses.*
- *Improving access and use of the parks.*
- *Improving Alexandra Park's public realm.*
- *Enhance green corridors and biodiversity.*
- *Create more river views.*
- *Local farming and food markets.*

Engagement Outcomes

Community Capital Assessment

SOCIAL CAPITAL

Positives

- *Strong sense of community.*
- *Lots of community groups and local events.*
- *Generally safe and high levels of wellbeing.*
- *Local heritage, history and tradition.*

Negatives

- *Lack of local amenity and services.*
- *Local governance and politics as a barrier.*
- *Affordability of housing and cost of living.*
- *Tensions with tourist population.*
- *Lack of younger demographics and ageing population.*

Opportunities

- *Provide more facilities for locals – cinema, local retail etc.*
- *More evening activities.*
- *More for young people, adolescents and families.*
- *Develop cultural offer and share the history and heritage of Windsor.*

Engagement Outcomes

Community Capital Assessment

FINANCIAL CAPITAL

Positives

- *There are plenty of businesses and retailers.*
- *It is a popular tourist destination with a high level of footfall.*
- *A number of popular visitor attractions.*
- *Strategic location.*
- *Access to an international market.*
- *Windsor is well-known and has a brand value.*

Negatives

- *Lack of staff due to difficulties in accessing the town centre.*
- *Lack of transport options.*
- *High business costs.*
- *Difficult service access for businesses in some areas.*
- *Uncertainty in the tourist market.*
- *Tourism contribution to the wider town centre is limited.*
- *National and local austerity threatens businesses.*
- *Security and policing is poor.*
- *High amounts of retail and lack of mixed use. E.g. lack of office space and residential.*
- *Lack of evening and overnight amenity and provision for visitors to spend more than a day.*

Opportunities

- *Developing the evening economy to promote more local activity and overnight stays.*
- *Affordable accommodation for overnight visitors.*
- *A greater mix of uses including a more varied commercial offer.*
- *Connection to the royal family.*
- *Green tourism.*
- *Celebrate Windsor.*
- *Reconsider parking and access to the centre.*
- *Develop movement and transport infrastructure.*
- *Improve links to Heathrow.*
- *Create a more affordable town centre.*

Engagement Outcomes

Community Capital Assessment

BUILT CAPITAL

Positives

- *Heritage architecture is well-liked and celebrated.*
- *Historic fabric and conservation area protections.*
- *Windsor Castle is an important landmark.*
- *Railways are an essential piece of infrastructure.*
- *The town centre is highly walkable.*
- *Connection to Eton and Eton College.*

Negatives

- *Access and transport networks are poor.*
- *Parking capacity is limited.*
- *Poor public realm in some places.*
- *Some difficult pedestrian routes.*
- *Poor cycling infrastructure.*
- *Topography is difficult for less able or mobile people.*
- *Connectivity is poor from West Windsor and other areas.*
- *Threats to heritage protection.*
- *Clutter in public realm and on buildings.*

Opportunities

- *Preserving and enhancing heritage identity.*
- *Improving pedestrian and cyclist safety and access.*
- *Enhancing rail links.*
- *Reconsider entry and access to the centre.*
- *Enhancement of parking sites.*
- *Improvements to public realm.*

	NATURAL	SOCIAL	FINANCIAL	BUILT
ROOTED	NATIVE The surrounding natural environment is one of the most distinctive and valuable assets of Windsor.	BELONGING Residents have reported feeling safe living and working in Windsor, and that the community is a key positive aspect of living here.	STEWARDSHIP A lack of stewardship and community-ownership of facilities in Windsor is evident, with a lack of control over the type of commercial offers available.	PLACE MAKING The built environment of Windsor, including the heritage architecture and landmark buildings such as Windsor Castle, are regularly referenced as positive aspects of the town and a contributor to its identity.
CONNECTED	ECOSYSTEMS The varied network of waterways and greenspace not only creates vital ecosystems, but is an important resource for the community.	SOCIAL EXCHANGE Many community groups providing opportunities for social exchange and contribute to social interaction and mixing.	INTEGRATED Windsor's economy and activity can appear dominated by the tourism industry however, many do acknowledge the positive aspects of this as a provider of employment and income.	INTER-CONNECTED Windsor has poor public transport links to regional and local areas, and transport options are limited, creating problems with the ease and affordability of access.
BALANCED	BIODIVERSE HABITAT The environmental contributes to the attraction of Windsor as a place to visit, live and work where people feel they can live sustainably and conscious of environmental impact.	MIXED Despite diversity amongst Windsor resident and visitor population, not all users feel that the town centre meets their needs.	DIVERSE There is a strong feeling that more diversity is needed in the retail and commercial offer, where currently the focus may be on the tourist market rather than meeting local needs.	PROPORTIONAL Balancing competing access needs of multiple users is needed to manage high volumes of movement and access to the centre.
RESILIENT	REGENERATIVE As adaptation to changes in climate is needed, the natural assets play an important role, particularly against mitigating flood risks.	LOCAL GOVERNANCE Concerns have been expressed regarding governance as there are feelings that resident and local community interests are not represented.	ADAPTABLE There are feelings of concern regarding the resilience and adaptability of the financial aspects of Windsor as many businesses appear to be struggling or closing.	DURABLE The town centre is highly rated in terms of its appearance, the quality of buildings and how easy it is to navigate.
PRUDENT	CONSERVATION There may be some risk of the loss or degradation of the natural assets, as the area deals with high visitor populations. This makes conservation and management a key priority.	ACCESS TO SERVICES Many surveyed responses have cited a lack of access to some key community amenities - particularly in regards to what is available to support young adults and adolescents.	REINVESTMENT More facilities that serve the needs of the community are needed for local residents to feel greater ownership, and a sense of investment.	PRESERVATION Conservation areas and listings are in place but further levels of consideration as to how to retain the essence and quality of Windsor's unique built environment is needed.

Consolidated Community Capital Framework analysis showing strengths and weaknesses of each capital, with strengths highlighted in darker tones and weaknesses in the lighter shades.

Engagement Outcomes

Conclusions

Community Capital Framework Analysis

The comments from the engagement outcomes have been applied to The Prince's Foundation Community Capital Framework to assess Windsor across various aspects of its natural, financial, social and built capital. The results of this analysis indicate strength in the natural and built capital but weakness particularly in the financial capital and in some aspects of the social capital.

Particular strengths to celebrate and build upon include the natural environment, the built heritage and strong community networks. Weaknesses are identified relating to a lack of stewardship, diversity and adaptability of the local businesses and economy, and an ability to deliver the town-centre needs of the whole community.

Outcomes & Emerging Themes

Movement and Access Into Windsor

Access to the town centre is a central issue, particularly affecting residents and workers. The Vision for Windsor survey suggests most users walk or drive to Windsor, showing little use of public transport. Bus services, in particular, can be improved in terms of local and regional connections, times of the day and frequency. Issues relating to cost and availability of parking need to be addressed, by developing other transport options to access the centre, such as a park & ride and transit shuttles using rail, bus, river and active travel.

Land Use and Diverse Commercial Offers

There is a need for a varied mixed-use offer in the centre that also provides housing, office and broader leisure and commercial uses as well as a diversity of retail and commercial options. There is interest in developing some of the missing amenities, such as an evening economy including food and beverage offers, as well as cultural and entertainment options.

Activating Underused Natural Resources

Celebrating the parks and greenspaces, and promoting greater use of these assets. This may include activating the riverfront areas with better quality public realm, improved signposting and a reconsideration of current parking sites.

Future of the Hospitality Industry

There is a need to build long-term financial resilience by diversifying the tourist attractions and offers, to provide a better visitor experience and gain town-wide benefits and re-investment. Windsor Castle plays a fundamental role in creating a balanced and mutually beneficial relationship with the town centre and local communities. There may be a need to resolve some of the conflicts between visitor and resident needs and rebalance priorities.

Protection of Heritage, Character and Identity

Prioritise retaining and enhancing the built character, the quality of the public realm, building conditions and shop fronts, ensuring that development and enhancement of Windsor does not threaten the existing qualities of place and heritage. This aligns with the development of a Windsor brand and experience that celebrates Windsor's assets of its environment, heritage and Royal connections.

A Vision for Windsor

The Vision articulates a broad consensus, developed throughout the stakeholder engagement process, regarding main concerns for the future of Windsor.

Part 4: A Vision for Windsor

- Preface
- The Vision & Vision Statements
- Transport & Movement
- The Built Environment
- The Natural Environment
- The Local Community
- The Global Community

86



A Vision for Windsor

Preface

This project sought to ask the communities of Windsor what their aspirations are for their town centre. Our investigation has led to a clear and strong sense of what Windsor represents to the many people that visit, and what they would like to see from it in the future:

- A thriving centre of community and commercial activity that provides for the daily needs of its local population.
- A memorable visitor experience, that meets the expectations of a globally recognised destination.
- A place that celebrates its unique history, heritage, culture and royal connections.
- A place that is pro-actively tackling the challenges of climate change and ensuring a secure future for its people.

The Vision

The Vision and Vision Statements, presented in the next few pages of this chapter, intend to capture the aspirations and priorities that have been identified throughout the process of stakeholder engagement. The Vision focuses on five important facets to Windsor and the opportunities and considerations related to them;

1. Transport & Movement
2. The Built Environment
3. The Natural Environment
4. The Local Community
5. The Global Community

Purpose & Intention

The vision has been developed with the aim of:

- Identifying the broader and far-reaching issues that need to be tackled strategically and holistically.
- Articulating an intention and direction that could be used to guide future decision making.
- Providing a big-picture perspective in which to assess the current opportunities and challenges.
- Considering how to plan for future changes, manage resources and ensure a secure economy and quality of life in Windsor.

A Vision for Windsor

The Vision & Vision Statements

A Vibrant Future for Windsor

An attractive, thriving and welcoming town for the local and global community.

100

Transport & Movement

Develop sustainable, convenient & affordable options to travel into Windsor town centre.

The Built Environment

Protect and enhance the heritage, character and identity of Windsor.

The Natural Environment

Promote, activate and improve access to the natural assets and resources.

The Local Community

Create a thriving local economy of business and community partnerships that benefit from Windsor's global brand.

The Global Community

Deliver a world-class visitor experience supported by a strong, diverse and resilient hospitality industry.

A Vision for Windsor

Transport & Movement

Develop sustainable, convenient & affordable options to travel into Windsor town centre.

An overwhelming issue that affects the residents, visitors and businesses of Windsor is that of access to the town centre. Despite good connections to London and Heathrow, for many residents in West Windsor and the surrounding regions, access to Windsor town centre is costly and difficult, due to limited public transport options and a lack of car parking.

Existing vehicle parking sites are located close to the centre, which presents problems of limited capacity and a lack of additional space to grow to meet increasing demand. This also creates traffic congestion and pollution, placing a high volume of traffic in the centre, and contributing to an unsafe and unpleasant pedestrian environment.

A strategy is needed to reconsider transport and movement to access Windsor, encapsulating investment in reliable and frequent bus and rail services, satellite parking sites for day and overnight visitors and the promotion of cycling and walking where possible, along safe and pleasant routes. Doing so provides the opportunity to improve the experience of arrival into the town and embed sustainable and environmentally-conscious principles.



Windsor & Eton Riverside rail station



Current visitor arrival into Windsor via coach park



Coach parking site

A Vision for Windsor

The Built Environment

Protect and enhance the heritage, character and identity of Windsor.

Windsor's identity is closely related to its built environment, which is composed of heritage buildings, conservation areas and listed structures.

There are understandable concerns regarding the impact of any future development, adaptation or growth, on the character and identity of the town. At the same time, poor quality public realm, and buildings that are under-maintained or not fitting within character of Windsor can impact negatively on the harmony and consistency of Windsor's character.

A heritage strategy for Windsor must consider not only how to protect the areas of conservation and surrounding sites, but how enhancement can be done in keeping with the local character and identity, extending to shop fronts and building façades, and the materiality and landscaping of public spaces.



A Vision for Windsor

The Natural Environment

Promote, activate and improve access to the natural assets and resources.

Windsor's diverse natural environment, including the numerous parks, greenspaces and the riverside, are frequently attributed as some of its principal assets. Many of these are in close proximity to the town centre and can be accessed within a short walking distance.

103 However, the riverside and Alexandra Gardens, which have the potential to be extremely high-quality urban green spaces, are hidden behind vehicle parking sites and busy roads.

There are opportunities to activate these spaces, improve way-finding and link up a network of green amenity and biodiversity corridors that enhance the natural environment and raise awareness of the variety of attractions within the town centre area.



River Thames



Barry Avenue riverside area



Alexandra Gardens

A Vision for Windsor

The Local Community

Create a thriving local economy of business and community partnerships that benefit from Windsor's global brand.

There is a prevailing sense amongst the local population that the town centre lacks sufficient amenities, retail and services for their needs. There are also concerns that there may be a loss of businesses and retailers, particularly as the town is recovering from the impact of Covid lockdowns and travel restrictions. Businesses report feeling threatened with increasing cost, lack of staff and uncertainty in the market and customer demand. A consequence of this business instability may be contributing to a feeling of competition between the local and global consumer.

Despite these challenges, Windsor maintains strong community groups and networks. Opportunities to strengthen local governance and increase community ownership and partnerships could see residents take a greater role in shaping a town that delivers their needs as well as providing a unique offer of retail and services to visitors from around the world. Positioning Windsor as a place of national and international importance, and defining the 'Windsor brand' creates a platform to attract inward investment from local, national and global partners from a variety of sectors and industries, leveraging the global position for local benefit.



The Old Court Arts Centre & Cinema



Railway arches units



Peascod Street shops

A Vision for Windsor

The Global Community

Deliver a world-class visitor experience supported by a strong, diverse and resilient hospitality industry.

Windsor takes enormous pride in its globally-recognised name, and tourism is a major contributor to the local economy. However the volatility of the industry has been exposed with recent national and international crises that has resulted in a lack of stability for businesses that rely on visitor footfall.

105

Building strength, diversity and resilience in the hospitality industry is essential to delivering a world-class visitor experience, whilst also ensuring secure employment and a stable economy. The visitor profile, currently concentrated on a particular tourist market, can be broadened to take advantage of businesses and events that have a global reach. To do this, filling the gaps in the provision of visitor accommodation, cultural, entertainment and evening and night-time activity is needed, to diversity the standard visitor experience of Windsor beyond a visit to the Castle. Nevertheless, opportunities to develop the relationship with the Windsor Castle, official royal warrants and place-based branding provide a chance to benefit from Windsor's iconic profile through re-investment in the place and locale.



Hotel accommodation in Windsor



Retail supporting Castle visitors



Royal Windsor Shopping Centre

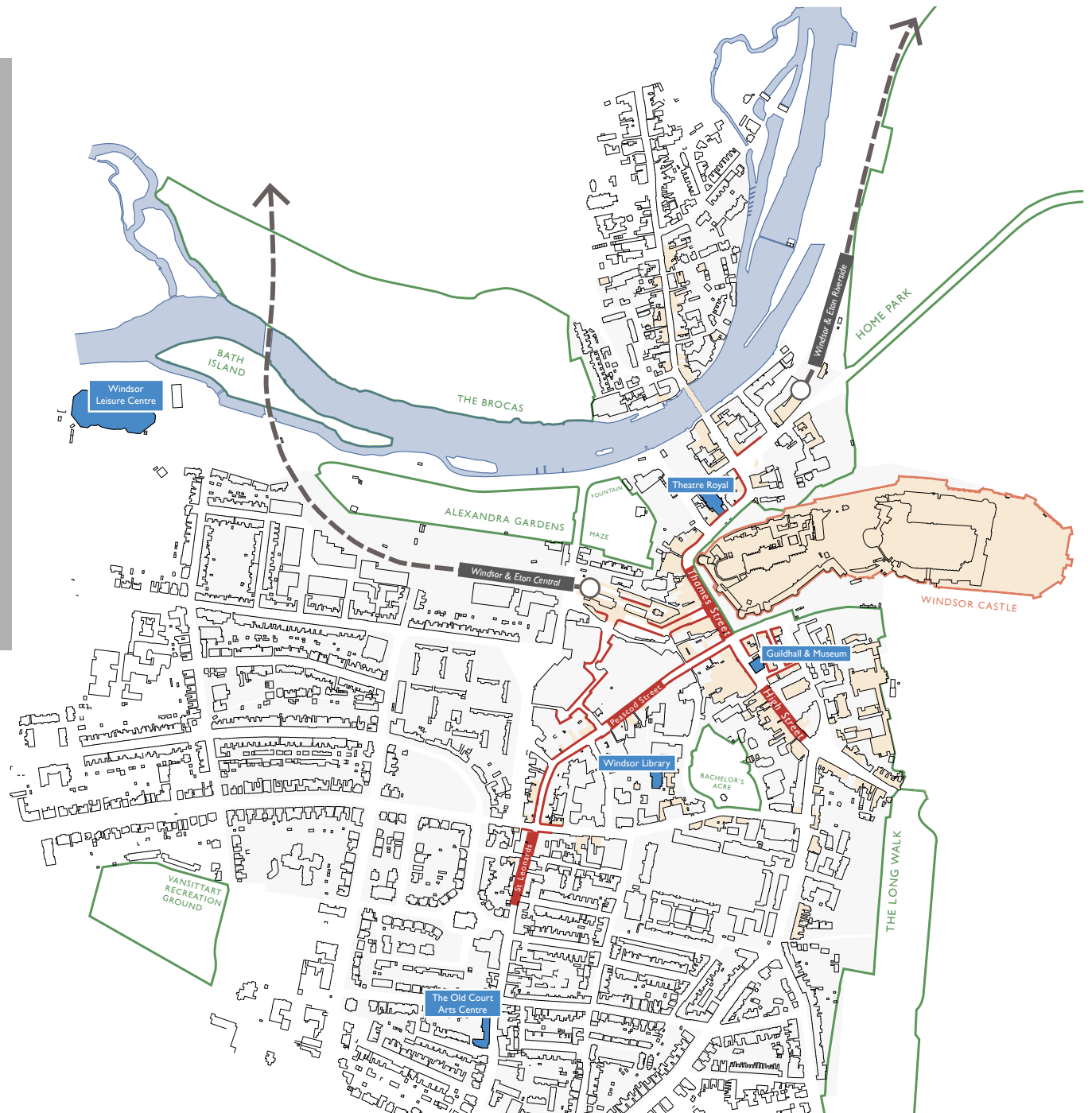
Strategies & Actions

A set of strategies and actions explore some opportunities and options to deliver the Vision.

Part 5: Strategies & Solutions

- Delivering the Vision
- Gateways & Arrival
- Town Centre Movement
- Character & Uses
- Public Realm
- Local Governance & Community Partnerships
- Implementation

106



Windsor Town Centre Assets

- Rivers & Waterways
- Parks, Gardens & Public Access Greenspaces
- Heritage Assets & Listed Buildings
- Rail links
- Retail & Commercial Streets
- Community & Cultural Assets

Strategies & Actions

Delivering the Vision

The Visioning workshop, that took place on the 28th and 29th September, presented an opportunity to deliberate a number of possible options to deliver the Vision.

The outcomes of this workshop session have been distilled into a set of actions and strategies, detailed in the following pages, with the purpose of illustrating and outlining possible next steps.

107 The plans and diagrams contained within this segment are for illustrative purposes only, and are based on the information available at the time of the project workshop.

Overview

A number of strategies have been formulated alongside a series of 21 action points, all intended to deliver against some or all of the vision statements.

Strategies

- Windsor Gateways Strategy
- Town Centre Movement Strategy
- Character Area Strategy
- Public Realm Improvement Strategy

Actions

Gateways & Arrival

1. Develop Satellite Parking Sites
2. Celebrate Arrival into Windsor
3. Invest in Improving Public Transport Connections
4. Encourage a Shift to Active Travel

Town Centre Movement

5. Discourage Unnecessary Vehicle Movement and Through-Traffic in the Town Centre
6. Improve Cycling and Walking Connections
7. Take Advantage of the River Thames for Access and Movement
8. Consolidate Town Centre Parking
9. Maintain Priority Parking and Access

Character & Uses

10. Invest in the Riverside to Create an Attractive Entrance into Windsor
11. Employ Guidelines and Regulations to Maintain the Character of the Heritage Core
12. Diversify Town Centre Uses
13. Nurture the Local Culture, Arts and Retail

Public Realm

14. Apply and Maintain a High-Quality Materiality of the Public Realm
15. Improve Engagement with the River and Riverfront
16. Develop a Framework for Regeneration of Riverside Parking Sites

Local Governance & Community Partnerships

17. Build a Directory of Community Groups and Partnerships
18. Establish a Collective Voice of Stakeholder Representation Across Windsor
19. Create a Register of Ownerships and Landlords
20. Engage with Windsor Castle and The Crown Estate
21. Capitalise on Royal Warrants and the Windsor Brand

Strategies & Actions

Gateways & Arrival

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Key Actions to Deliver the Vision

Action #1. Develop Satellite Parking Sites

The town centre itself lacks capacity to meet the demand for vehicle parking. Developing a range of satellite parking options will relocate a large amount of vehicle parking needs outside the centre of Windsor. This will relieve increasing pressure for town centre parking and remove high levels of traffic from the centre.

Action #2. Celebrate Arrival into Windsor

For visitors travelling by coach, the experience of arrival may be dampened by difficult and unpleasant access routes to the town centre from the current coach parking site. The Windsor experience can be better celebrated by integrating transit via scenic routes directly to the town centre and other attractions. These could be provided by boat and bus services or high-quality walking and cycling options as an active alternative.

Action #3. Invest in Improving Public Transport Connections

Creating frequent and reliable public transport links to other nearby destinations is fundamental to embedding sustainable and affordable movement and can be strategically developed to benefit town-centre wide destination points.

Investing in rail connections to Slough presents an opportunity to develop a more frequent service and support a connection to a dedicated parking and arrival facility near the M4.

Bus services from wider areas appear to be infrequently used. Developing on-demand bus services for residential areas with limited demand would improve accessibility for many locals that are unable to travel to Windsor by private vehicle.

Action #4. Encourage a Shift to Active Travel

A shift from vehicles to active travel - such as walking and cycling - has an important role to play in reducing the overall impact of traffic and congestion, particularly when considering the high numbers of visitors. Providing bike, e-bike and scooter hire can open these opportunities to visitors as well as locals, and promote the use of methods of active travel to access wider areas within and around the town centre.

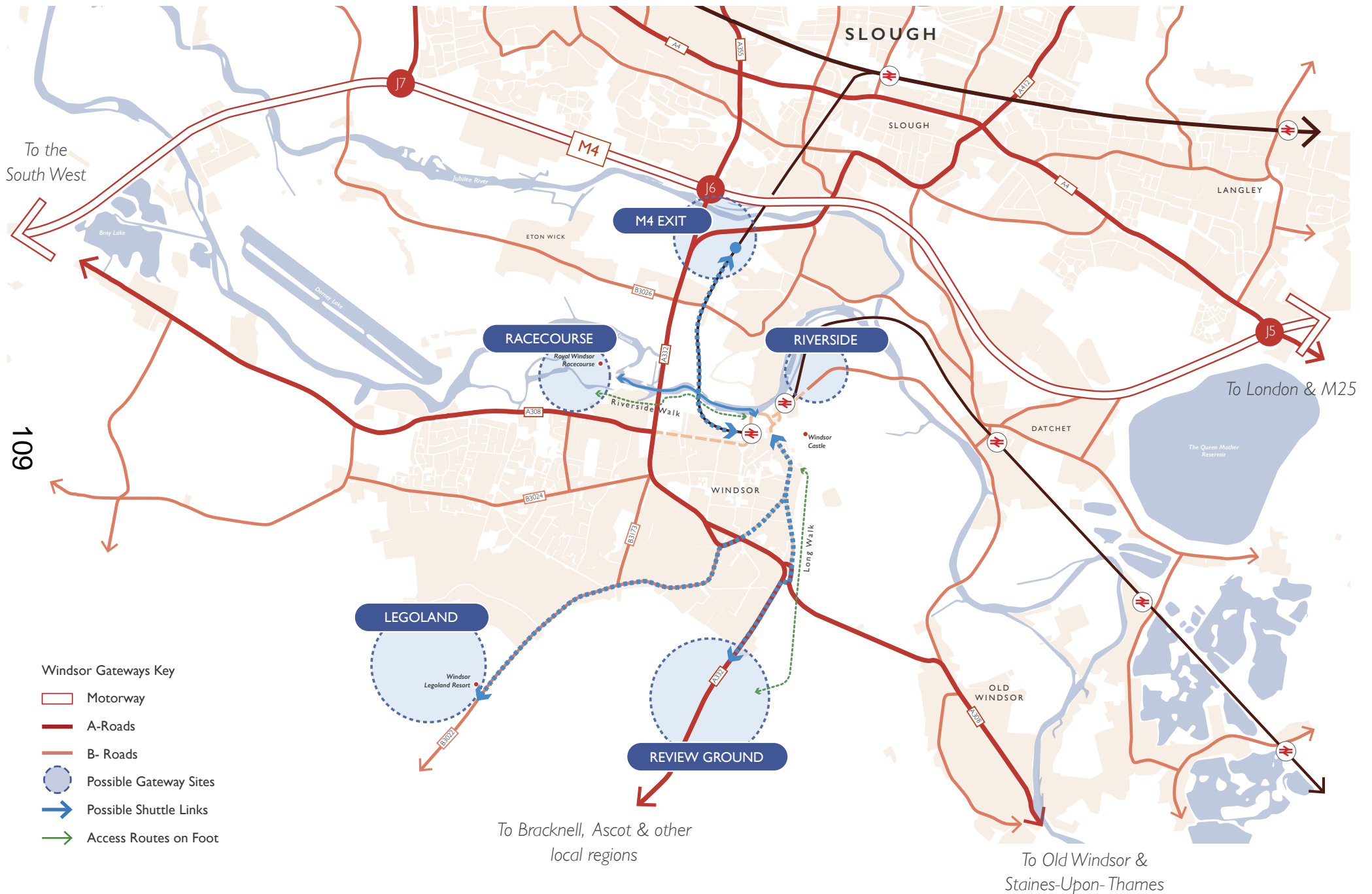
Windsor Gateways Strategy

'Gateway' is a term we are using to denote a place that signals arrival. As Windsor is a compact, busy centre within a relatively sparse and rural area, a transition from the sub-rural to urban context takes place at these gateway points.

The gateways are located at the periphery of Windsor's urban area, and are designed to prompt a switch from one mode of transportation to another. This is necessary in order to facilitate more efficient methods of movement in the urban environment, and to remove heavy traffic and congestion from the central area. The gateways should be high quality spaces that elevate Windsor as a major destination and contribute to the visitor experience of entering an historically important area.

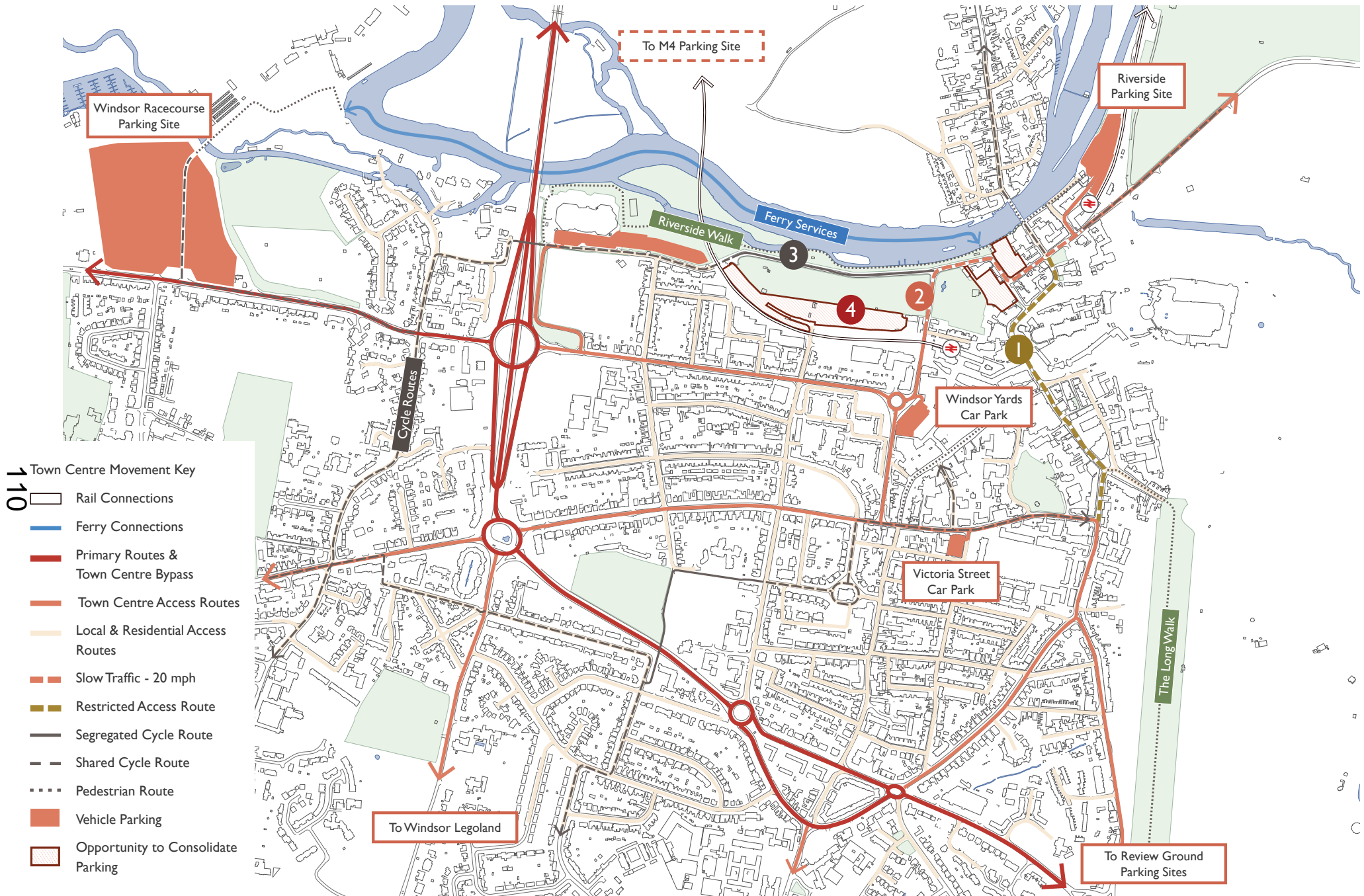
The gateway points should provide a place for secure and low-cost parking, necessary facilities including electric charging points, and access to various other transport and shuttle services such as bus, boat or rail. Methods of active travel can be encouraged by developing clear and legible cycle and walking routes and bike, e-bike and scooter hire schemes.

Strategic locations for these sites could take advantage of existing parking provisions, such as the Riverside and Review Ground parking. They could link with other destinations on the edges of Windsor, such as Windsor Racecourse and Legoland, as an opportunity to develop improved links to the town centre. Parking located adjacent to the M4 would capture a high volume of visitor traffic and coaches at a strategic point, and could potentially be served by the Windsor to Slough rail line.



Windsor Gateways Key

- Motorway
- A-Roads
- B- Roads
- Possible Gateway Sites
- Possible Shuttle Links
- Access Routes on Foot



Strategies & Actions

Town Centre Movement

Town Centre Movement Strategy

The town centre movement strategy explores the various options for travel in the central area of Windsor. In allocating priority users for key routes, multiple layers of town-wide movement networks can be created that function to balance the needs of all users, including private vehicles and access needs, public transport networks and cyclists and pedestrians. Some key elements of this strategy include:

- 1 Thames Street & High Street**
Route restricted to general traffic, but allowing public buses, taxis, emergency vehicles and service access, in order to reduce unnecessary through traffic.
- 2 Thames Avenue to Goswell Road**
A 20mph zone to slow vehicles and alleviate congestion.
- 3 Riverside & Barry Avenue**
Traffic removed from Barry Avenue between arches and junction with Goswell Road, to create a dedicated cycle and walking route, as part of a Riverside connection to Windsor Leisure Centre and on to Windsor Racecourse.
- 4 Car and Coach Park Site Consolidated and Reconsidered**
This coach and car parking facility is poorly located and often over-capacity during peak hours, requiring a rethink on how this can be provided to meet future demands, and finding an appropriate location, such as a parking site near the M4. Moving this site would remove the congestion from coach traffic in the area, and open opportunities for other amenities along the riverside.

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Key Actions to Deliver the Vision

Action #5. Discourage Unnecessary Vehicle Movement and Through-Traffic in the Town Centre

The town centre can be dominated by vehicle movement and parking during peak hours, which limits space for other users and pedestrians and cause safety issues and movement conflicts – particularly where there are often large crowds outside the Castle. Whilst an element of vehicle movement and access needs to be maintained, through-traffic should not be encouraged, and vehicle movement should be slowed to ensure the quality of the pedestrian experience.

Action #6. Improve Cycling and Walking Connections

Windsor's centre is fairly compact and highly walkable. Developing cycling and walking routes are an opportunity to showcase some of Windsor's key assets - such as the Riverside and the Long Walk, as well as link up to parking sites at the periphery. This also serves to create better connections to West Windsor and open amenable access routes to wider community residents.

These routes and connections should be developed, maintained and clearly marked as access routes to Windsor town centre, as part of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

Action #7. Take Advantage of the River Thames for Access and Movement

The use of the Thames as a movement channel provides opportunities for connecting the town centre to Windsor Racecourse, as well as further destinations such as Maidenhead and Staines. Whilst boat services currently exist, developing and promoting a frequent and reliable service could increase uptake.

Action #8. Consolidate Town Centre Parking

Large areas of surface parking waste valuable land in prime locations of the town centre, and create an unattractive amenity and areas of inactive space. In conjunction with the development of satellite parking sites which can relieve parking demand and provide an alternative coach parking facility, town centre surface parking should be consolidated with other uses to open new opportunities and better activation of the central area.

Action #9. Maintain Priority Parking and Access

Reducing vehicle and parking access can impact those unable to use other options and reduce accessibility for those with greater access needs. Sufficient priority parking in the centre should be reserved for those with the greatest needs in terms of accessibility and use, and not simply apportioned by cost.

Strategies & Actions

Character & Uses

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Key Actions to Deliver the Vision

Action #10. Invest in the Riverside to Create an Attractive Entrance into Windsor

The Riverside area provides the first glimpses into Windsor when arriving by train into Windsor & Eton Central, or by boat or on foot from the West. This presents an opportunity to display the best of the built and natural environment and create strategic views and sight lines towards Windsor Castle which is a major visible landmark.

Action #11. Employ Guidelines and Regulations to Maintain the Character of the Heritage Core

The Heritage Core of Windsor represents a very valuable asset in terms of its historic, cultural and built capital and in the interests of maintaining a high-quality destination. Within this defined central heritage area, standards must be upheld relating to the appearance, materiality and condition of the built environment.

Developing regulation and guidelines on this topic may be necessary to outline how to monitor and retain a consistent standard within the Heritage Core, applying to various aspects of building facade and shop frontage, street spill-out, outdoor seating and encroachment of activities into public spaces.

Action #12. Diversify Town Centre Uses

The Town Centre area has a number of shopping areas with a high proportion of commercial and retail units. However, a core issue identified is in respect to a lack of variety and diversity in the type of commercial offers. Other uses need to be supported that provide some of these missing elements for broader local and visitor needs, particularly more variety in entertainment and evening activity to contribute to an active town centre throughout the day.

Action #13. Nurture the Local Culture, Arts and Retail

St Leonards Road has the potential to develop a separate identity as a centre of local arts, culture and independent retail, anchored by the Old Court Arts Centre at one end and connecting to Peascod Street and the Town Centre at the other.

This location provides an opportunity to support local creators, makers and businesses, away from the more competitive and tourism-driven environment of the town centre, investing in the development of a collection of locally-led community resource as well as an alternative attraction for visitors that is away from the crowds. Enhancing signage and features of public realm design can also contribute to a branding and identity as a unique place within Windsor, in order to attract the activity to create a thriving economic environment.

Character Area Strategy

This strategy recognises the distinct and varied functions that co-exist in the town centre. Understanding and defining these can guide the coherent development of the town's identity, finding a place for all the necessary needs to synchronise and thrive. Four character areas are identified along with their key amenities:

The Riverside – a scenic entrance into Windsor:

- Windsor Leisure Centre
- Alexandra Gardens
- Riverside Path
- Windsor & Eton Riverside Station

The Heritage Core – the celebrated historic built environment:

- Windsor Castle & Crown Estate
- Guildhall & Museum
- High Street and Thames Street shops & amenities

The Town Centre – wider retail, commercial and service provision:

- Windsor & Eton Central Station
- Windsor Royal & Windsor Yards Shopping
- Windsor Library
- Bachelor's Acre
- Peascod Street Shopping

The Cultural Quarter – local amenity, retail and culture:

- Peascod Street & St Leonards Road Shopping
- Old Court Arts Centre
- Windsor College

THE RIVERSIDE

The riverside area has an integral role to play in creating a scenic arrival into Windsor, framing views of Windsor's landmark castle with a green and blue buffer of the surrounding river and gardens. This area also provides recreation and leisure amenities, as well as supporting access routes via train, boat and cycling and pedestrian access.

HERITAGE CORE

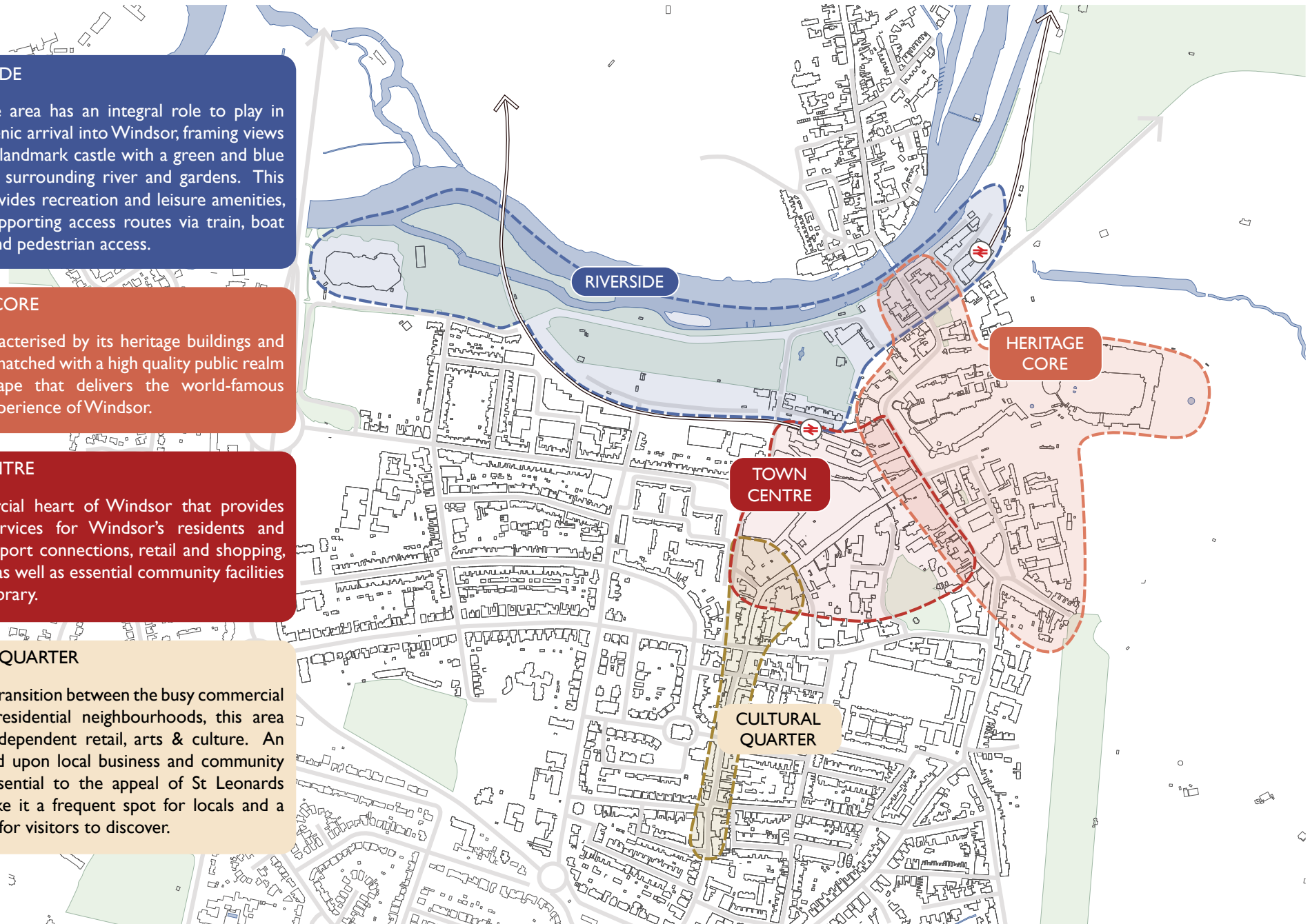
An area characterised by its heritage buildings and historic feel, matched with a high quality public realm and streetscape that delivers the world-famous image and experience of Windsor.

TOWN CENTRE

The commercial heart of Windsor that provides the core services for Windsor's residents and visitors: transport connections, retail and shopping, restaurants, as well as essential community facilities such as the library.

CULTURAL QUARTER

Forming the transition between the busy commercial centre and residential neighbourhoods, this area celebrates independent retail, arts & culture. An identity based upon local business and community activity is essential to the appeal of St Leonards Road, to make it a frequent spot for locals and a 'hidden gem' for visitors to discover.



Strategies & Actions

Public Realm

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Key Actions to Deliver the Vision

Action #14. Apply and Maintain a High Quality Materiality of the Public Realm

As part of a long term aspiration, create a high quality material finish to key streets and public spaces. This should consider road surfacing and paving, street furniture and areas of landscape, which all form part of the urban experience.

One aspect of this may be removing some areas of tarmac or asphalt surface in favour of more sympathetic materiality for the heritage environment, shifting the focus away from vehicle movement towards a distinctive pedestrian experience. This could also be supported by inserting more soft landscape and tree planting within areas of urban landscape to soften the streetscape.

Action #15. Improve Engagement with the River and Riverfront

One of the key underused assets of Windsor is the river and riverfront. Whilst there are some inherent uses of the river for leisure, sport and transportation are taking place, more can be done to promote and activate this asset. This could be delivered by removing some of the physical barriers to access, such as vehicle movement along Barry Avenue, and creating generous cycle and pedestrian paths, and developing more commercial, community and leisure activities along the riverfront.

Action #16. Develop a Framework for Regeneration of Riverside Parking Sites

The riverside car and coach parking sites represent the most strategic opportunities for regenerative change for the improvement of the area and benefit of the community.

These sites represent the weakest areas of the town centre in regards to visual impact, legibility and a cohesive built form. Inevitably, there is a limited life-span in their current form as other parking solutions will need to be found to manage growing capacity needs, and a framework for future use of these sites should be pro-actively considered.

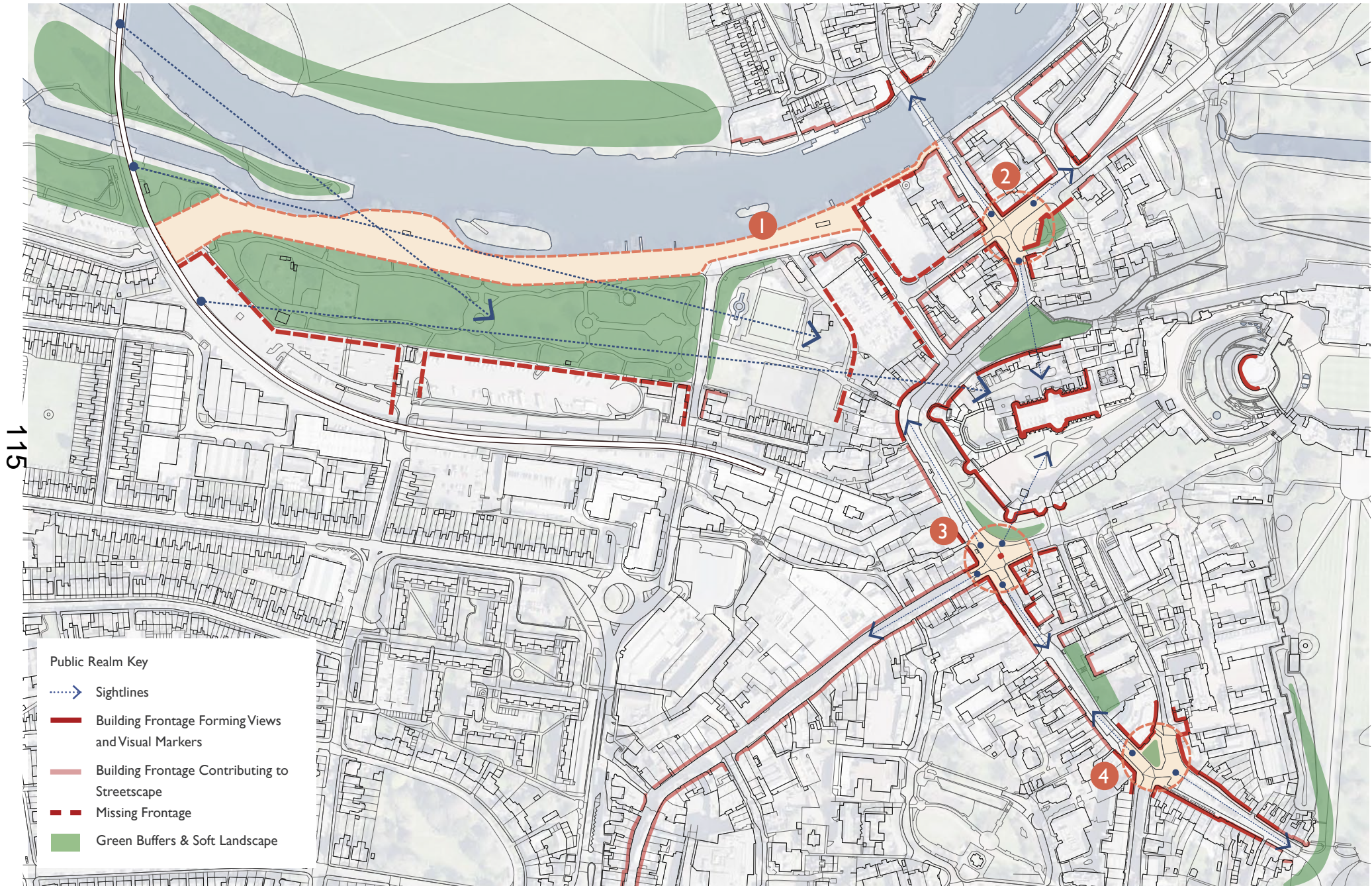
Developing a framework is an opportunity to consider how to repair the fractured streetscapes and create appropriate frontages to overlook and activate public spaces, whilst signalling arrival and entry into the town centre. It is also necessary to consider how any new structures remain sensitive to the area with appropriate design sensitivity and control of form and heights.

The community have made clear that any development on the riverside should be sympathetically designed and controlled to show tangible benefits for the town itself.

Public Realm Improvement Strategy

This strategy seeks to connect a network of public spaces, nodes of activity and crucial anchor points. Some aspirational points of public realm investment are outlined, with recognition of a number of public realm improvements scheduled for 2023 at Castle Hill and the lift and bridge to the Coach Park.

- 1 The Riverside Public Realm**
Development of a generous cycling and pedestrian channel, providing access and engagement with the water. This is also an opportunity to rethink how the riverfront meets Alexandra Gardens and remove some of the barriers between these public amenity spaces, and design in flood prevention and water retention to protect the surrounding areas.
- 2 Thames Street Junction**
An important node to be articulated as a key entry point to Windsor's central area with a sympathetic material treatment in accordance with impressive views of the Castle walls at a passing point to the Riverside area, Eton Bridge and Riverside Rail Station.
- 3 Castle Hill**
A central public space flanked by the Castle, the Guildhall and the monument to Queen Victoria. This public space requires wider, more comfortable pedestrian movement flows that use well-designed crowd management street furniture and appropriately acknowledges the statue at the centre. Upcoming improvements may be able to deliver on a number of these aspects.
- 4 Sheet Street Junction**
A key node that bridges the High Street and Park Street leading towards the Long Walk, that can be better articulated with sensitive materiality and landscape.



115

Public Realm Key

-  Sightlines
-  Building Frontage Forming Views and Visual Markers
-  Building Frontage Contributing to Streetscape
-  Missing Frontage
-  Green Buffers & Soft Landscape

Strategies & Actions

Local Governance & Community Partnerships

Key Actions to Deliver the Vision

Action #17. Build a Directory of Community Groups and Partnerships

The strength of Windsor's existing local community networks can be maximised to create a directory of groups and partnerships, a potential first step to synthesize the wider community needs with active resources to deliver against local targets and interests, whilst also creating a greater degree of community ownership and agency.

Action #18. Establish a Collective Voice of Stakeholder Representation Across Windsor

A forum to discuss and develop a strong voice of stakeholder representation of the various interests of residents across Central Windsor and West Windsor, in addition to wider areas that share a stake, is needed to create a unified community response, and dissolve some broader tensions and conflicts. This could enable a means for council offers and local political representation to support and devolve a degree of decision making power to a single entity community interest group.

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Action #19. Create a Register of Ownerships and Landlords

A landlords register is intended as a means of creating accountability, transparency and forming channels of communication to land and building owners in Windsor.

Action #20. Engage with Windsor Castle and The Crown Estate

The relationship with Windsor Castle, historically and in the modern day, has been an important one. It is important to consider how the community supports the Castle, and the Castle serves the community in return, with a mutually beneficial relationship to be sought.

The Castle is an opportunity to celebrate Windsor's history and develop a programme of community education and skill development, and other cultural and community opportunities.

Action #21. Capitalise on Royal Warrants and the Windsor Brand

Windsor has a history of producing high quality goods and services for the Castle and its royal residents, and today, this branding power carries global recognition. This presents an opportunity for local businesses and investors to capitalise on the Windsor name and contribute unique commercial offers that support the ethos of the modern day royals of craftsmanship and sustainable practice. Windsor can take advantage of this to cultivate opportunities for cultural, leisure and business tourism, and stage national and international events, to build diversity and resilience in its economy.

Strategies & Actions

Implementation

Recommendations for Delivery of Strategies & Actions

- Identify priority areas and interventions, alongside a programme and timeline.
- Create a stakeholder matrix for further consultation.
- Embed community engagement as a means to review initiatives as they develop and ensure a holistic approach that is in line with the principles and goals of the Vision.

117

Next Steps

The actions will be prioritised and reviewed through RBWM Cabinet and schedules agreed accordingly. It is intended that the following governance is implemented to facilitate this:

- Review existing groups & forums with involvement in Windsor before establishing any new stakeholder groups
- Form a Programme Board to monitor and steer progress across all vision statement and key priorities within each
- Form task and finish groups to wrap-around the key priorities, with adequate subject matter experts to drive these forward

A critical element of the next phase of work on the Vision for Windsor project is to continue working with stakeholders and members of the community. This is why working groups will encourage co-production alongside residents and interested parties.



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www.princes-foundation.org

www.rbwm.gov.uk



ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD
EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

EqlA : Title of Windsor Vision

Essential information

Items to be assessed: (please mark 'x')

Strategy		Policy		Plan		Project	X	Service/Procedure	
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Responsible officer	Andrew Durrant	Service area	PLACE	Directorate	PLACE
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Stage 1: EqlA Screening (mandatory)	Date created: 16/01/2023	Stage 2 : Full assessment (if applicable)	
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Approved by Head of Service / Overseeing group/body / Project Sponsor:

"I am satisfied that an equality impact has been undertaken adequately."

Signed by (print): Andrew Durrant

Dated: 16/01/2023

119

ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

EqlA : Title of Windsor Vision

Guidance notes

What is an EqlA and why do we need to do it?

The Equality Act 2010 places a 'General Duty' on all public bodies to have 'due regard' to:

- Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act.
- Advancing equality of opportunity between those with 'protected characteristics' and those without them.
- Fostering good relations between those with 'protected characteristics' and those without them.

EqlAs are a systematic way of taking equal opportunities into consideration when making a decision, and should be conducted when there is a new or reviewed strategy, policy, plan, project, service or procedure in order to determine whether there will likely be a detrimental and/or disproportionate impact on particular groups, including those within the workforce and customer/public groups. All completed EqlA Screenings are required to be publicly available on the council's website once they have been signed off by the relevant Head of Service or Strategic/Policy/Operational Group or Project Sponsor.

What are the "protected characteristics" under the law?

The following are protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010: age; disability (including physical, learning and mental health conditions); gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.

What's the process for conducting an EqlA?

The process for conducting an EqlA is set out at the end of this document. In brief, a Screening Assessment should be conducted for every new or reviewed strategy, policy, plan, project, service or procedure and the outcome of the Screening Assessment will indicate whether a Full Assessment should be undertaken.

Openness and transparency

RBWM has a 'Specific Duty' to publish information about people affected by our policies and practices. Your completed assessment should be sent to the Strategy & Performance Team for publication to the RBWM website once it has been signed off by the relevant manager, and/or Strategic, Policy, or Operational Group. If your proposals are being made to Cabinet or any other Committee, please append a copy of your completed Screening or Full Assessment to your report.

Enforcement

Judicial review of an authority can be taken by any person, including the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) or a group of people, with an interest, in respect of alleged failure to comply with the general equality duty. Only the EHRC can enforce the specific duties. A failure to comply with the specific duties may however be used as evidence of a failure to comply with the general duty.

ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

EqlA : Title of Windsor Vision

Stage 1 : Screening (Mandatory)

1.1 What is the overall aim of your proposed strategy/policy/project etc and what are its key objectives?

The aim of this project is to create a robust vision for the future of Windsor which incorporates the relevant emerging and existing strategies and plans for the area, whilst drawing on the many strengths and assets of the historic town. The focus area for this work includes Windsor town centre and central Windsor riverside locations, set between Eton, Datchet, Old Windsor & Clewer East.

A key objective within this project was to engage collaboratively with key stakeholders and residents via a series of thematic workshops using the Enquiry by Design (EbD) approach. The workshops, supported by a dedicated core team at The Princes Foundation, enabled us to gather important information and explore critical deliverables.

The workshops were fully inclusive.

1.2 What evidence is available to suggest that your proposal could have an impact on people (including staff and customers) with protected characteristics? Consider each of the protected characteristics in turn and identify whether your proposal is Relevant or Not Relevant to that characteristic. If Relevant, please assess the level of impact as either High / Medium / Low and whether the impact is Positive (i.e. contributes to promoting equality or improving relations within an equality group) or Negative (i.e. could disadvantage them). Please document your evidence for each assessment you make, including a justification of why you may have identified the proposal as “Not Relevant”.

ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

EqlA : Title of Windsor Vision

Protected characteristics	Relevance	Level	Positive/negative	Evidence
Age	Relevant	Low	Positive	<p>Key data: The estimated median age of the local population is 42.6yrs [Source: ONS mid-year estimates 2020]. An estimated 20.2% of the local population are aged 0-15, and estimated 61% of the local population are aged 16-64yrs and an estimated 18.9% of the local population are aged 65+yrs. [Source: ONS mid-year estimates 2020, taken from Berkshire Observatory]</p> <p>The project and the engagement workshops were fully inclusive and gave key stakeholders and residents the opportunity to contribute to the future vision of Windsor. We monitored engagement throughout to ensure all groups were represented. A variety of engagement methods were used to reach different audiences.</p>
Disability	Relevant	Low	Positive	<p>The project and the engagement workshops were fully inclusive and gave key stakeholders and residents the opportunity to contribute to the future vision of Windsor. We monitored engagement throughout to ensure all groups were represented. This project provided an opportunity for improvements to Windsor town centre to make it more accessible.</p>
Gender re-assignment	Relevant	Low	Positive	<p>The project and the engagement workshops were fully inclusive and gave key stakeholders and residents the opportunity to contribute to the future vision of Windsor. We monitored engagement throughout to ensure all groups were represented.</p>
Marriage/civil partnership	Relevant	Low	Positive	<p>The project and the engagement workshops were fully inclusive and gave key stakeholders and residents the opportunity to contribute to the future vision of Windsor. We monitored engagement throughout to ensure all groups were represented.</p>
Pregnancy and maternity	Relevant	Low	Positive	<p>The project and the engagement workshops were fully inclusive and gave key stakeholders and residents the opportunity to contribute to the future vision of Windsor. We monitored engagement throughout to ensure all groups were represented.</p>

ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

EqlA : Title of Windsor Vision

Race	Relevant	Low	Positive	<p><i>Key data: The 2011 Census indicates that 86.1% of the local population is White and 13.9% of the local population is BAME. The borough has a higher Asian/Asian British population (9.6%) than the South East (5.2%) and England (7.8%). The forthcoming 2021 Census data is expected to show a rise in the BAME population. [Source: 2011 Census, taken from Berkshire Observatory]</i></p> <p>The project and the engagement workshops were fully inclusive and gave key stakeholders and residents the opportunity to contribute to the future vision of Windsor. We monitored engagement throughout to ensure all groups were represented.</p>
Religion and belief	Relevant	Low	Positive	<p><i>Key data: The 2011 Census indicates that 62.3% of the local population is Christian, 21.7% no religion, 3.9% Muslim, 2% Sikh, 1.8% Hindu, 0.5% Buddhist, 0.4% other religion, and 0.3% Jewish. [Source: 2011 Census, taken from Berkshire Observatory]</i></p> <p>The project and the engagement workshops were fully inclusive and gave key stakeholders and residents the opportunity to contribute to the future vision of Windsor. We monitored engagement throughout to ensure all groups were represented.</p>
Sex	Relevant	Low	Positive	<p><i>Key data: In 2020 an estimated 49.6% of the local population is male and 50.4% female. [Source: ONS mid-year estimates 2020, taken from Berkshire Observatory]</i></p> <p>The project and the engagement workshops were fully inclusive and gave key stakeholders and residents the opportunity to contribute to the future vision of Windsor. We monitored engagement throughout to ensure all groups were represented.</p>
Sexual orientation	Relevant	Low	Positive	<p>The project and the engagement workshops were fully inclusive and gave key stakeholders and residents the opportunity to contribute to the future vision of Windsor. We monitored engagement throughout to ensure all groups were represented.</p>

ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

EqlA : Title of Windsor Vision

Outcome, action and public reporting

Screening Assessment Outcome	Yes / No / Not at this stage	Further Action Required / Action to be taken	Responsible Officer and / or Lead Strategic Group	Timescale for Resolution of negative impact / Delivery of positive impact
Was a significant level of negative impact identified?	No	No		
Does the strategy, policy, plan etc require amendment to have a positive impact?	No	No		

If you answered **yes** to either / both of the questions above a Full Assessment is advisable and so please proceed to Stage 2. If you answered "No" or "Not at this Stage" to either / both of the questions above please consider any next steps that may be taken (e.g. monitor future impacts as part of implementation, re-screen the project at its next delivery milestone etc).

ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

EqlA : Title of Windsor Vision

Stage 2 : Full assessment

2.1 : Scope and define

2.1.1 Who are the main beneficiaries of the proposed strategy / policy / plan / project / service / procedure? List the groups who the work is targeting/aimed at.

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2.1.2 Who has been involved in the creation of the proposed strategy / policy / plan / project / service / procedure? List those groups who the work is targeting/aimed at.

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125

ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

EqlA : Title of Windsor Vision

2.2 : Information gathering/evidence

2.2.1 What secondary data have you used in this assessment? *Common sources of secondary data include: censuses, organisational records.*

2.2.2 What primary data have you used to inform this assessment? *Common sources of primary data include: consultation through interviews, focus groups, questionnaires.*

Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation

ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

EqlA : Title of Windsor Vision

Protected Characteristic	Advancing the Equality Duty : Does the proposal advance the Equality Duty Statement in relation to the protected characteristic (Yes/No)	If yes, to what level? (High / Medium / Low)	Negative impact : Does the proposal disadvantage them (Yes / No)	If yes, to what level? (High / Medium / Low)	Please provide explanatory detail relating to your assessment and outline any key actions to (a) advance the Equality Duty and (b) reduce negative impact on each protected characteristic.
Age					
Disability					
Gender reassignment					
Marriage and civil partnership					
Pregnancy and maternity					
Race					
Religion and belief					
Sex					
Sexual orientation					

127

Advance equality of opportunity

ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

EqlA : Title of Windsor Vision

Protected Characteristic	Advancing the Equality Duty : Does the proposal advance the Equality Duty Statement in relation to the protected characteristic (Yes/No)	If yes, to what level? (High / Medium / Low)	Negative impact : Does the proposal disadvantage them (Yes / No)	If yes, to what level? (High / Medium / Low)	Please provide explanatory detail relating to your assessment and outline any key actions to (a) advance the Equality Duty and (b) reduce negative impact on each protected characteristic.
Age					
Disability					
Gender reassignment					
Marriage and civil partnership					
Pregnancy and maternity					
Race					
Religion and belief					
Sex					
Sexual orientation					

128

ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

EqlA : Title of Windsor Vision

Foster good relations

Protected Characteristic	Advancing the Equality Duty : Does the proposal advance the Equality Duty Statement in relation to the protected characteristic (Yes/No)	If yes, to what level? (High / Medium / Low)	Negative impact : Does the proposal disadvantage them (Yes / No)	If yes, to what level? (High / Medium / Low)	Please provide explanatory detail relating to your assessment and outline any key actions to (a) advance the Equality Duty and (b) reduce negative impact on each protected characteristic.
Age					
Disability					
Gender reassignment					
Marriage and civil partnership					
Pregnancy and maternity					
Race					
Religion and belief					
Sex					
Sexual orientation					

129

2.4 Has your delivery plan been updated to incorporate the activities identified in this assessment to mitigate any identified negative impacts? If so please summarise any updates.

These could be service, equality, project or other delivery plans. If you did not have sufficient data to complete a thorough impact assessment, then an action should be incorporated to collect this information in the future.

ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

EqlA : Title of Windsor Vision

Report Title:	Vision for Windsor
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	No
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Andrew Johnson - Leader of the Council and Chairman of Cabinet, Business, Economic Development and Property Councillor Samantha Rayner - Deputy Leader of the Council, Corporate & Resident Services, Culture & Heritage and Windsor
Meeting and Date:	Cabinet - 31st March 2022
Responsible Officer(s):	Andrew Durrant Executive Director of Place Services
Wards affected:	Windsor (Eton and Castle)

REPORT SUMMARY

The purpose of this project is to create a robust vision for the future of Windsor. The vision will incorporate the relevant emerging and existing strategies and plans for the area, whilst drawing on the many strengths and assets of the historic Town. Through stakeholder and resident engagement, challenges within the area will be considered and opportunities for the future will be recognised.

This paper seeks approval to commission The Prince's Foundation to support the Council to engage collaboratively with key stakeholders and residents through an Enquiry by Design (EbD) approach. It's estimated the project will last for a period of nine-months and will include a number of engagement opportunities and three key workshops to ultimately shape a Vision for Windsor.

1. DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

RECOMMENDATION: That Cabinet notes the report and:

- i) Agrees the scope for a 'Vision for Windsor' project to commence.**
- ii) Agrees to commission The Prince's Foundation and implement the Enquiry by Design (EbD) approach for engagement with stakeholders and residents.**

2. REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

Background

- 2.1 We have a perfect opportunity to build on our strong relationships with stakeholders locally to reflect on how the Town has adapted and changed over the past few years. Working in partnership with The Princes Foundation, we will consider how we would like the Town to evolve over the next 20+ years.
- 2.2 In recent years there has been a number of consultations within and surrounding the Windsor area, some of which have led to strategies or plans being developed for the area, such as the Windsor Neighbourhood Plan (WNP).
- 2.3 The focus area for this work includes Windsor town centre and central Windsor riverside locations, set between Eton, Datchet, Old Windsor & Clewer East shown in the map below. This area was not part of the adopted WNP, however this work will complement & support any future Neighbourhood Plan (known as Windsor 2030 Business Neighbourhood Plan).



- 2.4 In addition, the council has recently adopted the Corporate Plan, Borough Local Plan and the Environment and Climate Change Strategy. There is a need to bring together these strategic components in the area alongside our stakeholders' aspirations to create a vision for Windsor Town going forwards with a cohesive narrative.
- 2.5 There is an opportunity to reflect on how Windsor Town has developed and changed in the wake of the pandemic. Along with our stakeholders we need to capture what is going well in the Town, pre and post pandemic, what have we learnt and what would we like to take forwards.
- 2.6 Windsor's Royal connection brings in a great deal of domestic and international tourism to the area and creates many commercial opportunities. In this regard, the pandemic created a significant challenge for the Town. It is therefore

important to consider the future of the Royal residency and the associated opportunities and implications.

2.7 The Prince's Foundation has significant experience of working with communities and partners in the UK and around the world. Their Royal connection will also present a unique opportunity which will be advantageous to delivering a Vision for Windsor.

Project Aims

2.8 The project will be driven through a series of thematic workshops supported by a dedicated core team at The Princes Foundation. They will lead the council, community leaders and stakeholders through a process to develop the vision. The workshops will engage residents and gather important information whilst exploring critical deliverables that will evolve as feedback is generated. Sessions will particularly focus on:

- Articulating what makes Windsor a distinctive 'place'.
- Refining the opportunities and constraints plan for the area.
- Hearing a series of technical briefings from local stakeholders.
- Producing a context analysis for understanding the wider community.
- Carrying out a site walk with attendees to see first-hand the opportunities.
- Holding a roundtable discussion / focus groups to develop a shared hypothesis.
- Forming an early consensus around wider aspirations and goals for the next stage.

2.9 Windsor Town has many beneficial assets, which are well utilised; however, other assets, such as the riverside location, are underutilised at present but could potentially create prosperous opportunities in the future. This project will allow us to draw on our assets and those of our partner organisations and local businesses to create a shared concept for the Town.

2.10 The project will consider the workforce demographic within this area of the borough, i.e., the mix between commuter vs residency workforce. This will highlight opportunities to enhance new markets and understand the types of businesses being established in the town.

2.11 Through engaging with stakeholders and residents we will develop a coherent concept for the look and feel of the Town through design pallets, shop frontage and street scenes. This will create consistency across the Town and contribute to a sense of place, which is attractive to those shopping, visiting, working, and living within the area.

2.12 The project will empower the local community through the Enquiry by Design (EbD) approach, and this will strengthen our relationship with key stakeholders, partners, and residents within Windsor. It is also important that the project identifies those partners that may be less represented, an example of this might be our armed forces based within the Town's barracks.

2.13 Supported by The Princes Foundation we will develop a clear brand for the Windsor Vision project and its associated projects thereafter. The branding should

be identifiable and relatable to key stakeholders, residents, and visitors to the Town. The joint branding with The Princes Foundation should inspire, reflect our values and encourage trust. It should also be unique, innovative and engaging.

3. KEY IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The project outcomes will support elements of the Corporate Plan such as ‘creating a sustainable borough of opportunity and innovation through thriving communities and inspiring places.’ In addition, the project will contribute to many of the goals outlined within the plan, such as: an increase in footfall in Windsor between 2021-2026 and the Master Planning exercise for central Windsor by 2023.
- 3.2 The Enquiry by Design (EbD) approach will engage and empower key stakeholders, partners, and residents to have their say in the project and can therefore shape its outcomes and ultimately the Vision for Windsor going forwards.
- 3.3 Through our partnership working we will create a coherent narrative and concept for the Town which is consistent. We will also make the best use of the Towns assets and create opportunities for investment and addressing local challenges.
- 3.4 The Council and The Prince’s Foundation will each appoint a representative for the purpose of reporting and monitoring the project on a day-to-day basis. Both parties will also need to appoint a Communications Officer during Stage One to agree all external materials and agree joint Communications.
- 3.5 The programme is based on a project commencement starting from April 2022 onwards and will include milestone review periods quarterly.

4. FINANCIAL DETAILS / VALUE FOR MONEY

- 4.1 The Prince’s Foundation total contract value has been estimated at £50,300 and officers have identified existing budget provision through CIL & S106 investment to facilitate the work.
- 4.2 The Prince’s Foundation total cost has been broken down by stage, see table below. The costs exclude any expenses occurred by The Prince’s Foundation, although these are nominal as RBWM will provide on-site resource for workshop visits.

Stage	Cost (£)
Stage 1: Project Start-Up Period	£3,100
Stage 2: Key Stakeholder Workshop	£15,200
Stage 3: Windsor Vision Charter	£32,000
Total Estimated Contract Value	£50,300

4.3 The Council will need to provide all meeting and workshop event spaces. Each space will need to have adequate wireless, access to washrooms, and include refreshments for attendees.

4.4 The Prince’s Foundation will issue an output report following each quarter of the programme to justify their payment against milestones.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Prince’s Foundation contract will be effective for an estimated period of nine-months from the date of signature. It will assume that both parties agree that the contract, and any arrangements anticipated by it, may be terminated by one party giving the other party (90 days) notice to close and handover any activities.

5.2 Schedule 1 of the contract outlines the Terms & Conditions with The Prince’s Foundation to which the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead will be bound.

5.3 Procurement colleagues have been consulted in respect of this requirement and provided commentary on the proposed contract and assignment. Any risks in using the provider’s own terms and conditions has been highlighted and poses minimal risk. This is a below threshold service, and therefore Procurement Law is not applicable. The Contracts and Tendering Rules require a waiver for above £50k contract awards without competition.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 There is some risk associated with engaging stakeholders, partners, and residents within the project as successful engagement is key to the Enquiry by Design (EbD) approach. However, The Prince’s Foundation have set-out an approach for encouraging engagement within their proposal.

6.2 There is a risk associated with the outcomes of the project and having the necessary resource and capacity in the short-term and long-term to work towards the outcomes.

Risk	Level of uncontrolled risk	Controls	Level of controlled risk
Engagement with stakeholders, partners, and residents	Low	An external communication consultant appointed by The Prince’s Foundation will create a robust external communication strategy	Low
Appropriate resources, capacity, and	Medium	During the project resources should be identified in the short-	Low

influence to implement the outcomes of the project		term and long-term to work towards the outcomes of the project. We should work in partnership with others to increase access to resources, capacity, and influence.	
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7. POTENTIAL IMPACTS

7.1 Equalities. Equality Impact Assessments completed and will be published on the council's website.

7.2 Climate change/sustainability – The project specifically identifies this as a key RBWM strategy that the Windsor Vision will support

7.3 Data Protection/GDPR. No personal data has been processed.

8. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

8.1 The project sets out a 7-month programme of activity and is set within 3 stages:

1. Project Start-Up Period (April 2022)

- Planning and Preparation stage, which will inform look & feel of the later stages
- Creation of 'core team' (RBWM & PF) and ratify the work programme & defined milestones
- Review baseline information and prepare mapping
- Agree stakeholder participants
- Windsor Town Walk and start-up meetings – this will inform the brief for future workshops

2. Key Stakeholder Workshop (June 2022)

- Involve a small immediate group of stakeholders that will take part in a tour, roundtables and focus groups
- Aspirations and reflections on future of Windsor
- Technical briefings from local stakeholders to share ideas and opportunities for the area
- Context of wider community
- Form a consensus for wider aspirations and goals for next stage
- Outcomes will be packaged into a presentation, with coherent SWOT analysis ahead of stage 3

3. Visioning Charter Workshop (October 2022)

- 2-day location-based 'Visioning' workshop in Windsor involving a wider group of stakeholders / community
- Includes opportunity for public drop-ins (special characters of the Town and priorities) and how to remain involved

8.2 Workshop outcomes will include:

- Agree an emerging framework vision for Windsor and recommendations for short to longer term delivery
- Articulate of the distinctiveness of ‘place’ and agree consensus on shape and cornerstones of the vision
- Consensus around quality, place and character that the council finds acceptable
- Revisit the communication and engagement strategy in terms of outcomes

9. APPENDICES

9.1 This report is supported by one appendix:

- Appendix A: The Prince’s Foundation proposal
- Appendix B: Equality Impact Assessment Form

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

10.1 Windsor Neighbourhood Plan ([WNP Home \(windsorplan.org.uk\)](http://windsorplan.org.uk))

10.2 Corporate Plan ([Corporate Plan 2021-2026 | Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead \(rbwm.gov.uk\)](http://rbwm.gov.uk))

10.3 Borough Local Plan ([Adopted local plan | Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead \(rbwm.gov.uk\)](http://rbwm.gov.uk))

10.4 Environment and Climate Change Strategy ([Environment and climate strategy | Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead \(rbwm.gov.uk\)](http://rbwm.gov.uk))

11. CONSULTATION

Name of consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
<i>Mandatory:</i>	<i>Statutory Officers (or deputies)</i>		
Adele Taylor	Executive Director of Resources/S151 Officer	21/03/22	21/03/22
Emma Duncan	Deputy Director of Law and Strategy / Monitoring Officer	07/03/22	09/03/22
<i>Deputies:</i>			
Andrew Vallance	Head of Finance (Deputy S151 Officer)	07/03/22	09/03/22
Elaine Browne	Head of Law (Deputy Monitoring Officer)	21/03/22	21/03/22
Karen Shepherd	Head of Governance (Deputy Monitoring Officer)		
<i>Mandatory:</i>	Procurement Manager (or deputy) - if report requests approval to award, vary or extend a contract		
Lyn Hitchinson	Procurement Manager		

<i>Other consultees:</i>			
<i>Directors</i>			
Duncan Sharkey	Chief Executive	07/03/22	
Andrew Durrant	Executive Director of Place	07/03/22	07/03/22
Kevin McDaniel	Executive Director of Children's Services		
Hilary Hall	Executive Director of Adults, Health and Housing	07/03/22	08/03/22

Confirmation relevant Cabinet Member(s) consulted	Councillor Andrew Johnson - Leader of the Council and Chairman of Cabinet, Business, Economic Development and Property	Yes
	Councillor Samantha Rayner - Deputy Leader of the Council, Corporate & Resident Services, Culture & Heritage and Windsor	Yes

REPORT HISTORY

Decision type:	Urgency item?	To follow item?
Key decision	No	No
First entered into the Cabinet Forward Plan:		

Report Author:	Andrew Durrant and Claire Kellow
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Achieving *more* for Children

DRAFT

01 Introduction

We are delighted to introduce *Achieving more for Children* - our business plan for 2020-24. This is an ambitious plan that builds on our success over our first five years of operating, and explains how we will achieve even more for children and young people so that they have the best start in life and are able to have safe, happy, healthy and successful childhoods.

It sets out the projects that the company will deliver over the next four years to meet these aims. A number of these projects will be delivered across Kingston, Richmond, and Windsor and Maidenhead because they meet a common need. However, some have been designed to meet specific local challenges and circumstances or to reflect the priorities of each individual council. The business plan does not include our day-to-day business and we will of course continue to maintain our attention on providing those early help, education, health and social care services that many families rely on every day.

The programmes in the business plan are based on our conviction that to maintain the quality of our services and achieve the best possible outcomes for children, young people and families within the resources we have available, we must truly focus our work on six important priorities:

- building resilience in families
- creating inclusive local provision to meet increasing need
- investing in a skilled and flexible workforce
- developing our business and delivery models
- implementing smarter and more agile working practices
- striving to deliver excellent value for money in all that we do

Our plan builds on our achievements over the last five years including:

- achieving an Ofsted 'Outstanding' judgement for our children's social care support services in Kingston and a 'Good' judgement in Richmond and in Windsor and Maidenhead.

- achieving a positive Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) of the multi-agency response to the identification of initial need and risk in Windsor and Maidenhead in May 2022, which focused on our ‘front door’ including our Single Point of Access.
- developing our own local residential provision, including supported accommodation for care leavers, short break care for children and young people with disabilities, a new residential children’s home, and a new short break care overnight centre for children and young people with SEND.
- securing over £7 million from the Department for Education as part of the Partners in Practice initiative to develop innovative ways of supporting children and young people on the edge of care.
- implementing the Signs of Safety model across all our services, which has enabled practitioners to better work in partnership with children and families, building on their family strengths to promote their safety and wellbeing.
- becoming a national leader in the delivery of the Troubled Families programme with over 650 vulnerable families being given the additional support they need to improve the care and support they provide to their children.
- establishing an independent fostering agency (IFA) across all boroughs which has been judged good, and has now been operating effectively for almost three years and has led to an increase in the number of approved fostering households.
- achieving ‘Good’ inspection ratings of our Youth Offending Services in Kingston and Richmond, and Windsor and Maidenhead which demonstrates our high quality support to those young people who are involved in criminal activity.
- launching the new Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Register in Kingston and Richmond to capture the details of more children and young people with SEND to encourage greater engagement with families. All those that sign up receive a Disability Awareness Card, which was designed in collaboration with children and parents, and provides proof of a child’s disability.
- In October 2019, Ofsted revisited our SEND services in Windsor and Maidenhead and confirmed that we were making good progress against six of the eight areas identified as requiring improvement.
- In October 2022, Ofsted revisited our SEND services in Kingston and confirmed we were making sufficient progress against our Written Statement of Action, and a result, the formal quarterly support and challenge visits from the Department for Education and NHS England will come to an end.
- receiving a ‘good’ rating across all areas following the Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection of our Health Visiting and School Nursing Service in Windsor and Maidenhead in November 2022.

All three of our owning councils face challenging financial settlements which means that the company must operate within its budget, including the delivery of planned efficiency savings. At the same time, the need for our services is increasing, predominantly in relation to our need to support children and young people with SEND, and to deliver our responsibilities for children in care and those leaving care. We are also seeing a sustained increase in our referrals into our SPA teams across both operational areas.

Our business plan must focus on ensuring the company is able to better manage demand, meet needs, deliver required cost savings and achieve longer-term financial sustainability, balanced with a drive to maintain the quality of those services and support innovation and creative solutions to our challenges. As such, one of our key areas for development will be establishing local placement sufficiency and agreeing a model for the delivery of local placements.

Since the business plan was developed, we have experienced the COVID-19 pandemic which has had a significant impact on our service delivery. This impact is likely to continue for some time and may result in future changes to our priority projects over the coming years. More positively, it has also provided us with many learning opportunities such as the benefits of hybrid working for our workforce, and improved participation of children and young people receiving our support through online engagement.

02 About Achieving for Children

Achieving for Children (AfC) was created as a community interest company in 2014 by the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames and the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames to deliver all their children's services. In 2017, the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead became a third owner of the company. We now deliver services to more than 120,000 children and young people. We work closely with our local authority owners and local strategic partners, such as schools, the police, health services and voluntary sector organisations, to ensure that the services we provide are relevant and responsive to the differing needs of children and young people in the three local areas, and support the delivery of each council's local strategic priorities. Where it makes sense to scale-up and deliver services across all three areas, this will be done to achieve better outcomes for children and young people and deliver better value for money. Our initial seven year contract with Kingston and Richmond councils came to an end in March 2021. We are delighted that the councils have jointly agreed to extend our contract for a further five years until March 2026. We also have a seven-year contract with the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead which ends in 2024, with an option to extend for a further five years.

We deliver the full range of children's services for the three councils. Our service offer is based on strong universal provision delivered through our children's centres and youth centres. This is offered alongside targeted early help that provides support to families at the earliest opportunity to prevent children's and young people's needs escalating and facilitate family resilience. We expanded our universal services with the addition of health visiting and school nursing when Windsor and Maidenhead joined the company. These public health services complement our specialist nursing and therapy services for children with disabilities and complex health needs.

Our statutory offer includes child protection, children in need, support for children in care and leaving care, youth justice and services for children with special educational needs and disabilities. Our final service area is the support we provide to early years settings and schools to deliver high quality teaching and learning. This includes planning school places, school admissions, advice on school improvement and targeted support for vulnerable pupils. To support the delivery of these services, we employ just over 1,100 professionals from a wide variety of disciplines, including social work, teaching, nursing, occupational therapy, physiotherapy and clinical psychology. Our performance and the quality of our early help, health and social care services are good and this has been recognised by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission in their service and regulatory inspections. Inspection outcomes for special educational needs services are less positive and are an area for continued improvement.

Service benefits

Achieving for Children has a single organisational focus on services for children, young people and their families. A single organisation working across three local authorities brings operational efficiency and service resilience through a flexible workforce that is skilled and able to manage peaks in demands for services. Our larger scale means that specialist expertise, which may have been lost or unaffordable in a single local authority, can be retained and developed. The joint company model provides increased opportunities for employee engagement and empowerment, enabling cost-efficient decisions to be taken by practitioners working directly with families and reducing the need for more intensive work and interventions further down the line.

The service benefits for Achieving for Children are best seen in three areas. First, our investment in systemic family therapy to complement social work interventions when working with families with the most complex needs. Second, our Virtual School where our larger scale has enabled us to retain specialist practitioners focused on improving educational outcomes and destinations for children in care. Third, the development of a company-wide independent fostering agency to lead on the recruitment and retention of a highly-skilled pool of local foster carers. The agency was graded as 'Good' by Ofsted at its initial regulatory inspection in 2019.

Most of our funding comes from contracts with the local authorities that own us and commission us to deliver their children's services. The annual value of these contracts is £163 million. In addition, the company manages the allocation of over £413 million in Dedicated Schools Grant to early years providers and schools. Since 2015, there has been a significant financial pressure on the high needs block of the Dedicated

Schools Grant in Kingston and Richmond due to increasing need and complexity of need and the associated costs of school placements for children with special educational needs and disabilities. This is a national trend, which is beginning to also become evident in Windsor and Maidenhead in terms of a deficit position. There has similarly been an increase in children in need of social care support and becoming looked after. Again, this follows a national trend and is placing significant financial pressure on the three local authorities. One contributing factor to this increased cost has been a lack of local provision to meet the increasing numbers of children needing support and to meet their complexity of needs, leading to a reliance on external and independent provision which is often at a much higher cost.

Financial benefits

Our company model is designed to be flexible enough to respond to the individual priorities of each of our owning councils, but also to deliver jointly across the two or three partners where this improves outcomes and increases efficiency, resilience and cost effectiveness. We have a shared support service operating model which delivers efficiencies and resilience from a single approach to business services. This model has reduced central costs by just over £3 million since the company was established. There have also been financial efficiencies from a more stable workforce and a reduced reliance on more expensive locum and agency workers. This has been achieved through improved recruitment and retention schemes and the increased opportunities for career development and progression available in a larger organisation.

The pandemic has had a significant impact on workforce stability and so this remains a key area of focus for us, particularly in frontline roles that are proving hard to recruit to. We have increased our purchasing power for placements for children in care, care leavers and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, and we have invested in developing our own residential provision for children in care and supported accommodation for care leavers to help meet their needs locally at a lower cost. We opened Green Leas, a 17-bed unit offering 24-hours supported accommodation in Kingston in 2017, and opened Hope House, our first children's home, in March 2020.

Overall, we have reduced the costs of delivering services for the councils by £12 million since 2014 and in Windsor and Maidenhead, we are in the lowest 10% of costs per head of the child age population when benchmarked nationally.

One of the reasons Achieving for Children was established as a community interest company was to benefit from increasing our commercial and income-generation opportunities whilst maintaining our social focus on giving children the best start and improving their life chances. In our first five years, we have successfully diversified our income by providing a consultancy offer to local authorities which are considering

alternative delivery models, or which require support to improve the effectiveness and impact of their children's services.

We have provided in-depth support to eight local authorities in England since 2014 and, as a result of this success, we were named as a Partner in Practice by the Department for Education in 2018 and have successfully provided improvement support to a further five local authorities. We have recently taken on responsibility for the Berkshire-wide Sensory Consortium Service, which includes the management of 40 qualified teachers for visually and hearing impaired children and young people. The service provides sensory impairment support across Windsor and Maidenhead, Slough, Bracknell Forest, Wokingham, Reading and West Berkshire.

Since 2014, we have also generated income from traded services, trusts and foundations, fundraising and corporate partnerships. This has enabled us to innovate our service offer and implement creative solutions to meet families' needs. Over the next four years, we intend to focus our commercial efforts on this activity and reduce our consultancy offer, as this is considered a more sustainable approach for the company.

Commercial benefits and business development

As a community interest company, Achieving for Children is able to trade its services to other local authorities and public bodies, through management consultancy and the provision of services under contract, to create a surplus for reinvestment in frontline services for children, young people and their families. It also has the potential to expand the range of services provided by the company and to access funding opportunities that are not open to local authorities, such as charitable trusts and foundations and corporate sponsorship, that can be used to fund or supplement funding for non-statutory services.

Since 2014, we have generated £5 million in traded services with schools and from our improvement consultancy offer to 12 local authorities. We have secured more than £10 million in grant funding to develop our services, including substantial funding from the Department for Education to develop innovative solutions for children experiencing domestic violence, substance misuse and parental mental health issues. This has resulted in the development of a nationally-recognised service which provides a multi-disciplinary approach to building family resilience to prevent children requiring child protection interventions or needing to come into care.

To make sure we take advantage of opportunities, a business development strategy has been developed to sit alongside this overarching business plan. The Achieving for Children Business Development Strategy outlines the organisation's objective to further develop as a specialist children's services provider and commissioner over the next five years. It outlines a structured approach to identifying, evaluating

and agreeing which opportunities are right for Achieving for Children and our owning councils.

At the heart of the strategy is an ambition to improve the lives of children and young people by providing affordable and outstanding children's services support to the young people of Kingston, Richmond, and Windsor and Maidenhead. Services may be extended to other organisations supporting children outside of our three boroughs where there are clear ethical, financial or developmental benefits.

You can read the strategy on our website: <https://www.achievingforchildren.org.uk/reports/>

Our leading performance

<p>Ofsted rates our children’s social care services in Kingston as ‘Outstanding’ and as ‘Good’ in Richmond and in Windsor and Maidenhead.</p>	<p>91% of families have improved the care they provide to their children following intensive support from the Strengthening Families service. The service has provided support to 265 families experiencing domestic violence, substance misuse and parental mental health concerns.</p>	<p>More than 1,000 children with disabilities receive short break care, including overnight respite care, from Achieving for Children. 96% of parents and carers rate the care and activities that their children receive as good or better.</p>
<p>More than 10,000 young people each year regularly use our youth services to take part in positive activities that develop their interests and talents. More than 1,500 young people complete their Duke of Edinburgh’s award each year delivering over 45,000 hours of volunteering to their local communities, with a social value of more than £475,000.</p>	<p>Since AfC was created in 2014, we have delivered 9,074 additional school places including expanding SEND provision in mainstream schools and co-developing five new free schools. This means that more of our children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities are now educated within their local communities.</p>	<p>98% of education, health and care plans (EHCPs) are completed within the statutory timescale of 20 weeks from the request for assessment. This places our services among the best in the country for the timeliness of assessments and plans for children with SEND.</p>
<p>We support 165 schools to deliver high quality teaching and learning. 91% of schools across our three boroughs are judged to be ‘Good’ or ‘Outstanding’ by Ofsted, including 97% in Windsor and Maidenhead, and are at the top of the school league tables for progress and attainment at all key stages.</p>	<p>89% of children and young people report improved mental health and emotional wellbeing following support from our emotional health services. Our services include art therapy, clinical psychology and systemic family therapy.</p>	<p>More than 13,000 families attend one of our children’s centres each year for health appointments, to access local childcare, and to attend activities that help their children get ready for school. 77% of children achieve a good level of development in their first year at school, which is well above the national average at 72%.</p>

03 Our vision and values

Our vision

Our vision is to provide children and their families with the support and services they need to live safe, happy, healthy and successful lives.

Who we are

At Achieving for Children we champion children and families, putting their wellbeing and education first. As a social enterprise, we take the values of public service and combine them with a business approach to deliver our social aims. We have the independence and flexibility to tailor innovative solutions to the needs of children and their families, whilst maintaining our focus on delivering priorities for each of the councils that owns the company.

How we work

- *We put children and young people first:* we are passionate about ensuring the best possible outcomes for children and young people – and this drives everything that we do.
- *We embrace diversity and champion inclusion:* we are committed to valuing difference and diversity in our workforce and in the children and families we work with, so that their identities are promoted and their individual needs are met.
- *We are resourceful, adaptable and dependable:* we find and create solutions that work well for children and their families. We build our reputation based on our professionalism, our dedication, our flexibility, and by always delivering what we promise.
- *We nurture strong, responsive and caring relationships:* we build strong and productive partnerships with children, young people, parents, carers and communities so that we can listen and learn from one another.
- *We lead and support partnerships to meet the needs of children and families:* we build strong and effective partnerships with our owning councils, other statutory services, schools, education providers, local businesses, as well as organisations in the voluntary and community sector.

- *We value and invest in our staff to deliver innovative and quality services:* we know that our employees are our most important asset – they make our ambitions a reality. We recruit and retain the best people, value their experience and expertise, and support their professional development and personal growth.
- *We will work with our own councils to deliver the most effective solutions for them:* we understand the requirements of each council that commissions us to deliver their children’s services, and work closely with elected members and corporate leaders to help deliver their plans and priorities.

Our values

- *Trust:* We are reliable, others can count on us to undertake tasks and deliver on what was agreed – we will do what we said we would do. We will encourage open and honest communication, and model clear and fair professional boundaries.
- *Respect:* We will listen to and value other people’s perspectives and differences. We will show empathy and humility in the way we communicate.
- *Empower:* We help others to realise their ability and potential, and show emotional intelligence in our approach. We show appropriate and respectful use of the power given to us in our jobs or positions and we use this to encourage and enable others.

04 Our business plan

What is the business plan?

Achieving *More* for Children - the business plan for Achieving for Children for 2020 to 2024 is the company’s most important strategic document. It articulates our vision for the company together with the most important outcomes that we want to achieve for children in partnership with our owning councils and local strategic partners. It also sets out our objectives for what we want the company to be and how we will change and develop in order to deliver these outcomes. Against each of our strategic outcomes, the business plan sets out priority activities that we will focus on delivering over the next four years. These are the key priorities that will enable us to deliver our vision. Each priority includes targets and milestones so that the three councils, our partners, stakeholders, young people and families can hold us to account. The intention of our business plan is not to capture everything we do as a company. It is a high-level strategic document which

provides a clear framework for decision-making about our services and how we prioritise and allocate our resources.

How we have developed our business plan

The priorities in our business plan are based on a sound understanding of the local needs in each of the three local authority areas. We have developed a strong evidence base for our plan using demographic trends, performance data and the needs analyses produced by the councils in their joint strategic needs assessments to better understand local needs, alongside more qualitative feedback about the effectiveness and impact of our services. To make sense of all of this information, we held a **Big Conversation** in 2019. This involved a series of listening events with children, young people, parents, carers, partner organisations in the statutory and voluntary sectors, the councils and our own employees. These conversations enabled us to hear about those issues that are most pressing and that should be our highest priority, as well as identifying creative solutions and potential areas for innovation. The Big Conversation also enabled us to make sure that our plan is aligned with the strategic priorities of our owning councils in their corporate plans and with our strategic partners, including the local health and care plans developed by the clinical commissioning groups.

How we will measure our progress

We will monitor progress in two ways. Firstly, by being clear about our priority activities, when we expect these to be delivered and monitoring our progress against those delivery plans. We report on progress with the implementation of our business plan through our quarterly project and financial monitoring which goes to the AfC Board and senior leaders across the organisation. We also produce an annual report and impact report each year which set out our key achievements over the previous 12 months.

Secondly, we monitor progress through a set of key performance indicators and quality measures that are reported as part of our contractual arrangements. These have been set by the councils as part of our contracts with them and by our board of directors to ensure the continual development of the company and the services it delivers. There is regular monitoring and scrutiny of our performance by the councils and the board of directors, with progress against the key performance indicators reported publicly to each of the owning councils. All the success measures that we have used in this plan are reported to the councils and published as part of our quarterly contract monitoring.

Annual review

Each year the business plan priority areas will be reviewed and updated. The annual review will be reported to the councils in public meetings. The annual review will provide a self-assessment of our progress at implementing our priorities in the previous year, as well as refreshing our

priorities and activities for the year ahead.

For 2022-23, as part of the refresh of the business plan, we have reviewed our priority projects. Some new projects have been added and some existing projects have been amended slightly to reflect new circumstances. In addition, a number of projects have now been removed from the business plan. These are set out below.

Strategic Priority	Priority project	Why is this no longer included in the plan?
Achieving more for Children across our whole organisation		
Stronger families	Ensure Achieving for Children is able to effectively respond to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic by continuing to keep our children and young people safe, ensuring our families feel supported, and helping our staff to adapt to new working arrangements.	<p>This has been completed. We managed to minimise the disruption to our services caused by COVID-19 by adopting a flexible and pragmatic approach to service delivery. Children, young people and families continued to receive high quality services, either face-to-face or virtually, and our staff have fed back that they felt supported throughout the pandemic.</p> <p>Our service delivery has now returned to normal, with best practice identified during COVID-19 implemented such as communicating with children in care virtually.</p> <p>A new hybrid approach to working arrangements has been established across the organisation. Staff have been supported to adapt to this change and are supported to operate effectively in this way, with the necessary IT equipment and systems support available as required.</p> <p>We are in the process of reviewing our office accommodation, and rationalising it so that it better meets the needs of hybrid working and supports our owning Councils to achieve their efficiency targets. This is now considered part of our business as usual activity.</p>
Successful organisation	Develop and implement a more formalised approach to business development through a new Business Development Strategy and Business Development Plan. This will include the development and implementation of a revised fundraising strategy that brings in grants and other income to	<p>This has been completed. The new formalised approach to business development is now in place and the Business Development Strategy has been published alongside the business plan on our website. Our strategic vision, as set out in the strategy, is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop cost effective approaches to support children and young people with a particular focus on more affordable, high quality, local placement options. • Innovate to improve services and support children to achieve better outcomes. We will be pioneers in the digital development space with a focus on improving efficiency and using technology to better engage with young people and partners.

151

	<p>support the delivery of innovative new services that promote positive outcomes for the most vulnerable children and young people.</p>	<p>The vision is underpinned by a number of key principles that will underpin our activity in this area. It focuses our approach to business development into three areas: the sufficiency strategy, best practice approaches, and grants and research; and sets out how we will monitor our impact.</p>
	<p>Take opportunities to expand the company, should they present themselves, by finding a children's services partner for Windsor and Maidenhead that would enable service effectiveness, operational efficiency and resilience, and longer-term financial sustainability. Any expansion will be subject to decision by the owning councils.</p>	<p>For the remainder of the business plan, we will not be prioritising the expansion of the company, and as such, we have removed this project. It may be revisited in the longer-term.</p>
<p>Smarter working</p>	<p>Implement digital strategies and solutions to improve the operational efficiency of frontline and corporate support services, maximising the time available to practitioners for working directly with children and young people.</p>	<p>Our digital activity has now become business as usual, led by our Digital Transformation team. We effectively integrate digital technology into many areas of our business, which has enabled us to change how we operate and deliver value. This work is driven by our Digital, Data and IT Strategy 2021-24.</p> <p>As part of our recent digital activity we have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● established our Digital Ambassadors scheme across Achieving for Children. The Digital Ambassadors provide a range of support including training to new starters, supporting sessions on both new and existing systems, hosting Google Question and Answer drop in sessions and providing 1:1 support. ● Utilised Robotic Process Automation (RPA) which can help with repetitive and lower-value work, like logging into applications and systems, moving files and folders, extracting, copying, and inserting data, filling in forms, and completing routine analyses and reports freeing up staff to do more high value tasks. We have rolled our RPA in our Single Point of Access to process online referrals into our Liquid Logic case management system; and in our School Admissions team to verify the addresses submitted on school place applications against information held in council tax records. ● Undertaken a project to establish a Digital Customer Platform (DCP) which will be a one-stop-shop for the public to carry out online transactions with our services.

		<p>Individuals will have their own accounts on the system where they can view all of their interactions with us via the self-service portal. The DCP is a tool, used to help facilitate the needs and requirements of both our services and their service users using modern technology.</p>
	<p>Develop and implement an Achieving for Children Environment Strategy that sets out our commitment to taking proactive steps to minimise the environmental impact of our activities, which will enable us to support our owning councils in their efforts to address the climate change emergency.</p>	<p>We have developed our Environment Strategy, which is published on our website, and which sets out our environmental commitments as an organisation. It sets out that we are committed to taking proactive steps to minimise the environmental impact of our activities. We will seek to deliver children’s services in an environmentally-friendly way by identifying areas of change which will result in fewer carbon emissions. We work closely with our owning Councils in the hope that through our actions, we will contribute to our boroughs’ efforts in creating a sustainable and biodiverse environment for future generations to enjoy. The strategy sets out an action plan which is monitored regularly by the Environment Task Force, chaired by the Chief Operating and Finance Officer, which has been established to drive forward our activity.</p> <p>As part of the implementation of our strategy, we have taken part in a range of environmental activities including World Earth Day, the Big Plastic Count, the Climate Marathon, and Non Disposable Cup Day. We have also worked closely with our Youth Councils, and will continue to do so to ensure we maintain momentum.</p>
<p>Achieving more for children in Kingston and Richmond / Windsor and Maidenhead</p>		
<p>Stronger families</p>	<p>Embed the strengthened approach to the quality assurance of frontline services so that they continue to effectively safeguard children and young people and promote their wellbeing and achievement. This will include strengthening the multi-agency focus on quality assuring EHCPs for children and young people with SEND.</p>	<p>Our quality assurance framework for our frontline services is now well-established across both operational areas and is supporting our frontline staff to effectively safeguard children and young people and promote their wellbeing and achievement. The framework includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Quantitative data, performance and intelligence including: weekly summary reports; monthly data sets presented at the Performance, Quality and Innovation Board; service, team and worker level data; quality checklists; monthly performance reports to the AfC Board and the owning Councils; and annual end of year performance reporting. ● Qualitative data and audits including: Practice Week; reports from services and teams; impact audit and thematic reviews including with our multi agency partners; direct observation of practice; appreciative evaluation; case and learning reviews; and seven minute learnings. ● Children’s, families’ and carers’ voices including: participation activities; impact audits; online family survey; feedback at child protection conferences and child looked after reviews; HaveMySay; focus groups; Corporate Parenting Board; Children in Care Council; complaints and compliments; Special Educational Needs and Disabilities participation team. ● Practitioners’ voices and input including: annual staff survey; principal social worker and head of practice learning; exit interviews; feedback to the Director of Children’s Services and senior leaders; drop in sessions; Signs of Safety practice lead sessions; and annual professional development scheme.

		<p>Where necessary we have strengthened those areas requiring additional focus. For example, in Kingston and Richmond we have increased the SEND participation resource to enable us to more effectively capture feedback from the families we support and build stronger and more robust relationships with parents.</p>
<p>Positive futures</p>	<p>Review and reconfigure the future delivery of health services in line with the development of the new integrated care services. This will include establishing an operating model that promotes high quality and integrated services to support children and young people to maximise their independence, resilience and health outcomes, and reviewing our health staff offer to support a permanent and stable workforce.</p>	<p>Given the recent national change from Clinical Commissioning Groups to Integrated Care Boards/ Systems (ICB/S), and the need for this to embed and become fully established, this project is no longer considered an immediate priority for the remainder of the business plan.</p> <p>However, we will continue to deliver health services in partnership with the ICB and other health colleagues, with a strong focus on improving the quality of services and ensuring they are as integrated as possible to support better outcomes for children, young people and their families. As part of our wider Achieving for Children recruitment and retention project, which is ongoing, we will be targeting recruitment in our health services with the aim of establishing a more permanent and stable workforce. This is necessary in light of national recruitment challenges, particularly in relation to therapy services.</p>

Our commitment to equality and diversity

Within Achieving for Children, we have recognised the need to strengthen our equality and diversity practice and better understand our workforce and the issues that impact them. To support this, we have established the staff-led Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Board which includes senior managers and staff from across the organisation. The board’s purpose is to drive our equality and diversity change agenda, in line with our organisational values. Its aim is to support staff to understand differences and behave respectfully to each other so that people want to work and stay working in the company and that Achieving for Children can respond to the different needs of service users. The board helps with the implementation of our equality and diversity action plan which aims to promote, improve and sustain equality, diversity and inclusion across the organisation. The plan was developed based on responses to our equality and diversity staff survey. We will continue to seek the views of staff and provide a range of engagement mechanisms to ensure we hear their voice and learn from their experiences. For example, we have recently established three employee networks, which represent different characteristic groups from across Achieving for Children.

Along with colleagues in Richmond and Wandsworth, we were also part of the Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) pilot, which was

based on a successful programme implemented in the NHS to improve the experiences of staff from minoritised ethnic groups. As part of the pilot, we collated data on staff from ethnic minority backgrounds in relation to areas such as recruitment, training, promotion, and turnover, and used this to create an action plan to address the issues we identified. Following the successful completion of the pilot, we will continue to report on the data and the action plan annually. The project is aligned to the work of the EDI Board and will be overseen by EDI Board members.

Our commitment to the environment

As an organisation we are committed to taking proactive steps to minimise the environmental impact of our activities. In 2021-22 we developed our first environment strategy, which sets out this commitment. We seek to deliver children's services in an environmentally-friendly way, through identifying areas of change which will result in fewer carbon emissions. We work with Kingston, Richmond, and Windsor and Maidenhead councils to contribute to our boroughs' efforts in creating a sustainable and biodiverse environment.

We have identified six key areas where we can focus on having an impact.

- Staff awareness and engagement
- Waste and recycling
- Energy efficiency and biodiversity
- Travel and transport
- Commissioning and procurement
- Young people's participation

Alongside the environment strategy, we have developed an action plan which will support our aims in reducing our carbon footprint and take forward the key priorities identified under each theme. The action plan is overseen by an environment taskforce, coordinated by the Strategy, Policy and Programmes team. Where possible, it will capture how impact will be measured.

The action plan is presented to the Achieving for Children Board of Directors and is regularly scrutinised by the Kingston and Richmond, and Windsor and Maidenhead youth councils.

The strategy itself can be found here: <https://kr.afcinfo.org.uk/pages/about-us/reports-and-documents/environment-strategy>

This work has now been incorporated into our business as usual activity.

05 our ambition

By 2024, Achieving for Children will be a strong and financially stable organisation. Children's services throughout England are facing unprecedented financial challenges, predominantly because of the need to support more children and an increase in the complexity and longevity of their needs. This relates to services for children in need of help and protection, children in care and leaving care, unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, and children with special educational needs and disabilities. It is placing significant pressure on the three councils' revenue budgets and, in the case of support for children with special educational needs and disabilities in Kingston and Richmond, is building a substantial in-year and cumulative financial deficit because the allocated government grant is insufficient to meet the increasing need.

We will meet this challenge by having a relentless focus on outcomes for children and young people based on local needs and priorities. Delivering our vision to give children the best start in life and improve their life chances is not just a job for Achieving for Children, but is a shared responsibility with the wider public and voluntary sector. By 2024, Achieving for Children will be characterised by its strong and meaningful relationships with our partner organisations and our whole-system approach to improving services and outcomes for children and young people. We will have strengthened relationships with parents and carers, and our service offer will be shaped by them and by the direct involvement of children and young people. The co-production of effective solutions to local priorities, including the financial challenges, will be evident in our successful delivery of this business plan, as well as our response to emerging issues. We will have invested in integrated services and joint commissioning with our partners, bringing together our collective ideas, talent and resources to better meet the needs of children and young people, especially those with the most complex needs. This will most be evident in our delivery of children's health services where we will have strengthened our integrated health services for children with disabilities, and we will have expanded our offer to include health visiting and public health nursing in schools.

We will focus our early help services on building resilience in families so that they are better able to help, support and protect their children

without the need for statutory interventions. Our services will consistently use reflective, collaborative and strengths-based approaches to working with the whole family so that parents are able to make positive and lasting changes to the care they provide to their children. This means maintaining strong universal services, such as youth services, and investing in targeted early help services based on evidence-based interventions that are proven to work in supporting sustained change in families.

We aim to have consistently good quality services that support children and young people to live safe, happy, healthy and successful lives. By 2024, our social care services will be judged to be 'Good' quality by Ofsted in their inspection of local authority children's services or the subsequent inspection framework. Local area inspections of services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities and for youth justice services will also have positive outcomes, as will inspections of our health services by the Care Quality Commission. We will have clear action plans in place to address any 'written statement of action' in relation to our special education needs or disabilities services and will be able to demonstrate progress implementing these actions. Most importantly, satisfaction with our services of children, young people and parents will also be high. We will consistently get the basics right for families in terms of good quality assessments, plans, interventions and support packages that are regularly reviewed, and use evidence of what works coupled with effective risk management that support children and young people to remain at home with their families as much as possible.

By 2024, we will have successfully invested in local provision so that children and young people can stay closer to their families and support networks, and benefit from our local offer of integrated education, health and care services. We will have met the increasing demand for school places and have maintained local choice for children and young people by working with the government to create more free schools and by having permanently expanded 'Good' and 'Outstanding' local schools. We will have invested in inclusive education so that more children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities can be educated in local mainstream schools. We will have also opened more local special schools with a specific focus on autistic spectrum conditions, speech, language and communication needs, and social, emotional and mental health needs. In the next four years, we will also have increased the number of foster care families, opened our own residential children's homes and increased our range of supported accommodation for care leavers. We will have joined-up this support to provide holistic support to children in care and on the edge of care. All our services will be focused on promoting independence and developing the skills that young people will need in adulthood.

Achieving our vision for children and young people is reliant on a skilled, motivated and stable workforce. So, by 2024, we will be recognised as an employer of choice for professionals working with children and young people. We will have reduced the number of vacant posts and agency workers in our organisation, reduced our annual voluntary turnover, and increased our employee satisfaction rates to above 90%. Our frontline employees will be able to spend the large majority of their time working directly with children and families because we have lean, streamlined

business processes and have invested in new technology and digital solutions that enable more agile and smarter working. This will include bringing in-house those support services that will enable us to provide better and more cost-efficient services for children and their families. We will have strengthened our commissioning practices to foster innovation and achieve higher quality services at a lower cost and will have a well established sufficiency model that supports local and good quality care and support for young people in all three of our boroughs. We will remain open to opportunities to bring onboard a partner local authority to work alongside our services in Windsor and Maidenhead.

06 our strategic priorities to 2024

Based on our vision and ambitions, we have identified six strategic priorities for our business plan for the next four years.

Strategic priority	What will we achieve for children and young people?	Why is this important?
Stronger families	We will have a relentless focus on safeguarding children and young people across all our services. The services we deliver will be high quality and will protect and promote the wellbeing of children and young people by promoting family resilience. We will work collaboratively with our key partners to ensure we are able to realise the benefits of joint working to support our children, young people and families.	<i>Ensuring children and young people are safe from harm is our core business. We want to build resilience in our families and communities so that they are better able to help, support and protect children without the need for statutory intervention. As part of this, we want to ensure our relationships with key partners are strong and that our families really benefit from collaboration and joined-up working.</i>
Positive futures	We will invest and work collaboratively to improve our local education, health and care offer to children and young people so that they have access to high quality services, are able to stay close to their families and friends, achieve well, and develop their skills for independence.	<i>It is crucial that we provide the right support at the right time. This will enable us to help children and young people to develop their independence and prepare for adulthood. Putting in place local provision means children and young people can stay close to their families and essential support networks and they can benefit from our integrated services giving them the best chance for a positive future.</i>
Excellent workforce	Our workforce will be experienced, talented, empowered and motivated to deliver the best possible services and outcomes for	<i>Feedback from children, young people and families always emphasises the importance of a consistent, skilled and motivated</i>

	children and young people. We will invest in the recruitment, retention and development of our workforce and reward their achievements.	<i>workforce. We want to make AfC a place where people want to come and work and a company that they are proud to tell their family and friends that they work for.</i>
Financial stability	The services we deliver will provide excellent value for money and we are trusted by our commissioning councils to deliver the best possible services within the agreed contract price, including the efficient delivery of our financial savings plans.	<i>Given the financial context, nationally and locally, it is essential that we are focused on delivering efficient, cost-effective and financially sustainable services so we are able to support those most in need.</i>
Successful organisation	We will secure the sustainability of the community interest company through contract renewal, business development, fundraising and good growth, so that we are able to reinvest in the services we deliver directly to children and their families.	<i>As the needs of young people and our owning councils change we will develop and adapt our business and delivery models to ensure we continue to meet their needs and offer value for money.</i>
Smarter working	Our business processes will be efficient, cost-effective and supportive to frontline practitioners so that they are able to spend as much time as possible working directly with children, young people and their families to improve outcomes for them.	<i>Better business processes and effective use of new digital technologies will allow our workforce to reduce the amount of time they spend on unnecessary paperwork and bureaucracy, freeing them up to spend more time with the children, young people and families we support.</i>

07 Delivering our strategic priorities in 2023-24

Achieving more for Children across our whole organisation

Strategic Priority	Priority project	Lead	How will we know we have been successful in 2024?
Positive futures	Implement the Sufficiency Strategy to increase capacity in local foster care, residential care and supported accommodation, and work with	Associate Director for Provider Services	As an organisation, we will have a clear direction about how much residential support we will deliver ourselves and how much we will commission. To support this, we will have developed a framework that sets out principles of when each approach should be used and we will be in the process of implementing this in both operational areas.

	<p>other local authorities pan-London and pan-Berkshire to improve commissioning arrangements for placements that cannot be delivered from local, in-house provision.</p>		<p>90% of children and young people will be living locally in high quality care placements close to their friends and family, and will be effectively supported to full independence and adulthood.</p> <p>Any additional placement capacity is provided to the market with income generated from the commercial strategy for residential care reinvested each year into local services for children in care and on the edge of care.</p> <p>We will have agreed a delivery model with our owning councils that increases the amount of local accommodation and will have a clear roadmap that shows what provision will open when in each of our boroughs.</p> <p>We will have supported the development of at least one new residential children's home and two new supported accommodation units for care leavers leading to 60% of children in care and young people leaving care being in local care placements.</p>
	<p>Strengthen the quality and effectiveness of services delivered by the independent fostering agency (IFA), so that it supports the recruitment, training, development and retention of more foster carers and enables more children and young people to benefit from in-house family-based care.</p>	<p>Associate Director for Provider Services</p>	<p>Our IFA will be judged as 'Good' by Ofsted. We will have increased our number of foster carers by 100 families so that more children and young people are able to benefit from family-based care.</p> <p>Our IFA will be judged 'Good' by Ofsted. We will have increased our total number of foster carers by 25 families.</p>
<p>Excellent workforce</p>	<p>Strengthen the approach to recruitment and retention with a clear, coordinated and focused programme of activity so that we can attract experienced and well-qualified practitioners and managers, retain a permanent workforce, and reduce employee turnover and reliance on a higher-cost agency workforce.</p>	<p>Associate Director for Workforce</p>	<p>We will have a strong and stable workforce with a voluntary turnover rate below 15% and an agency staff rate below 10%, particularly in our frontline teams. There will be clear career development pathways with more than 75% of our employees saying that Achieving for Children is a good place to work.</p>

	Ensuring Achieving for Children is an inclusive and diverse organisation that celebrates differences and that represents the local communities it serves.	Equality and Diversity Board	<p>We will be moving towards having a workforce that is more reflective of the local community that it services, with established staff equality groups that work alongside the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Board to ensure that Achieving for Children is known for embracing diversity and championing inclusion for our workforce and the children and families that we work with, so that their identities are promoted and their individual needs are met.</p> <p>We will be implementing the actions identified in the EDI action plan and participating in the Workforce Race Equality Standard annually.</p>
Financial stability	Review and strengthen capacity and arrangements for commissioning, procurement and contract management , including the joint commissioning of services with NHS South West London and the Frimley Integrated Commissioning Board, to achieve quality, value and improved outcomes for children, young people and their families.	Associate Director of Business Development and Strategic Commissioning	<p>A new commissioning framework has been agreed with a focus on joint commissioning, supported by a skilled commissioning team. This will contribute to ensuring that we have robust and comprehensive commissioning arrangements including effective joint commissioning with the Integrated Commissioning Boards.</p> <p>Procurement and contract management has been strengthened across the organisation. Placement commissioning is a strength for AfC, embedded into our company culture and supports cost efficient and high quality services and support.</p>
Smarter working	Review and put in place strengthened arrangements for support services so that the company has the services it needs to be efficient, effective and deliver excellent value for money. This includes establishing a business partner model within Business Services with our operational areas, with a focus on upskilling colleagues so they are more equipped to undertake basic business service functions.	Chief Operating and Finance Officer	<p>The company benefits from effective and cost-efficient corporate support services. Employee satisfaction rates with support services are high because 98% of issues and incidents are successfully resolved within agreed timescales.</p> <p>HR will be delivered in-house and the review of the IT service level agreement will be complete. We will be taking forward the recommendations from the independent IT and digital review.</p> <p>Operational colleagues will be upskilled to take on basic Business Services tasks through the provision of a range of support such as project management toolkits and guidance, and IT helpdesk systems. Ongoing advice and guidance will be provided to ensure colleagues are fully equipped and comfortable undertaking these tasks. As a result, operational areas will report they are able to undertake these tasks effectively and that they feel supported.</p> <p>This will enable resources in Business Services to be targeted where they are most needed and where they provide the best value for money.</p>

	In consultation with children, young people and families, partners and other key stakeholders, develop the new Achieving for Children Business Plan , which will set the direction for the organisation for future years.	Chief Operating and Finance Officer	<p>A new business plan will have been developed, ready to launch in April 2024. The plan will have been drafted based on a sound understanding of the local needs in each of the three local authority areas and priorities will be identified based on robust evidence such as inspection reports, data and intelligence, needs analyses, and qualitative feedback that we collect from stakeholders.</p> <p>We will gather specific views on the plan from our children, young people and families, our owning Councils, key partners such as schools and the voluntary and community sector, and our employees. This will ensure it reflects local needs accurately.</p> <p>The plan will also align with any strategic plans or priorities of key partners such as our owning Councils and health colleagues.</p>
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Achieving more for Children in Kingston

Strategic priority	Priority project	Lead	How will we know we have been successful in 2024?
Stronger families	Implement the Families First safeguarding model by embedding specialist adult practitioners in family social work teams in order to provide a whole-family approach to child protection and ensure that children are able to safely remain within their families.	Director of Children's Services	The Families First safeguarding model will be established. Internal reviews of practice will evidence that Signs of Safety and systemic approaches are embedded. External reviews and inspections of our services will consistently demonstrate the success of our practice in promoting resilience in families so that children are safe and well cared for. Ofsted will judge our children's services to be at least good or outstanding in their overall effectiveness.

	Work with statutory partners and voluntary, community and faith sector organisations to strengthen the local early help offer by continuing to develop early help resilience networks and implementing Family Hubs, to build resilience in families so they are better able to protect and meet the needs of children without the need for higher-tier services or ongoing social work support.	Associate Director for Early Help	We have a strong partnership-focused early help offer that provides coherent and coordinated support to families from the right service at the earliest opportunity, led by the early help resilience networks. The development of Family Hubs will be underway with a clear plan for implementation. Universal services and targeted early help services are effective at reducing the need for statutory interventions, meaning that there has been a 20% reduction in child protection planning and the number of children coming into care.
Positive futures	Review and reconfigure the Leaving Care service to ensure the offer to young people leaving care remains high quality and effectively meets their needs, while the service is well positioned to manage any potential increased demand.	Director of Children's Social Care	100% of recommendations from the leaving care review have been implemented, with the newly configured service in place and delivering an excellent offer to young people leaving care that supports them to prepare for adulthood and the transition to independence. The initial review is complete and work is underway to implement the recommendations, with 25% successfully complete.
	Deliver the SEND Futures Plan (including the Safety Valve Agreement) to transform the experiences of children and young people with SEND and their families, so that local, high-quality education, health and social care provision meets children's assessed needs and maximises their independence, whilst also delivering value for money and operating within the available DSG high needs funding.	SEND Programme Director	The needs of most children and young people with SEND are met at the earliest stage in mainstream schools without the need for an EHCP. 75% of children and young people with a plan are educated in local mainstream and special schools with much reduced reliance on independent and non-maintained school provision outside of the borough. The educational needs of children and young people with SEND are met within the funding provided in the Dedicated Schools Grant. Services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities are consistently high quality with 75% of parents and carers rating services as good or better.
	Improve the provision of occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, and physiotherapy through the implementation of recommendations identified in the review of therapies across	Associate Director for SEND	There is an enhanced local therapies offer which is more accessible and more responsive to growing demand. 75% of parents and carers rate therapies as good or better. The revised staffing model impacts positively on the recruitment and retention of therapists and develops wider expertise across the whole SEND workforce. 25% of recommendations identified in the therapies review are implemented.

	Achieving for Children, NHS South West London and key partners.		
	Work with adult care, health and housing providers to improve pathway and transition planning for young people with SEND so that services and support are in place to meet their needs, promote independence and enable a positive experience of early adulthood.	Associate Director for SEND	All young people with SEND have an effective transition plan in place by the age of 15 that plans for their independence and maximises their opportunities for a positive experience of early adulthood, including planning for their transition to adult social care services where needed. A revised transitions protocol has been agreed between Achieving for Children and adult social care services and is embedded across SEND and leaving care services.
	Contribute to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) transformation programme at place and south-west London ICS levels, including by expanding coverage of the Mental Health in Schools Teams to all schools in Kingston and Richmond and by strengthening Tier 2 CAMHS services to reduce the waiting times for assessment and treatment.	Associate Director for Emotional Health	Children and young people are more easily able to access high quality mental health services that have a strong focus on early intervention and prevent issues escalating to higher levels of need. 75% of families will rate mental health services as good or better. There are Mental Health in Schools Teams in all schools across Kingston and waiting times for assessment and treatment have been reduced at Tier 2 CAHMS services.

The priorities in our plan for Kingston are aligned with the Corporate Plan for 2019-23 - Making Kingston Better, Together - in particular strategic outcome 3: healthy, independent and resilient residents, with effective support to those who need it most. We will contribute to the development of the new Kingston Corporate Plan to ensure that the plans continue to align.

Achieving more for Children in Richmond

Strategic priority	Priority project	Lead	How will we know we have been successful in 2024?
Stronger families	Implement the Families First safeguarding model by embedding specialist adult practitioners in family social work teams in order to provide a whole-family approach to child protection and ensure that	Director of Children's Services	The Families First safeguarding model will be established. Internal reviews of practice will evidence that Signs of Safety and systemic approaches are embedded. External reviews and inspections of our services will consistently demonstrate the success of our practice in promoting resilience in families so that children are safe and well cared for.

	children are able to safely remain within their families.		Ofsted will judge our children's services to be at least good or outstanding in their overall effectiveness.
	Work with statutory partners and voluntary, community and faith sector organisations to strengthen the local early help offer by continuing to develop early help resilience networks and implementing Family Hubs, to build resilience in families so they are better able to protect and meet the needs of children without the need for higher-tier services or ongoing social work support.	Associate Director for Early Help	We have a strong partnership-focused early help offer that provides coherent and coordinated support to families from the right service at the earliest opportunity, led by the early help resilience networks. The development of Family Hubs will be underway with a clear plan for implementation. Universal services and targeted early help services are effective at reducing the need for statutory interventions, meaning that there has been a 20% reduction in child protection planning and the number of children coming into care.
Positive futures	Review and reconfigure the Leaving Care service to ensure the offer to young people leaving care remains high quality and effectively meets their needs, while the service is well positioned to manage any potential increased demand.	Director of Children's Social Care	100% of recommendations from the leaving care review have been implemented, with the newly configured service in place and delivering an excellent offer to young people leaving care that supports them to prepare for adulthood and the transition to independence.
	Deliver the SEND Futures Plan (including the Safety Valve Agreement) to transform the experiences of children and young people with SEND and their families, so that local, high-quality education, health and social care provision meets children's assessed needs and maximises their independence, whilst also delivering value for money and operating within the available DSG high needs funding.	SEND Programme Director	<p>The needs of most children and young people with SEND are met at the earliest stage in mainstream schools without the need for an EHCP. 75% of children and young people with a plan are educated in local mainstream and special schools with much reduced reliance on independent and non-maintained school provision outside of the borough. The educational needs of children and young people with SEND are met within the funding provided in the Dedicated Schools Grant.</p> <p>Services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities are consistently high quality with 75% of parents and carers rating services as good or better.</p> <p>The re-inspection of local area SEND services by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission judges that sufficient progress has been made in implementing the written statement of action and that the overall quality of services has improved.</p>

	<p>Improve the provision of occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, and physiotherapy through the implementation of recommendations identified in the review of therapies across Achieving for Children, the CCG and key partners.</p>	<p>Associate Director for SEND</p>	<p>There is an enhanced local therapies offer which is more accessible and more responsive to growing demand. 75% of parents and carers rate therapies as good or better. The revised staffing model impacts positively on the recruitment and retention of therapists and develops wider expertise across the whole SEND workforce.</p> <p>25% of recommendations identified in the therapies review are implemented.</p>
	<p>Work with adult care and housing providers to improve pathway and transition planning for young people with SEND so that services and support are in place to meet their needs, promote independence and enable a positive experience of early adulthood.</p>	<p>Associate Director for SEND</p>	<p>All young people with SEND have an effective transition plan in place by the age of 15 that plans for their independence and maximises their opportunities for a positive experience of early adulthood, including planning for their transition to adult social care services where needed.</p> <p>A revised transitions protocol has been agreed between Achieving for Children and adult social care services and is embedded across SEND and leaving care services.</p>
	<p>Contribute to the CAMHS transformation programme at place and south-west London ICS levels, including by expanding coverage of the Mental Health in Schools Teams to all schools in Kingston and Richmond and by strengthening Tier 2 CAMHS services to reduce the waiting times for assessment and treatment.</p>	<p>Associate Director for Emotional Health</p>	<p>Children and young people are easily able to access high quality mental health services that have a strong focus on early intervention and prevent issues escalating to higher levels of need. 75% of families will rate mental health services as good or better.</p> <p>There are Mental Health in Schools Teams in all schools across Richmond and waiting times for assessment and treatment have been reduced at Tier 2 CAMHS services.</p>

The priorities in our plan for Richmond are aligned with the Corporate Plan for 2018-22 - Standing Up for Richmond Residents - in particular the strategic outcome 4: a borough for everyone. We will contribute to the development of the new Richmond Corporate Plan to ensure that the plans continue to align.

Achieving more for Children in Windsor and Maidenhead

Strategic priority	Priority project	Lead	How will we know we have been successful in 2024?
Stronger families	Establish an intensive support team to work with children on the edge of care to support them to remain with their families where safe to do so, and to work with children in care so that where appropriate they can be reunified with parents or placed in their extended family or community. As part of this, support foster placements where there are stability issues and step appropriate children down from residential placements to foster placements.	Director for Children's Social Care	The intensive support team will be well established and operating effectively with evidence of impact. This will include: an increased number of children remaining within their family network; a reduction in the number of children in residential provision; and reduction in the number of children in care overall.
Positive futures	Develop resources to support assessment and early intervention in mainstream early years settings, schools and colleges so that they are equipped to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND who are below the threshold for an education, health and care plan.	Deputy Director for Education	All mainstream early years settings, schools and colleges are observed to confidently and effectively support children and young people with SEND who are below the threshold for an EHCP. An inclusion charter mark has been developed to formalise engagement in this scheme. Resources to support assessment and early intervention have been developed and put in place. 80% of mainstream early years settings, schools and colleges are observed to confidently and effectively support children and young people with SEND who are below the threshold for an EHCP.
	Work with the ICB and other partners to implement the written statement of action for SEND so that services are high quality and respond better to the needs, views and ambitions of children, young people and their families.	Deputy Director for Education	Monitoring of local area SEND services by the Department for Education judge that services are effective and continue to improve. 60% of parents and carers rate services as 'Good or better'.

	Develop alternative education provision to better support the educational progress, achievement and wellbeing of children and young people with challenging behaviours who have been permanently excluded or are at risk of exclusion from school.	Deputy Director for Education	New alternative education provision has been developed to support the needs of 36 children and young people with challenging behaviours, leading to improved educational progress, attainment and outcomes (no young people are currently excluded from primary school).
	Work with adult care and housing providers to improve pathway and transition planning for young people with SEND and for care leavers so that services and support are in place to meet their needs, promote independence and enable a positive experience of early adulthood.	Deputy Director for Education	Following the implementation of a revised transitions protocol, agreed between Achieving for Children and adult social care services, all young people with SEND have an effective transition plan in place by the age of 15 that plans for their independence and maximises their opportunities for a positive experience of early adulthood, including planning for their transition to adult social care services where needed.
	Work to reduce gaps in attainment in reading, writing and mathematics between children in receipt of the Pupil Premium grant and their peers to provide the foundation for all children to achieve well and have positive choices for their future learning.	Deputy Director for Education	The attainment for reading, writing and mathematics (combined) at the end of key stage 2 for pupils in receipt of the Pupil Premium grant is better than the results of the statistical neighbour peer group (summer 2024 results).
Smarter working	Specify, procure and implement a new case management system to replace the existing PARIS system that is used across children's services with the aim of improving consistency of practice; reducing the administrative burden on staff; automating much of the standard reporting needs; and enabling more effective collaboration with partners, families and children.	Director of Children's Services	The new case management system is in place and is operating effectively across all areas of the service. Families, children and other partners contribute to the system electronically, improving the knowledge of a given child, with data migration and staff training programmes underway.

The priorities in our plan for Windsor and Maidenhead are aligned with the Corporate Plan for 2021-2026 - Building a borough of opportunity and innovation.

08 Our financial plan

Achieving for Children's Medium Term Financial Strategy focuses on achieving financial sustainability over the business plan period and explains how the business plan programmes and business development strategy will help achieve financial sustainability. In setting the medium term budget we have focused on making informed recommendations that align with our commissioning councils' affordability objectives, as well as making best use of available funds to achieve the best outcomes for children and young people.

The six business plan principles align with the organisation's financial objectives through the promotion of family resilience, maximising independence into adulthood through supporting young people to meet their full potential, investment in local borough resources, and focusing on efficient business processes and commissioning.

The organisation will be following three overarching financial principles over the coming years.

➤ **Achieving value for money**

All three of Achieving for Children's commissioning councils have historically received relatively low levels of funding for council services and as a result, services must be delivered at a lower than average cost. Achieving for Children delivers good quality services for a relatively low cost across general fund services. Education services that are funded by the Dedicated Schools Grant are delivered at average cost and the organisation is working proactively towards improving services in line with inspection findings. The programmes detailed in this programme facilitate the improved use of resources.

➤ **Maximise resources available to frontline services**

Achieving for Children regularly reviews budgets to ensure that resources available to frontline services are maximised and there is a sufficient balance to ensure that frontline services have the infrastructure to ensure they can continue to support children and families. The following aspects are important in achieving this objective:

- adequate needs led budget growth and achievement of savings
- maximise income generation

- periodic review of emerging priority areas
- business plan programmes must facilitate the effective use of resources

➤ **Shared budget responsibility**

Achieving for Children operates a culture of shared budget responsibility with all staff being responsible for ensuring that every pound spent is maximising positive outcomes for children and young people and is in line with budget control processes. Each of the programmes identified in this business plan will have a project sponsor as well as project management and finance support. Progress against the plan and on the associated spend and savings implications will be monitored on an ongoing basis with the relevant leadership team having overarching oversight.

The financial implications, in terms of spend and savings will be carefully monitored over the plan period. It is clear that the coming years will be financially challenging for Achieving for Children given the ongoing pressure on wider public sector budgets and national increases in levels of need for children's services. It is of paramount importance that the organisation continues to work with commissioning partners to ensure a mutual understanding of existing and emerging pressures, and reaches agreement on the level of funding available and how that funding should be prioritised to achieve the best possible outcomes for the children and young people we support.

The medium term financial plan can be found on our website:

<https://www.achievingforchildren.org.uk/pages/about-us/reports-and-documents>



Champions for children and families

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY **2023-2027**

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Achieving for Children's (AfCs) Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) sits alongside the Business Plan and is produced as part of the budget process. It is reviewed and updated at least annually. This document outlines the company's financial strategy.

1.2 There are a number of key factors that influence AfC's finances:

- Central government funding of children's services, local government and specifically the impact of this on the Councils that own and fund the majority of AfC's costs
- The relative financial positions of each of the commissioning councils
- Central government's policies and guidelines on children's services
- Changing demographics and levels of social need in our three boroughs that impact on the number of children requiring support and the complexity of that need
- Need for children's services both statutory and preventative.
- Income generation
- National factors including the cost of living crisis, economic factors such as inflation and availability of placements and experienced staff

2. KEY OBJECTIVE OF THE MTFS

2.1 The 2023 strategy will continue to focus on achieving financial sustainability for the Company in the context of escalating financial pressure in the delivery of children's social care, health and education services as well as in Local Government generally. The organisation will be following three overarching principles:

- Delivery of value for money services that are low cost and high outcome
- Maximise resources available to front line services

- Shared budget responsibility

2.2 The Strategy prioritises ensuring services are affordable as follows:

- Ensure there is a mutual understanding of what is affordable for each council in terms of funding and quality
- Achieving value for money
- Achieving challenging cost reduction targets
- Generating income to support services
- Ensuring available funding is directed at priority areas
- Ensuring that the financial interest of each owner is safeguarded
- Planning for financial sustainability over a medium to longer term period

3. FINANCIAL CONTEXT

- 3.1 This plan is being written in the context of continued and escalating pressure on children's services budgets in our local boroughs and the rest of the country. This pressure has been exacerbated by the Covid pandemic and cost of living crisis which has increased the need for children's services and could potentially have a lasting financial impact over the coming years. In addition the national high levels of inflation are impacting on the cost of supporting children and young people as suppliers seek to pass on increases. The funding and demand pressures in social care and high needs education services has continued to feature in national press and also in national findings reports undertaken by Local Government representative groups. Need for these services and complexity of that need has continued to increase during the 2022/23 financial year and whilst there is a clear requirement to meet statutory need the organisation must ensure that it continues to develop mechanisms to drive down average costs of support if services are to remain affordable. The budgets of all three of AfCs commissioning councils remain challenging and AfC is committed to working in partnership to implement solutions that are both affordable and achieve good outcomes for children and young people.
- 3.2 The Local Government sector has seen significant funding reductions since 2010 and our commissioning councils are all balancing borough priorities as well as increasing demand for adult and children's services. It is important that in the delivery of services there is ongoing discussion with the commissioning councils regarding affordability, scope of services, service models and quality. AfC must support each council to make decisions about how the funding that is available should be prioritised between children's services and this may lead to difficult decisions. In addition, it is important that AfC safeguards the individual financial resources of each council where financial positions dictate a different level of service offer than can be afforded.
- 3.3 Given the tightening financial envelope it is important that as an organisation we are clear about what can be afforded and look to transform services to continue the quality journey whilst delivering within the financial resources available. This may involve doing things differently and challenging the way things have always been done. The five year Business Plan outlines how this will be achieved over the coming year and an extensive exercise to review

strategic priorities will be undertaken in 2023/24 to support extended medium term service planning.

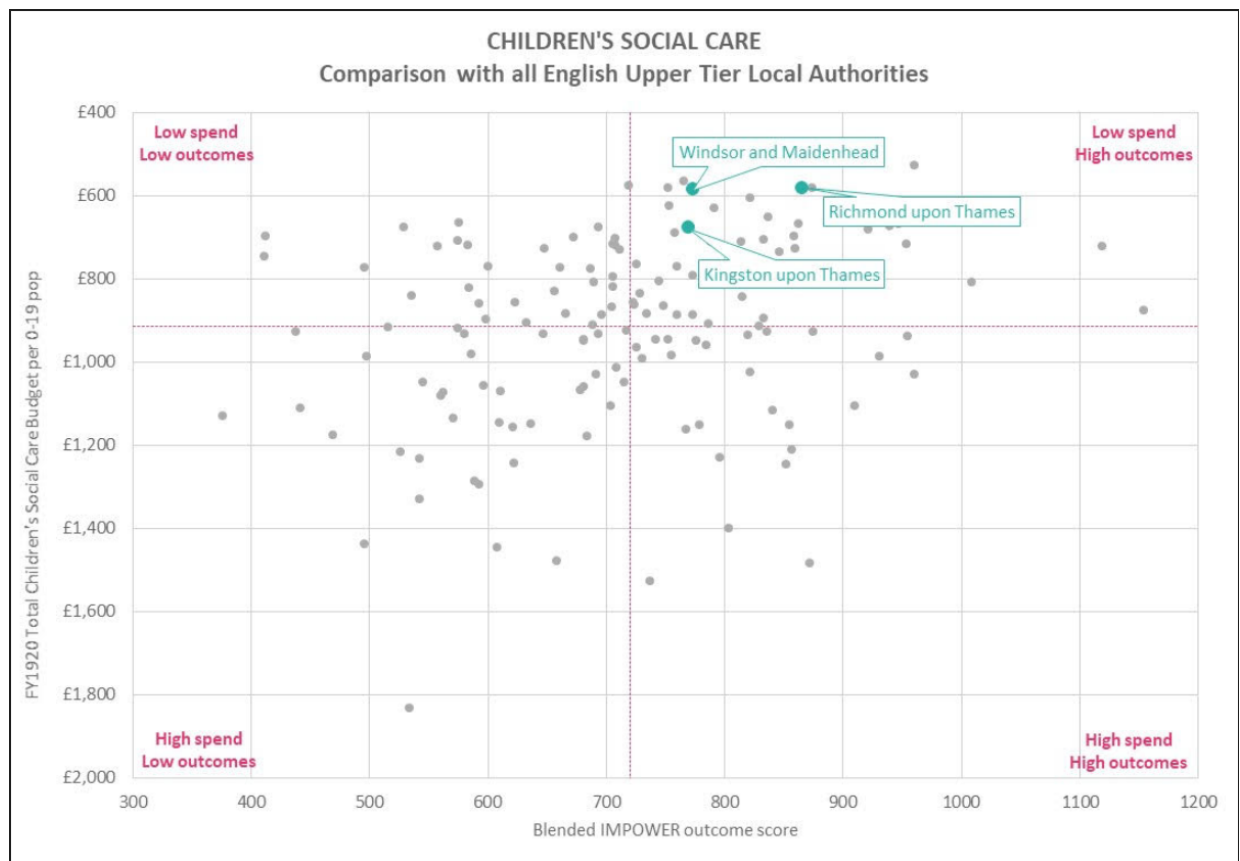
4. FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

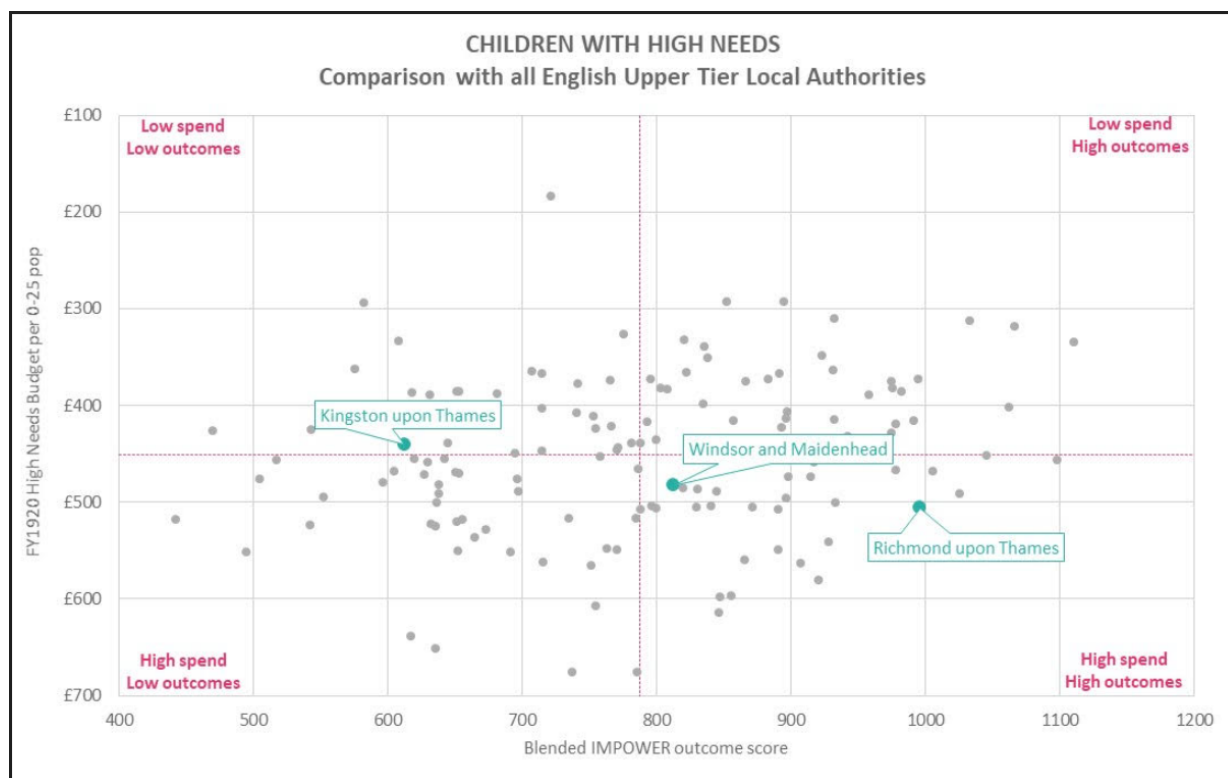
4.1 Financial performance can be measured by looking at how our services benchmark based on two key financial performance elements:

- Relative value for money
- Ability to deliver services within what is affordable for each commissioning council

Value for money

4.2 AfC aims to deliver low cost and good quality services across all three council contracts. The most recent Impower Index (2019/20) demonstrates that AfC's children's social care services perform well when comparing level of investment to outcomes being achieved. There is a more mixed picture for high needs education.





4.3 When looking at the latest available actual spend benchmarking data (2020/21) all three council contracts continue to be delivered at a reasonable average cost particularly in the context of the positive inspection ratings. The Schools funding benchmarks are higher but this reflected the amount of Dedicated Schools Grant received and passported to schools and other education providers.

	RICHMOND		KINGSTON		WINDSOR & MAIDENHEAD	
	Average spend per head	Rank compared to 151 comparable Las	Average spend per head	Rank compared to 151 comparable Las	Average spend per head	Rank compared to 151 comparable Las
Childrens Social Care	£559.20	49	£548.63	48	£470.19	15
Non Schools Education	£191.32	96	£45.00	6	£43.10	5
Schools Education	£2,211.15	115	£1,935.79	96	£1,719.98	72

Commissioning Council Affordability

4.4 Although value for money benchmarks would indicate a relatively strong performance, services are still costing significantly more than is provided within the base contract prices. Overspends are occurring to different scales across all three contracts due to a number of reasons:

- Increasing levels of need for services beyond what can be accommodated within base budget envelopes and current average costs

- Inflationary pressures associated with general inflation, market dynamics and escalations in complexity of need that is being supported in placements.
- Systemic underfunding of high needs education services within the ringfenced DSG funds
- Non achievement of some savings that were built in to the base budgets

4.5 It is important that service quality and spending expectations are mutually agreed and understood with each commissioning council to improve this position. The approach to this has improved in recent years with AfC contributing at a more granular level to each commissioning council's budget setting process. The key ways in which a mutual position is reached are as follows:

- AfC staff and the DCS engage with the relevant council process in setting the annual budget. The three councils have subtly different approaches but all include the identification and agreement of growth and savings.
- Annual AfC contract review as part of the commissioning process to look at the budget and performance targets for the following year.
- Submission of monthly budget and performance monitoring data and periodic meetings with the commissioner to discuss performance.
- Input into each council's political approval and monitoring process which dovetails with AfC Board approvals and monitoring.

5. LINKS TO BUSINESS PLAN

5.1 Achieving a financially sustainable business model continues to be one of the Company's key priorities in 2023/24 and the medium term. The priorities outlined in the Business Plan look to balance quality and affordability as well as achieve service improvement within a challenging financial envelope. The Business Plan and budget has been produced with significant amounts of engagement with staff, stakeholders and the councils. The Business Plan focuses on six themes, which align with borough specific projects and objectives. The following table looks at these strategic themes to identify how they can be aligned to the organisation's financial objectives.

Strategic priority	What we will achieve for children and young people?	Link to Financial Sustainability
STRONGER FAMILIES	We will have a relentless focus on safeguarding children and young people across all our services. The services we deliver will be high-quality and will protect and promote the wellbeing of children and young people by promoting family resilience. We will work collaboratively with our key partners to ensure we are able to realise the	This theme should help manage needs-led services through providing early intervention support to prevent need and costs escalating, reinforcing thresholds to access services and manage need, ensuring that funding is prioritised to those children most in need and where possible reducing the requirement for costly permanent accommodation.

	benefits of joint working to support our children, young people and families.	
POSITIVE FUTURES	We will invest and work collaboratively to improve our local education, health and care offer to children and young people so that they have access to high quality services, are able to stay close to their families and friends, achieve well, and develop their skills for independence.	This theme should have a positive impact into adulthood. Focusing funding on support that will increase independence should both reduce average costs over time but will also enable the councils to attract increased funding through the apprenticeship scheme. The support of children locally will enable financial resources to be focused on developing local provisions rather than on costly transport and out of borough independent sector provision.
EXCELLENT WORKFORCE	Our workforce will be experienced, talented, empowered and motivated to deliver the best possible services and outcomes for children and young people; we will invest in the recruitment, retention and development of our workforce and reward their achievements.	This theme will ensure that staff are skilled and retained which should reduce reliance on the more expensive agency workforce and ensure that staff are delivering efficient and high quality services through developing to their full potential.
FINANCIAL STABILITY	The services we deliver will provide excellent value for money and we are trusted by our commissioning Councils to deliver the best possible services within the agreed contract price, including the efficient delivery of our financial savings plans.	This priority is at the heart of the organisation's sustainability model. We will work with our commissioning councils to agree an affordable funding envelope and work to ensure that we achieve maximum value for every pound spent. We will learn best practice from other local authorities who are delivering good quality and relatively low cost services.
SUCCESSFUL ORGANISATION	We will secure the sustainability of the community interest company through contract renewal, business development, fundraising and good growth, so that we are able to reinvest in the services we deliver directly to children and their families.	These activities will enable the continued investment in services in the context of challenging contractual financial envelopes. We will also explore more efficient service delivery models for some services and generate income to provide external investment into our children's services.
SMARTER WORKING	Our business processes will be efficient, cost-effective and supportive to frontline practitioners so that they are able to spend as much time as possible working directly with children, young people and their families to improve outcomes for them.	This workstream will maximise the resources that are available for front line services and lead to an affordable support service that meets business needs. We will develop our use of technology to make processes and business services more efficient including developing our

		accommodation and flexible working strategy.
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6. KEY BUSINESS PLAN / DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES FOR THE UPCOMING YEAR

- 6.1 It is clear that affordability of services must continue to be a key focus over the term of this strategy and the Business Plan across all three boroughs. Increasing need, inflation and complexity of needs is continuing to add pressure across education, social care and health services. This has been further complicated by the ongoing impact of the pandemic. The following key areas of work will be integral to delivering affordable services in the coming year and beyond:

PRIORITY ACTIVITY TO CONTROL COSTS	HOW WILL IT BE DELIVERED?
<p>DEMAND MANAGEMENT</p> <p>Supporting the prioritisation of services to young people most in need and demand management through the application by service teams of consistent thresholds.</p>	<p>Core services have well established threshold guidance that is periodically reviewed both internally and externally through inspections or specific requests for independent review. The DCSs are responsible for ensuring there are arrangements in place to monitor compliance and support staff to understand the threshold guidance.</p>
<p>LOCAL PROVISION</p> <p>Delivering the recommendations of the AfC Sufficiency Strategy at pace in terms of using commissioning opportunities effectively and developing more local provision where it makes financial sense to do so.</p>	<p>The Sufficiency Strategy has been agreed by all three Local Authorities and progress continues on implementing the recommendations including development of the Independent Fostering Agency, development of commissioning expertise and capacity, evaluation of options associated with increasing local residential placements and associated support services.</p>
<p>COMMISSIONING/PROCUREMENT COMPETENCE</p> <p>Building commissioning and procurement capacity and competence in the organisation to ensure that placement and other procurement activity is as effective as possible in finding solutions and driving down cost.</p>	<p>The organisation will continue to build competence and capacity within the commissioning team to ensure that the improved practice from the last three years in relation to placement commissioning continues and that we get the best price when undertaking procurement activity. The Associate Director of Business Development and Strategic Commissioning will continue to develop the commissioning strategy to ensure that we are making best use of our market share and where appropriate planning ahead with providers to get preferable rates. We will also continue to link in with commissioning partnership arrangements for SEND and social care.</p>

<p>REVIEW</p> <p>The effective review of placements, plans and working models is key to ensuring that we are promoting independent, resilient families and that we are prioritising the funding we have in an effective way.</p>	<p>The company has established practices to ensure that plans and placements are periodically reviewed to support the continued alignment of funding and support to the changing needs of young people. It is important that we continue to work to improve these practices particularly in social care and SEND where the financial pressure and scope for changing needs is most significant.</p>
<p>MODERNISATION OF WORKING PRACTICE</p> <p>Review of how we work to ensure that we are making best use of technology, flexible working practices and that support services offer value for money.</p>	<p>AfCs 'Future Ways of Working Strategy; outlines how we will build back better in terms of efficient use of buildings, homeworking, digital technologies and reduced travel / printing. Cyclical reviews are also undertaken of all back office support services.</p>
<p>FINANCIAL MONITORING & PLANNING</p> <p>Detailed monitoring of all high risk areas on an ongoing basis and consistent reporting internally, to the AfC Board and to the Councils.</p>	<p>The finance team will continue to monitor budgets and report performance to budget managers, leadership teams, the board and councils regularly. The finance team will also work to further improve budget awareness and confidence in managing budgets across the organisation.</p>

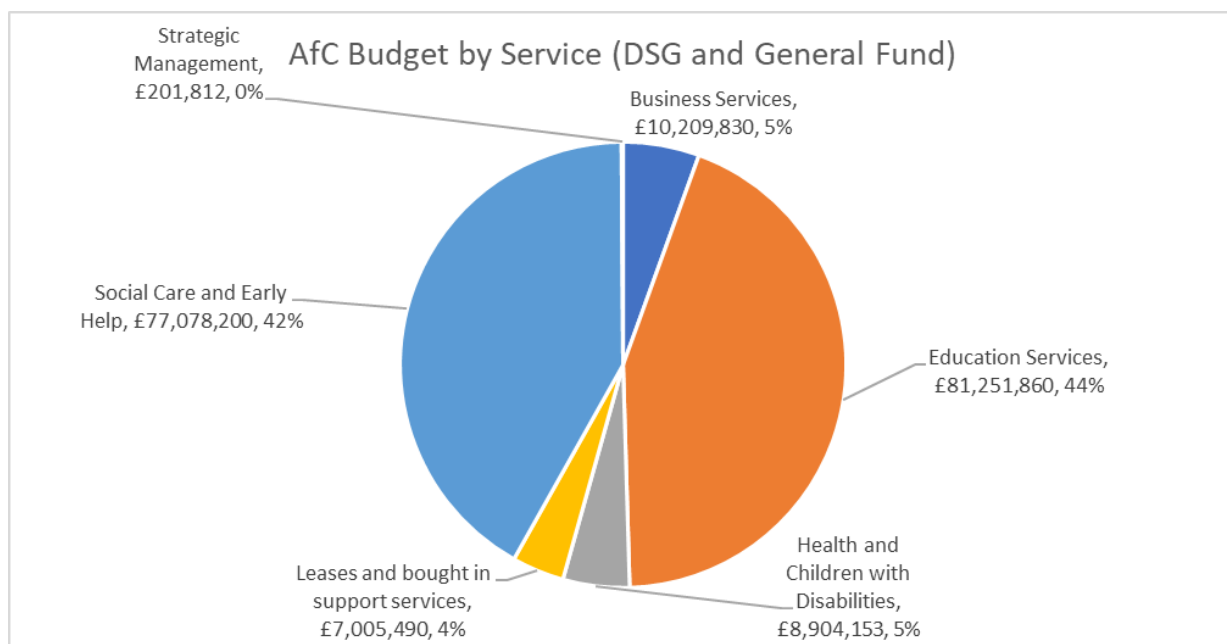
7. SHORT TERM BUDGET

- 7.1 In setting the 2023/24 AfC has worked closely with each of the three councils and the table below shows the proposed position and movement for next year. Detailed budget reports will be considered by each council between January and March 2023.

	Kingston	Richmond	Windsor and Maidenhead	Total
	£	£	£	£
Contract price movements				
2022/23 Q2 contract price excl DSG	40,991,100	43,323,900	29,876,365	114,191,365
Growth	3,020,989	2,847,905	3,323,000	9,191,895
Savings - agreed with councils	-970,358	-1,353,704	-3,511,000	-5,835,062
Savings - unfunded Inflation	-211,300	-211,300	-223,000	-645,600
Inflation - pay award	966,300	603,000	519,500	2,088,800
Inflation - increments	211,300	211,300	223,000	645,600

Inflation - contracts	753,212	1,157,321	659,500	2,570,033
Inflation - pensions	175,000	175,000	220,000	570,000
Grant and virement changes	-167,443	-320,723	-2,528,070	-3,016,236
Growth to be awarded in year - pay award	-966,300	-603,000	0	-1,569,300
Total net change	2,811,400	2,505,800	-1,317,070	4,000,130
2023/24 opening contract price excl DSG	43,802,500	45,829,700	28,559,295	118,191,495
DSG funding in contract price	25,474,100	26,642,900	14,342,850	66,459,850
2023/24 base contract price incl DSG	69,276,600	72,472,600	42,902,145	184,651,345

7.2 The budget is planned to be spent as follows:



7.3 The biggest risk to achieving a balanced position on general fund services is the cost of needs led services both in terms of potential increases in the number of children needing support and the average cost of that support.

7.4 The ringfenced DSG funds are not expected to achieve a balanced position due to underfunding for high needs education services within the councils' DSG grant allocations. Cost management programmes are in place and outlined in the respective borough Deficit Management Plans and these plans must be a core focus over the period of this strategy and beyond. AfC continues to work to raise awareness of this issue and has the clear remit that statutory obligations to the young people should continue to be met despite the government underfunding.

7.5 Where the savings plans identified do not achieve an in-year balanced position, discussions have been held with the relevant Council to agree authorised overspends. Where a balanced position

is reliant on the achievement of the riskier savings, contact is ongoing with the relevant Council to report progress against achievement of the cost reductions and if these do not come to fruition there should be an agreement about alternative cost reductions or an in-year contract change control.

8 MEDIUM TERM BUDGET

8.1 The Company undertakes high level budgeting for a five year period (including current) to ensure that there is a planned approach to delivering services. The following table outlines the high level changes to the general fund budget (Non DSG). The expectations are reviewed with the Councils each year to ensure that medium term financial planning remains aligned. This table represents a point in time. Savings plans and growth requirements are periodically reviewed during the year to identify how budget gaps can be resolved. This is informed by changes in the council's relative financial positions as well as emerging pressures and opportunities within children's services.

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	TOTAL
	£	£	£	£	£
Growth - direct costs	4,532,613	4,959,717	4,108,013	4,416,151	18,016,494
Growth - indirect costs	4,659,282	607,646	772,890	572,434	6,612,252
Savings - agreed with councils	-5,835,062	-2,175,906	-1,024,718	-547,565	-9,583,251
Savings - unfunded Inflation	-645,600	-655,284	-665,113	-675,090	-2,641,087
Inflation - pay award	2,088,800	1,209,308	1,358,308	1,523,308	6,179,723
Inflation - increments	645,600	655,284	665,113	675,090	2,641,087
Inflation - contracts	2,570,033	1,860,696	1,062,178	1,456,508	6,949,415
Inflation - pensions	570,000	0	0	570,000	1,140,000
Net change before budget adjustments	8,585,666	6,461,461	6,276,672	7,990,835	29,314,634

8.2 The table above summarises the latest position and work is ongoing to identify further cost avoidance / efficiency savings for the latter years of the plan. It is also recognised that significant work needs to be undertaken to reduce down the level of year on year growth required for needs-led social care placements.

8.3 In relation to the general fund the biggest financial challenges for the medium term period are:

- The management of need for social care and health services and the management of unit costs in these areas. This will be undertaken through the monitoring of thresholds to access services, continued investment in early intervention and the further development of the local placement market and placement commissioning / brokerage function.
- Management of increasing staff costs, particularly in social care due to regional shortages of suitably qualified staff. The workforce strategy will look to reduce reliance on expensive agency workers through targeted recruitment campaigns, improved agency arrangements

and a review of the incentives package for staff groups where recruitment and retention is challenging. AfC also periodically reviews delivery models to support efficiency of the service offer and how it is delivered.

- The challenging savings targets that have been built into all three council contracts as well as additional savings required to fund pressures that have not been funded within the base contract prices. The project management approach will keep the leadership team focused on the achievement of these programmes and associated savings. There will be early conversations where the achievement of savings is not possible to reach a mutual agreement with the relevant council about associated actions.

8.4 In addition to the general fund pressures the company is working towards bringing DSG funded high needs education expenditure more in line with the associated Government Grant allocation across all three boroughs. This activity is likely to last for at least the period covered within this plan. Detailed plans are in place and AfC continues to work closely with the councils, DfE and partners to review and improve the position.

8.5 The Directors of Childrens Services and Chief Operating & Finance Officer are responsible for identifying savings with their leadership teams and planning for the implementation of these changes. They are supported in doing this by a senior member of the finance team who attends their leadership meetings. All major areas of pressure have detailed financial recovery plans which are subject to continual monitoring, review and contingency action planning where actions do not achieve the required financial impact. It is integral that AfC achieves the plans' ambitions to reduce and control needs-led budgets so that services can be sustained in the longer term.

9. FINANCIAL CONTROL

9.1 AfC operates a devolved approach to budget management with nominated budget managers responsible for service spend. The budget manager is a member of staff at team manager level or above and is the officer who makes the operational decisions about how to spend money. The ongoing financial challenges faced by the company has necessitated a review of the arrangements that govern budget manager spend. Under the revised financial regulations budget managers are able to spend up to their designated budget but must formally seek permission from their director to spend above this limit. The director may opt to transfer budget from elsewhere in their department on a temporary or permanent basis to enable the higher level of spend or may seek a contract change control from the relevant commissioning council. Each budget manager is supported by a dedicated management accountant who meets with them at least quarterly and more frequently for higher risk budgets. The finance team produces monthly monitoring information which is signed off by the relevant leadership team before being sent to the Board and relevant council.

9.2 The Company has three main categories of spend which determines the key controls and levers for controlling spend:

Budget Type	Key controls
<p>Controllable budgets are budgets that AfC can directly impact by taking associated actions. They support statutory services but may not in themselves be statutory. Examples include staffing, training, stationary, travel, supplies and services.</p>	<p>Leadership Team approval of vacancies prior to recruitment.</p> <p>Centralisation of general budgets e.g. training, stationary, furniture and equipment etc.</p>

	<p>Where overspends are anticipated senior level sign off of spend over a pre agreed limit</p> <p>All budgets allocated to individual budget managers and signed off prior to the year</p> <p>Periodic review of agency staff by Leadership Team</p> <p>Budget manager sign off of all invoices</p> <p>Budget manager training</p> <p>Monthly budget monitoring produced by finance team in consultation with the budget manager</p> <p>Consideration of overall position by leadership teams monthly</p>
<p>Stepped Costs are those that are demand led but can be directly controlled through associated action and the risks associated with reducing spend can be managed more easily. The main category of budget here relates to salary costs within frontline teams where the number of staff may not have to increase with every increase in demand but where there are a certain number of staff needed to maintain caseloads within an agreed range.</p>	<p>Leadership Team approval of all vacancies prior to recruitment.</p> <p>Leadership Team consideration of alternative options via the request form before recruitment decisions made</p> <p>Monitoring of workloads via information produced by the data intelligence team</p> <p>Manager sign off of funded establishment annually</p> <p>Periodic Leadership Team review of teams over establishment</p> <p>Monthly budget monitoring produced by finance team in consultation with the budget manager</p> <p>Consideration of overall position by Leadership Team monthly</p>

<p>Demand (or needs / direct) led budgets are those that are directly linked to the meeting of statutory duty and are difficult to influence in the short term. Examples include placements for children looked after, rent and allowances for care leavers, direct costs related to agreed educational placements and legal costs associated with specific cases.</p>	<p>Child by child placement monitoring and sign off by budget manager monthly</p> <p>Budget manager sign off of all invoices</p> <p>Attendance of key staff at decision making panels including finance where finance decisions are being made</p> <p>Periodic high cost placement reviews</p> <p>Monthly reconciliation and production of management information</p> <p>Periodic review of placement types by commissioning team</p> <p>Monthly budget monitoring produced by finance team in consultation with the budget manager</p> <p>Consideration of overall position by Leadership Team monthly</p> <p>Development of the commissioning team and placement sufficiency strategy</p>
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- 9.3 AfC has consistently maintained controllable costs within budget but has struggled to deliver services within budgets for stepped costs and direct needs led costs for the following reasons:
- fluctuations in need
 - increases in unit costs / limited supply of placements
 - failure to deliver on savings plans
 - use of agency staff to cover vacancies
- 9.4 A number of programmes are under way to support the organisation to improve financial performance including recruitment initiatives to reduce reliance on unbudgeted and expensive agency staff and further development of options to improve placement brokerage and sufficiency.
- 9.5 Last year a more focused project management approach was introduced with the DCSs and COFO having overarching responsibility for the achievement of savings in their areas. The relevant leadership team and the Board receive updates on progress and risks. Each programme has a service lead, a project lead and a finance lead. Progress and achievement of net cost reductions will be monitored during the year with alternative actions being agreed with commissioners, if needed, through periodic commissioning meetings.

10. RISKS AND MITIGATIONS

- 10.1 The following table summarises key financial risks for the coming year and associated actions

RISK / CHALLENGE	ACTION TO MITIGATE RISK
<p>Inflation - inflationary pressures pose the most significant risk to children's services budget in 2023/24. Pressure is being experienced on placement budgets, staffing budgets, agency staffing budgets, contractual spend and fuel budgets.</p>	<p>Inflationary increases have been built into budgets but it is possible given the escalation in RPI and CPI that it may exceed the amount allowed for. Robust commissioning practises that minimise inflationary increases on expenditures as well as solution focused partnership working will be key to understanding this pressure and mitigating it wherever possible.</p>
<p>Placement budgets – This pressure will be impacted by the number of children who require support next year as well as the complexity of their needs. Practitioners have reported a clear step up in complexity of need since the onset of the pandemic and this is coming through in more intensive and expensive support packages. Children's services have been operating in an environment where demand outstrips supply for specialist placements in recent years and the increase in demand nationally and locally due to the increase in asylum seekers supported is exacerbating the placement shortfall and pushing up prices.</p>	<p>Internal review system for all placements to ensure they are the most appropriate in terms of service and cost.</p> <p>Detailed financial monitoring at an individual placement level.</p> <p>Sufficiency Strategy</p> <p>Engagement with joint commissioning groups / initiatives to drive down cost and increase purchasing power</p> <p>Monthly financial monitoring updates provided to each council and quarterly meetings with commissioners to discuss latest performance and activity data, risks and associated actions</p> <p>Claim of additional grant funding wherever possible for refugees, unaccompanied asylum seekers and care leavers</p> <p>Demand management strategies such as edge of care support and other established early help services.</p>
<p>Balance young people's outcomes with balancing budget - Risk that the organisation does not strike the right balance between spending within budget and ensuring that children and young people are safe from harm / their wellbeing is supported.</p>	<p>The Leadership Teams review the monthly monitoring and agree on all financial actions that could impact on services. This ensures that the service impact of financial action plans is considered and risks identified/ monitored. Director overview of all decisions relating to their directorates</p>

<p>Achievement of savings and agreement of one off costs for redundancy etc. - Risk that savings are not achieved leading to in year overspends.</p>	<p>Regular monitoring of progress against savings plans.</p> <p>Project plans for each of the high value schemes with regular reporting to the Leadership Teams</p> <p>Quarterly progress reporting to the AfC Board and Commissioners.</p>
<p>Risk of cross subsidy if the level of funding that can be afforded by each LA differs</p>	<p>Operational area budgets recorded separately to avoid high level cross subsidy. Demand budgets ringfenced to ensure that placement / transport budgets are not vulnerable to cross subsidy</p> <p>Definition of core service provided by Business Services and agreement about level of support for each borough in the context of funding levels</p> <p>Annual financial exercise undertaken to check actual expenditure levels against contract prices</p> <p>Oversight by Directors of Children’s Services and Chief Operating Officer</p>
<p>Risk that Councils do not agree proposed savings and growth</p>	<p>Regular briefings for councillors throughout the budget setting processes</p>

11. CASHFLOW AND LIQUIDITY

- 11.1 AfC has access to a contractual Revolving Credit Facility of up to £45m to provide working capital for the provision of the three major contracts with the owning Councils. This is needed as services are billed for in arrears and so it can be up to two months before the company receives payment for services delivered. The company uses the facility to ensure that there is sufficient liquidity to meet day to day operational needs. AfC holds short term deposits with a number of banking institutions to ensure that the administrative burden of operating the loan facility remains practical. Investment limits are agreed with the owning councils annually as part of the Financial Plan.
- 11.2 AfC has had an average borrowing of £26m over the last 12 months, comfortably below the £45m. The borrowing essentially pays for the services delivered to the councils on credit and any one off set up costs that remain on the Company’s Balance Sheet.

12 GOING CONCERN

- 12.1 As a company, AfC is required to demonstrate that it is a going concern. In order to do this the Board needs to consider its future financial position and assure itself that its position for the

short/medium term is capable of continuing to trade. It also needs to provide assurance to the councils that its financial plans are robust and issues around its future financial position are presented to, and agreed by the Councils as part of the detailed budget setting process.

- 12.2 It is important that AfC continues to engage with the three owning Councils in relation to what is affordable and what level and cost of service the councils need to make the contracts with AfC financially viable for them.
- 12.3 Due to the nature of AfC's services and the decision to offer AfC staff the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) AfC holds a considerable pension liability on its Balance Sheet. The decision to offer the LGPS was made at the inception of AfC and is an important factor in ensuring that AfC is in a good position to recruit and retain high quality social care staff. It is important that AfC is able to explain this position to potential trading partners and provide assurance that it is a going concern. This will be done through the Statement of Accounts and associated publications.

13 CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

- 13.1 It is clear that the coming years will be financially challenging for Achieving for Children. It is of paramount importance that the organisation continues to work with commissioning partners to ensure a mutual understanding of existing and emerging pressures and reaches agreement on the level of funding available and how that funding should be prioritised in line with both organisation and council objectives. The following activity will be prioritised over the coming months to move this plan forward:
- Prioritisation of actions detailed in the Workforce Strategy including recruitment initiatives, campaigns and incentives to move towards a more permanent and affordable workforce
 - Progression of the Placement Sufficiency Strategy and associated recommendations through council approval processes
 - Achievement and monitoring of detailed budgets and associated savings plans
 - Continued demand management through early intervention work and threshold management
 - Continued detailed monitoring and reporting to AfC leadership teams, AfC Board and commissioners
 - Progression of this strategy alongside the AfC Business Plan and 2023/24 budget through council decision making processes



ACHIEVING FOR CHILDREN BOARD OF DIRECTORS	
DATE:	30th January 2023
REPORT AUTHOR:	Lucy Kourpas - Chief Operating and Finance Officer
SUBJECT:	ACHIEVING FOR CHILDREN BUDGET 2023/24
PURPOSE:	To present the draft 2023/24 budget for approval

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report details the proposed 2023/24 budget for Achieving for Children (AfC). The budget has been discussed in detail with each of the three councils that commission services from AfC. The final budget approval is a matter reserved to Richmond, Kingston and Windsor and Maidenhead councils as AfCs owners and will be formally presented for approval in February / March 2023. The following table summarises the proposed contract prices:

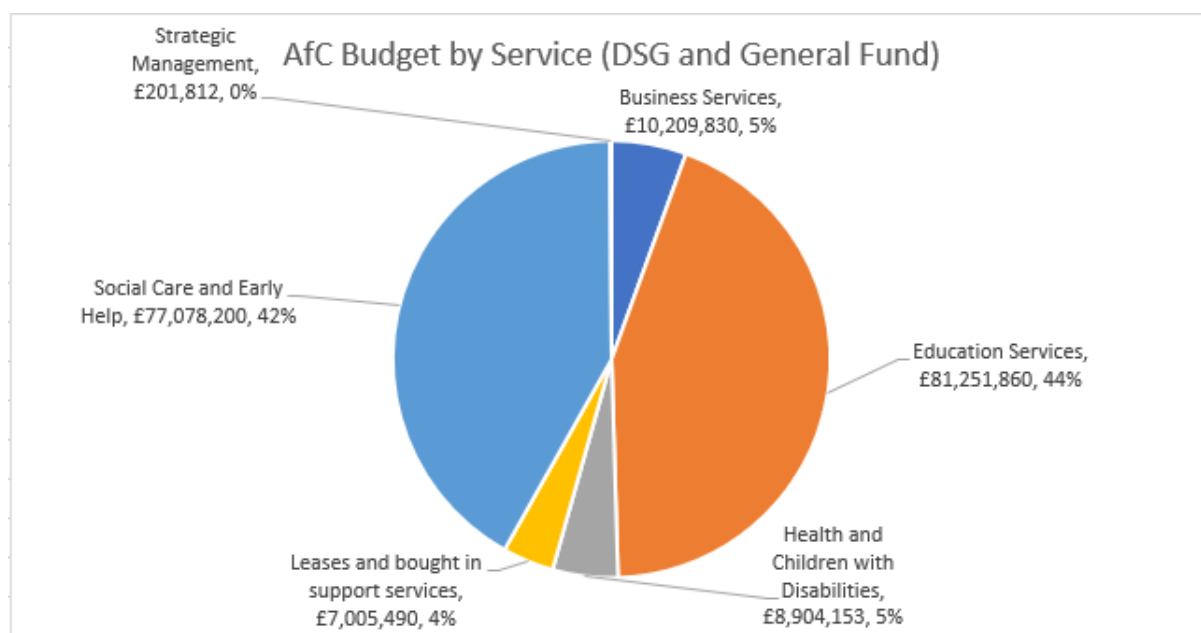
	Kingston	Richmond	Windsor and Maidenhead	Total
Contract Prices	£	£	£	£
General Fund	43,802,500	45,829,700	28,559,295	118,191,495
Dedicated Schools Grant	25,474,100	26,642,900	14,342,850	66,459,850
TOTAL	69,276,600	72,472,600	42,902,145	184,651,345

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

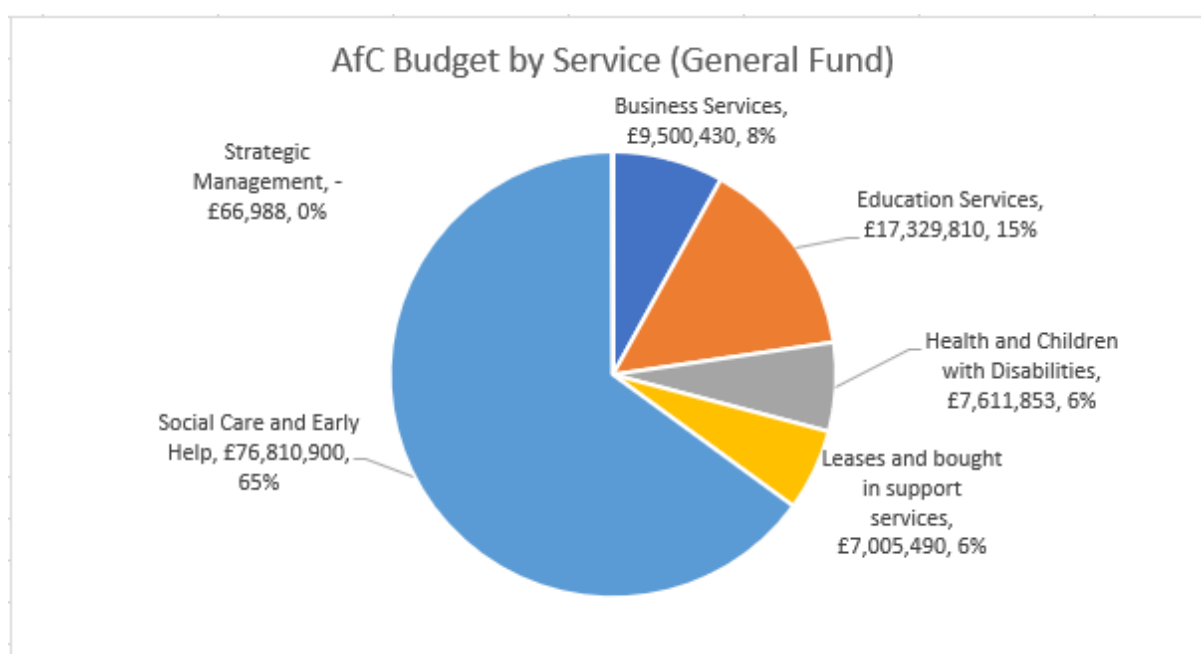
- 2.1 The Board is asked to agree to the 2023/24 budget that will go forward to the councils for approval.

3. GENERAL FUND BUDGET

- 3.1 The overall AfC budget is proposed at £184,651,345 profiled as follows:



3.2 The General Fund AfC budget (excl DSG) is proposed at £118,191,495 profiled as follows:



3.3 AfC have been fully engaged in each of the three budget setting processes taking place in the Local Authorities and have undertaken the company's detailed budget setting process alongside their respective timetables. This budget, once agreed, will form part of the three commissioning council's political budget setting processes which concludes in Councillors approving budgets in late February and early March 2023. Each of AfCs owning councils is also required to consider and approve the AfC budget and Business Plan each year.

3.4 The proposed changes to the 2023/24 AfC budget are outlined below:

	Kingston	Richmond	Windsor and Maidenhead	Total
	£	£	£	£
Contract price movements				
2022/23 Q2 contract price excl DSG	40,991,100	43,323,900	29,876,365	114,191,365
Growth	3,020,989	2,847,905	3,323,000	9,191,895
Savings - agreed with councils	-970,358	-1,353,704	-3,511,000	-5,835,062
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Grant and virement changes	-167,443	-320,723	-2,528,070	-3,016,236
Growth to be awarded in year - pay award	-966,300	-603,000	0	-1,569,300
Total net change	2,811,400	2,505,800	-1,317,070	4,000,130
2023/24 opening contract price excl DSG	43,802,500	45,829,700	28,559,295	118,191,495
DSG funding in contract price	25,474,100	26,642,900	14,342,850	66,459,850
2023/24 base contract price incl DSG	69,276,600	72,472,600	42,902,145	184,651,345

GROWTH (£9.192m)

- 3.5 Growth requests have been provisionally approved in all three boroughs. The anticipated 2023/24 growth levels are listed in the table below. Where growth is not funded, AfC will need to identify in-year mitigations to avoid overspending.

	Kingston	Richmond	Windsor and Maidenhead	Total
	£	£	£	£
Growth				
Social Care current demographic growth	396,089	1,245,032	-95,914	1,545,207
Social Care future demand	616,127	319,365	789,914	1,725,406
SEN Transport current demographic growth	0	0	40,000	40,000
SEN Transport future growth	0	0	312,000	312,000
External Legal Services	0	0	300,000	300,000

National Transfer Scheme	0	0	610,000	610,000
Total Demand Growth	1,012,216	1,564,397	1,956,000	4,532,613
Social Care Staffing	659,700	298,500	253,000	1,211,200
Social Care Recruitment & Retention	635,912	635,952	0	1,271,863
SEND Staffing	398,562	43,562	0	442,124
SEND contracts	27,500	27,500	0	55,000
Education staffing	212,100	66,000	375,000	653,100
Business Services	55,000	65,000	91,000	211,000
IT & Digital	20,000	29,995	200,000	249,995
Edge of Care invest to save	0	117,000	448,000	565,000
Total Controllable Growth	2,008,774	1,283,509	1,367,000	4,659,282
2023/24 Budget Growth	3,020,989	2,847,905	3,323,000	9,191,895

SAVINGS (-£6.481m)

- 3.6 A significant challenge for the Company relates to savings targets set by the councils as part of the wider public sector regime of budget reduction as well as savings required due to unfunded growth. The following table summarises the budget reductions that have been built into the 2023/24 budget.

AfC Saving Theme	Richmond	Kingston	Windsor & Maidenhead	Total
Placement Sufficiency	364,068	287,577	1,763,000	2,414,645
Social Care Transformation	281,395	200,000	470,000	951,395
Early Help Transformation	500,321	214,861	190,000	905,182
Education Transformation	0	60,000	713,000	773,000
Workforce Transformation	207,920	207,920	375,000	790,840
TOTAL	1,353,704	970,358	3,511,000	5,835,062
Unfunded increments - individual team challenge	211,300	211,300	223,000	645,600
	1,565,004	1,181,658	3,734,000	6,480,662

- 3.7 Appendix A provides a detailed breakdown of the agreed general fund savings. The savings are subject to formal agreement at the various council political meetings in February/March. If the councils do not wish to proceed with any of the proposed savings at this stage in the process AfC will first look to propose alternative savings (where possible) and if alternatives can not be agreed the councils will need to provide growth to avoid overspending next year.

INFLATION (£5,874m)

- 3.8 AfC submitted inflationary growth requests to each borough in the Summer / Autumn 2022 and the following table summarises the outcomes of these bids:

	Kingston	Richmond	Windsor and Maidenhead	Total
Inflation	£	£	£	£
Employer pension contribution increase (3.9)	175,000	175,000	220,000	570,000
Pay award (3.10)	966,300	603,000	519,500	2,088,800
Contractual pay increments (3.10)	211,300	211,300	223,000	645,600
Contract inflation (3.11)	753,212	1,157,321	659,500	2,570,033
2023/24 inflation	2,105,812	2,146,621	1,622,000	5,874,433
Growth to be awarded in year - pay award	-966,300	-603,000	0	-1,569,300
2023/24 inflation included in base contract price	1,139,512	1,543,621	1,622,000	4,305,133

- 3.9 Additional funding has been provided across all three boroughs to allow for the increase in employer pension rates for the Local Government Pension scheme from 19% to 19.9% following the triennial valuation. In Windsor and Maidenhead the budget was set before the triennial valuation results were received and the surplus funds will contribute to other staffing pressures.
- 3.10 All three boroughs have agreed to fund a pay award next year. In Windsor and Maidenhead this is a local decision and has been budgeted at 4%. In Richmond and Kingston this is negotiated at a national level and has been set aside in the council's accounts pending the outcome of national negotiations. It has been budgeted at 2.5% in Richmond and 4% in Kingston. The actual amount given will be adjusted to reflect the final National Joint Council / Teachers pay award. The cost of contractual salaries increments will not be funded by any of the boroughs and so this will be an additional pressure to be met from existing budgets.
- 3.11 Where AfC holds contracts with specific inflationary increments this has also been provided for using the inflationary factor outlined in the contract. Placements have been inflated using a projected CPI which mirrors the council assumptions - 5% in Kingston, 7.8% in Richmond and an average of 4% in Windsor and Maidenhead.

GRANT AND CONTRACT CHANGES (-£3.016m)

- 3.12 The contract prices will also change for a number of agreed adjustments to reflect estimated Government Grant amounts or one off prior year service funding. These include where Government funding may have changed or where it has been agreed that budgets will be reflected differently between the councils and AfC. These budget adjustments are agreed at an officer level between the Local Authorities and AfC during the year.

- 3.13 The most significant movement next year relates to the application of public health grants to eligible spend across AfC services.

4. DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT

- 4.1 The provisional grant settlement for the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) was announced on 16th December 2022. AfC will continue to manage the DSG grant funds on behalf of the three councils although not all of the money will be included in the annual contract prices. This means that AfC will be responsible for the management of those funds including passporting funding directly to schools and early years settings. AfC will also deliver significant education services with the most material being high needs education services but also including services such as school admissions, early years advisory services and school improvement.
- 4.2 The table below details the anticipated DSG budgets for each borough, after block transfers which are expected to be agreed as part of each council's budget setting process.

Block	Richmond DSG Budget £	Kingston DSG Budget £	Windsor & Maidenhead DSG Budget £
Schools Block	142,013,494	129,153,827	109,813,634
Central School Services Block	1,002,112	1,172,905	994,733
Early Years Block	15,286,555	13,742,465	11,210,174
High Needs Block	38,316,861	32,163,453	30,182,800
Total	196,619,022	176,232,650	152,201,341

- 4.3 The funding must be applied to education services with a significant portion being passported to schools and early years providers as de-delegated budgets.
- 4.4 AfC have drafted detailed budget reports for each council and so the details will be formally approved in February and March. The links to the detailed budget reports are detailed below for information:
- [Richmond Schools Budget Report](#)
 - [Kingston Schools Budget Report](#)
 - [Windsor and Maidenhead Schools Budget Report](#)
- 4.5 The most significant challenge for next year will remain the management of high needs education services within the budget available. In Richmond and Kingston this budget has been agreed with the DfE and council as part of the five year Safety Valve Funding agreement and will exceed the amount of grant funding available (shown in table above). In Windsor and Maidenhead the expenditure on high needs is expected to be manageable within the funding allocation as long as the Delivering Better Value action plan continues to be prioritised and successfully implemented.

- 4.6 The cumulative deficits on all three DSG funds remains a significant risk to AfC and the councils and the addressing of those deficits must remain one of AfCs top priorities next year. The importance of the plans is recognised in the AfC Business Plan. In recognition that shortfalls in high needs education funding is a growing national issue, the DfE issued guidance to strengthen the DSG fund ringfence and has extended the three year statutory override to support Local Authorities implement plans over time without the deficit impacting on Local Authority financial viability.

5. RISKS AND MITIGATIONS

- 5.1 The following table summarises key financial risks for the coming year and associated actions

RISK / CHALLENGE	ACTION TO MITIGATE RISK
<p>Inflation - inflationary pressures pose the most significant risk to children's services budget in 2023/24. Pressure is being experienced on placement budgets, staffing budgets, agency staffing budgets, contractual spend and fuel budgets.</p>	<p>Inflationary increases have been built into budgets but it is possible given the escalation in RPI and CPI that it may exceed the amount allowed for. Robust commissioning practises that minimise inflationary increases on expenditures as well as solution focused partnership working will be key to understanding this pressure and mitigating it wherever possible.</p>
<p>Placement budgets – This pressure will be impacted by the number of children who require support next year as well as the complexity of their needs. Practitioners have reported a clear step up in complexity of need since the onset of the pandemic and this is coming through in more intensive and expensive support packages. Children's services have been operating in an environment where demand outstrips supply for specialist placements in recent years and the increase in demand nationally and locally due to the increase in asylum seekers supported is exacerbating the placement shortfall and pushing up prices.</p>	<p>Internal review system for all placements to ensure they are the most appropriate in terms of service and cost.</p> <p>Detailed financial monitoring at an individual placement level.</p> <p>Sufficiency Strategy</p> <p>Engagement with joint commissioning groups / initiatives to drive down cost and increase purchasing power</p> <p>Monthly financial monitoring updates provided to each council and quarterly meetings with commissioners to discuss latest performance and activity data, risks and associated actions</p> <p>Claim of additional grant funding wherever possible for refugees, unaccompanied asylum seekers and care leavers</p> <p>Demand management strategies such as edge of care support and other established early help services.</p>

<p>Balance young people's outcomes with balancing budget - Risk that the organisation does not strike the right balance between spending within budget and ensuring that children and young people are safe from harm / their wellbeing is supported.</p>	<p>The Leadership Teams review the monthly monitoring and agree on all financial actions that could impact on services. This ensures that the service impact of financial action plans is considered and risks identified/ monitored. Director overview of all decisions relating to their directorates</p>
<p>Achievement of savings and agreement of one off costs for redundancy etc. - Risk that savings are not achieved leading to in year overspends.</p>	<p>Regular monitoring of progress against savings plans.</p> <p>Project plans for each of the high value schemes with regular reporting to the Leadership Teams</p> <p>Quarterly progress reporting to the AfC Board and Commissioners.</p>
<p>Risk of cross subsidy if the level of funding that can be afforded by each LA differs</p>	<p>Operational area budgets recorded separately to avoid high level cross subsidy. Demand budgets ringfenced to ensure that placement / transport budgets are not vulnerable to cross subsidy</p> <p>Definition of core service provided by Business Services and agreement about level of support for each borough in the context of funding levels</p> <p>Annual financial exercise undertaken to check actual expenditure levels against contract prices</p> <p>Oversight by Directors of Children's Services and Chief Operating Officer</p>
<p>Risk that Councils do not agree proposed savings and growth</p>	<p>Regular briefings for councillors throughout the budget setting processes</p>

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Budgets will be carefully monitored during 2023/24 to ensure that appropriate action is taken where financial pressure arises. The combination of inflationary, demand pressures and savings required means that 2023/24 will be another challenging year in financial terms.
- 6.2 Balancing the ever increasing financial pressure with the responsibility to ensure the best outcomes for children remains a significant challenge going into 2023/24. Increases in demand and high average cost of placements is a national issue that is causing budget pressure for most providers of children's social care and education services. The Councils have provided significant

levels of growth and so it is important that the budgets are prioritised effectively to ensure demand is managed within the available budget envelope.

- 6.3 The underfunding of high needs education, rising inflationary pressures and the step up in complexity of support needed by children and young people remain the greatest challenges next year and it is important that as an organisation we periodically review delivery models and make changes to support value of money.
- 6.4 Challenging savings targets have been built into the budget for next year and it is important that progress against these projects and achievement of planned budget reductions is monitored. The achievement of planned savings and managing demand will need to continue to be a high priority for all staff that have authority to commit to spend. Where projects under-achieve savings targets or there are demand-led overspends, cost reductions will need to be found from elsewhere to ensure the Company can operate within the contract funding envelope agreed with the councils.
- 6.5 It is important that AfC continues to embed a culture of financial restraint into all officers with spending power and that the Company regularly reviews the financial position to ensure that money is aligned to service needs and priorities. Expenditure restraint policies and procedures will need to continue into 2023/24 to ensure that controllable budgets remain balanced and resources can be effectively prioritised in demand led budgets.

7. CONTACTS

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Borough	Service	AfC Saving Theme	Title	Project Description	Impact on CYP Risk	Deliverability RAG	Saving Target 2023/24 £000	Saving Target 2024/25 £000	Saving Target 2025/26 £000	Saving Target 2026/27 £000	Saving Target 2027/28 £000	Key Risks / Challenges
LBR	Business Efficiency and Digital Transformation	Business Services Transformation	Savings generated by moving data centres to the cloud	ICT & Digital Infrastructure programme that will generate savings in contributions payable to Kingston ICT	Green	Green	0	9	14	10	0	Savings dependant on infrastructure programme not overspending or overrunning. Oversight and reporting by Kingston ICT service to keep project on track.
LBR	Social Care and Early Help	Early Help Transformation	Early help rationalisation and transformation	Consolidation of early help services into a Family Hub model with resources focused on edge of care and the most impactful interventions. Children's centres and youth centres will be reviewed as part of this transformation as well as family support, youth offending, strengthening families, adolescent safeguarding. Early help services currently supports 291 children and young people. The top three referral reasons are challenging behaviour, child mental health, domestic violence. Children centres support over 7,000 young people and youth centres / services over 1500 young people.	Red	Amber	500	500	0	0	0	0 Risk that young people and families are not supported at an early stage leading to escalation of needs into statutory services. Risk that a young person suffers harm due to issues not being picked up at an early stage. Risk that referrals from agencies increase e.g. via schools, GPs etc. Re-mapping of pathways to support, review thresholds to access support, clear communication with partners about how to access to support, mobilisation of voluntary sector. Oversight of risk by statutory DCS and Director of Social Care.
LBR	Social Care and Early Help	Placement Sufficiency	Use of Richmond Children's Home	Increasing use of capacity at Richmond Children's Home to four children (80% capacity)	Green	Amber	113	0	0	0	0	0 Risk that appropriate staffing can't be recruited to support increase in number of young people supported in the home. Risk that young people can't be matched to support lower vacancies in the home.
LBR	Social Care and Early Help	Placement Sufficiency	Increasing the capacity of In-House Foster Carers	We are aiming to increase our foster care placements. Inhouse foster carers cost about £250 less per week than independent ones and inhouse placement can also be better supported by AfC. To achieve this goal we need to increase usage of existing foster carers and also proactively recruit new foster carers. We are in the process of reviewing the foster carer benefits package to make sure we are as attractive as possible - this will include making sure remuneration is competitive, appropriate support is in place and there is a comprehensive wider benefits offer e.g. local memberships etc. We currently support 66 children in foster placements with 44% being with in house carers.	Green	Red	23	105	123	0	0	0 Risk that there is a lack of investment/focus on recruitment campaign, that the foster care benefits offer is not competitive or that there is not enough families who want to become foster carers. Risk that team do not effectively manage existing foster carer cohort to reduce vacancies. Fostering Board in place to ensure progress is monitored and to shape foster carer strategy. Review of benefits package including allowances and support.
LBR	Social Care and Early Help	Placement Sufficiency	Demand and inflation management	Ongoing focus on placement commissioning strategies, development of market and continued robust demand thresholds	Green	Amber	228	0	0	0	0	0 Risk that inflation remains high and the shortfall in market competition dilutes negotiating power. Risk that demand for placements diverts attention from strategic oversight to day to day brokerage.
LBR	Social Care and Early Help	Social Care Transformation	Review social care delivery models including staffing structures, offer to care leavers, transitions	Review social care delivery models. The review will look at how we deliver support to children in need and children on protection plans to ensure that we prioritise qualified social workers to statutory work and use non qualified practitioners to support areas where a qualification is not needed. The review will look at how we can change the delivery model to deliver within budget whilst ensuring that we continue to protect those children who are most vulnerable through reasonable staff caseloads. The review will also look at the leaving care service and will review the level of support that is provided to young people over the age of 19 with a focus on stepping young people down to independence at the earliest point. Working with adults to improve the process of transitions as well as support young people to transition to adult services or into independence. This joint working will cover all aspects including continuing care, employment opportunities, life skills etc	Red	Red	281	70	45	0	0	0 Risk that changes make delivery models unsafe/leads to escalation of needs into other statutory services. Workloads continue to rise and this dilutes the ability to make savings. Risk that change makes recruitment and retention issues worse or that service are not open to alternative approaches. Risk that changing the care leaver offer leads to escalation in needs and some young people do not cope living more independently. Resource request submitted to ensure the programme is effectively scoped and that work is started to review and transform delivery models. It is expected that this would achieve additional savings. Scoping team to include both Kingston children's specialists as well as independent input. Review to draw on best practice guidance and recent local and national reviews. Statutory DCS and Director of Social Care to have regular input and ownership of programme. Risk that with tightening budgets thresholds are raised and silo working/budgets undermine benefits of smooth and timely transitions. Close working with adult and health colleagues to ensure that there are clear transition points and that services focus on preparing young people for those transitions. Joint strategic leadership oversight to bring together children's, adults, housing and health.
LBR	Education	Support Service Transformation	Upgrade of SEND system to reduce administration support	Improved use of system to record and automate processes and information reduces the need for admin support.	Green	Amber	0	0	18	0	0	0 Risk that admin workloads continue to rise in line with front line pressures leading to less scope to scale back admin resource. Risk that there is a lack of investment in digitisation and ICT meaning that processes remain outdated and saving is not achievable. Business case for digital and ICT investment being considered by the council. Year 1 savings used for additional systems costs.

Borough	Service	AfC Saving Theme	Title	Project Description	Impact on CYP Risk	Deliverability RAG	Saving Target 2023/24 £000	Saving Target 2024/25 £000	Saving Target 2025/26 £000	Saving Target 2026/27 £000	Saving Target 2027/28 £000	Key Risks / Challenges
LBR	Business Efficiency and Digital Transformation	Support Service Transformation	Digitisation initiatives	Introduction of a new digital customer platform and robotic automation reduces the need for administration processes and support.	Green	Amber	0	0	38	0	0	Risk that admin workloads continue to rise in line with front line pressures leading to less scope to scale back admin resource. Risk that there is a lack of investment in digitisation and ICT meaning that processes remain outdated and saving is not achievable. Business case for digital and ICT investment being considered by the council. Year 1 savings used for additional systems costs.
LBR	Business Support and Admin	Support Service Transformation	Rationalise support services	Reduction in support services to reflect reduced front line teams / services.	Amber	Amber	0	73	0	0	0	Risk that admin workloads continue to rise in line with front line pressures leading to less scope to scale back admin resource.
LBR	Recruitment and Retention	Workforce Transformation	Reduction in recruitment and retention incentives	This saving scales back some of the growth requested for recruitment and retention incentives to exclude relocation incentives and target it at fewer teams due to affordability.	Amber	Green	208	0	0	0	0	Risk that retention bonuses are divisive leading to further retention issues. Clear communication on rationale of when staff have access to incentives and legal advice sought.
RBK	Business Efficiency and Digital Transformation	Business Services Transformation	Savings generated by moving data centres to the cloud	ICT & Digital Infrastructure programme that will generate savings in contributions payable to Kingston ICT	Green	Green	0	0	0	20	0	Savings dependant on infrastructure programme not overspending or overrunning. Oversight and reporting by Kingston ICT service to keep project on track.
RBK	Social Care and Early Help	Early Help Transformation	Early help rationalisation and transformation	Consolidation of early help services into a Family Hub model with resources focused on edge of care and the most impactful interventions. Children's centres and youth centres will be reviewed as part of this transformation as well as family support, youth offending, strengthening families, adolescent safeguarding. Early help services currently supports 291 children and young people. The top three referral reasons are challenging behaviour, child mental health, domestic violence. Children centres support over 7,000 young people and youth centres / services over 1500 young people.	Red	Amber	215	215				Risk that young people and families are not supported at an early stage leading to escalation of needs into statutory services. Risk that a young person suffers harm due to issues not being picked up at an early stage. Risk that referrals from agencies increase e.g. via schools, GPs etc. Re-mapping of pathways to support, review thresholds to access support, clear communication with partners about how to access to support, mobilisation of voluntary sector. Oversight of risk by statutory DCS and Director of Social Care.
RBK	Education Services	Education Transformation	Statutory or school buy in only education offer (growth mitigation)	The School Improvement Grant has historically paid for central education services in Kingston. From April 2023 the DfE will be ceasing this grant funding and has said that LAS should seek funding from schools instead. Schools Forum will vote on whether schools should fund these services in January. If they do not think they can afford to then these services will need to cease or be funded by the council. The services include responding to MP/councillor queries, supporting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in schools, moderating teacher assessments, safeguarding adviser and monitoring phonics.	Red	Green	60	66				No non statutory support to schools unless they 'buy in' to the offer. Risk that there is a deterioration of school Ofsted ratings over time and schools feel unsupported by the LA. No formal intelligence about schools at a borough wide level leading to risk that officers, councillors etc will not have sufficient borough wide information to support this policy area. Priority work to be undertaken by the Director of Education.
RBK	Social Care and Early Help	Placement Sufficiency	Expanding supported accommodation options through internal offer or improved brokerage arrangements	Reducing the cost of supported accommodation by ensuring that young people step down in to independent living as soon as they are able (e.g. supported accommodation with phased down support or houses of multiple occupancy), proactive management of the market to drive down weekly cost of accommodation through bulk purchasing accommodation and working with providers to develop supported accommodation, further development of our inhouse offer through bringing Beverly House up to a suitable standard and looking at whether the Local Authority could develop a further accommodation unit. Kingston currently supports 97 care leavers and 98 UASC over the age of 98.	Green	Amber	100	0				Risk that accommodation to build additional local provision similar to Green Leas will not be available internally leading to whole reliance on the open market. Risk that there is insufficient competition in the market to support placement brokerage negotiations. Supported accommodation business case in place. Brokerage Team in place who are looking at market management strategies. Brokerage team led by experienced head of service.
RBK	Social Care and Early Help	Placement Sufficiency	Selling unused capacity at Rainbow House respite centre at a profit	Kingston owns a short break respite provision called Rainbow House. We have been scaling up usage of the provision since it opened and we are now in a position to sell bed nights that are not needed by Kingston children. This saving reflects selling circa 450 nights at a profit by 2024/25. We will be looking to put bulk purchasing contracts in place with other local authorities	Green	Green	156	156				Risk that the need for respite care in Kingston rises and there is less spare capacity to sell. Risk that staff lack the capacity to effectively market and sell places to other LAs or that other LAs do not want to buy the Rainbow House offer. Initial interest from LB Sutton and Surrey CC. Some income will be used to invest in capacity to manage contracts with other LAs including referral process. Risk that the offer does not meet required quality standards/safeguard service users. Contract is being monitored by the AD Health with regular meetings with the deliver partner.

Borough	Service	AfC Saving Theme	Title	Project Description	Impact on CYP Risk	Deliverability RAG	Saving Target 2023/24 £000	Saving Target 2024/25 £000	Saving Target 2025/26 £000	Saving Target 2026/27 £000	Saving Target 2027/28 £000	Key Risks / Challenges
RBK	Social Care and Early Help	Placement Sufficiency	Increasing the capacity of In-House Foster Carers	We are aiming to ensure that within four years, 80% of our foster care placements are with inhouse foster carers. Inhouse foster carers cost about £250 less per week than independent ones and inhouse placements can also be better supported by AfC. To achieve this goal we need to increase usage of existing foster carers and also proactively recruit new foster carers. We are in the process of reviewing the foster carer benefits package to make sure we are as attractive as possible - this will include making sure remuneration is competitive, appropriate support is in place and there is a comprehensive wider benefits offer e.g local memberships etc. We currently support 66 children in foster placements with 44% being with in house carers.	Green	Red	31	124	123			Risk that there is a lack of investment/focus on recruitment campaign, that the foster care benefits offer is not competitive or that there is not enough families who want to become foster carers. Risk that team do not effectively manage existing foster carer cohort to reduce vacancies. Fostering Board in place to ensure progress is monitored and to shape foster carer strategy. Review of benefits package including allowances and support.
RBK	Health	Social Care Transformation	Expansion of Direct Payments to families	Encouraging families with children with disabilities to receive a direct payment for care and support rather than this being arranged through AfC. This will encourage families to be more independent and enable them to tailor support to the needs of the child / family. We buy in to a direct payment support service so that families with direct payments have information and advice. Examples of support could be respite, holiday clubs or therapies.	Green	Amber	10	0				Risk that families do not want to access care through direct payments and would rather rely on the Local Authority. Advice service in place for families, periodic review of direct payment offer.
RBK	Social Care and Early Help	Social Care Transformation	Review social care delivery models including staffing structures, offer to care leavers, transitions	Review social care delivery models including staffing structures and the offer to care leavers. The review will look at how we deliver support to children in need and children on protection plans to ensure that we prioritise qualified social workers to statutory work and use non qualified practitioners to support areas where a qualification is not needed. The review will look at how we can change the delivery model to reduce the staff establishment in these teams whilst ensuring that we continue to protect those children who are most vulnerable through reasonable staff caseloads. The review will also look at the leaving care service and will review the level of support that is provided to young people over the age of 19 with a focus on stepping young people down to independence at the earliest point. Working with adults to improve the process of transitions as well as support young people to transition to adult services or into independence. This joint working will cover all aspects including continuing care, employment opportunities, life skills etc	Red	Red	190	210	90			Risk that the reduction in staff establishment makes delivery models unsafe/leads to escalation of needs into other statutory services. Workloads continue to rise and this dilutes the ability to make savings. Risk that change makes recruitment and retention issues worse or that service are not open to alternative approaches. Risk that changing the care leaver offer leads to escalation in needs and some young people do not cope living more independently. Resource request submitted to ensure the programme is effectively scoped and that work is started to review and transform delivery models. It is expected that this would achieve additional savings. Scoping team to include both Kingston children's specialists as well as independent input. Review to draw on best practice guidance and recent local and national reviews. Statutory DCS and Director of Social Care to have regular input and ownership of programme. Risk that with tightening budgets thresholds are raised and silo working/budgets undermine benefits of smooth and timely transitions. Close working with adult and health colleagues to ensure that there are clear transition points and that services focus on preparing young people for those transitions. Joint strategic leadership oversight to bring together childrens, adults, housing and health.
RBK	Education	Support Service Transformation	Upgrade of SEND system to reduce administration support	Improved use of system to record and automate processes and information reduces the need for admin support.	Green	Amber	0	0	18	0	0	Risk that admin workloads continue to rise in line with front line pressures leading to less scope to scale back admin resource. Risk that there is a lack of investment in digitisation and ICT meaning that processes remain outdated and saving is not achievable. Business case for digital and ICT investment being considered by the council. Year 1 savings used for additional systems costs.
RBK	Business Efficiency and Digital Transformation	Support Service Transformation	Digitisation initiatives	Introduction of a new digital customer platform and robotic automation reduces the need for administration processes and support.	Green	Amber		38	38			Risk that admin workloads continue to rise in line with front line pressures leading to less scope to scale back admin resource. Risk that there is a lack of investment in digitisation and ICT meaning that processes remain outdated and saving is not achievable. Business case for digital and ICT investment being considered by the council. Year 1 savings used for additional systems costs.
RBK	Business Services	Support Service Transformation	Reduction in support services to reflect reduced front line teams / services.	Reduction in support services to reflect reduced front line teams / services.	Amber	Amber	0	35	35	35		Risk that admin workloads continue to rise in line with front line pressures leading to less scope to scale back admin resource.
RBK	Recruitment & Retention	Workforce Transformation	Reduction in recruitment and retention incentives	This saving scales back some of the growth requested for recruitment and retention incentives to exclude relocation incentives and target it at fewer teams due to affordability.	Amber	Green	208					Risk that there could be equal pay claims (legal advice sought). Risk that retention bonuses are divisive leading to further retention issues. Clear communication on rationale of when staff have access to incentives and legal advice sought.

Borough	Service	AfC Saving Theme	Title	Project Description	Impact on CYP Risk	Deliverability RAG	Saving Target 2023/24 £000	Saving Target 2024/25 £000	Saving Target 2025/26 £000	Saving Target 2026/27 £000	Saving Target 2027/28 £000	Key Risks / Challenges
RBWM	Social Care and Early Help	Social Care Transformation	Application of eligible grants	Application of cost associated with supporting refugees to eligible grant income	Green	Green	170	0	0	0	0	0 Risk that AfC does not incur eligible spend. This is very unlikely but will be monitored by the relevant Head of Finance.
RBWM	Social Care and Early Help	Early Help Transformation	Contract reviews	Review of contractual spend to target at most important priorities	AMBER	AMBER	100	0	0	0	0	0 Risk that demand for services delivered through contracts continues to increase. Thresholds for accessing support to be monitored by AD Operations.
RBWM	Special Educational Needs & Disabilities	Education Transformation	Home to School Transport provided at statutory levels	Home To School Transport provided at statutory level; current exceptional provision phased out over a 5 year plan.	AMBER	AMBER	8	8	8	8	8	8 Risk that families appeal decisions and service has to provide non statutory transport. Risk that young people do not attend school leading to higher education costs. The AD Operations to monitor the position and consider cost v benefit.
RBWM	Education	Education Transformation	Academy Conversion funded by Department for Education	Following recent improvements established at the school including the achievement of an OFSTED rating of good there will be an application to the Department for Education to meet the school deficit position at the point of transfer.	GREEN	RED	300	0	0	0	0	0 Risk that the DfE refused the request and the council remains liable for the debt. Keep council up to date.
RBWM	Education	Education Transformation	Reduction in the Education Welfare Service	Remove existing traded service element of Education Welfare Service as they are new burdens that haven't been funded.	AMBER	AMBER	75	53	0	0	0	0 Risk that schools feel unsupported and issues with school attendance are not addressed at an early enough stage leading to escalation in needs. Joint working with schools to monitor the position.
RBWM	Education	Education Transformation	Reduction in the Admissions Service Team	Review of the Admissions Service structure and priorities.	AMBER	AMBER	40	0	0	0	0	0 Risk that reduced capacity coupled with rising demand impacts on service quality and timeliness of EHCs. KPIs to be monitored by the AD Education to assess impact on service.
RBWM	Special Educational Needs & Disabilities	Education Transformation	Review Special Educational Needs and Disabilities policies as part of Delivering Better Value	Reallocation of SEND team and support staff towards 'Delivering Better Value' priorities	AMBER	GREEN	290	0	0	0	0	0 Risk that the quality of the SEND service deteriorates as some staff focus on project / improvement work rather than business as usual tasks. Risk that staff do not find capacity to progress Delivering Better Value Program actions. Oversight of programme by the Associate Director of Education and regular reporting on progress.
RBWM	Social Care and Early Help	Placement Sufficiency	Removal of the Children in Care estimated future demand	Children in care demand management to ensure that thresholds are clear and that resources are prioritised towards those children most in need.	RED	RED	788	0	0	0	0	0 Risk that a child comes to harm or that the saving is just unachievable. Clear threshold guidance to be issued by the DCS to ensure children remain safe. Regular progress reporting to the Local Authority and oversight of threshold y DCS.
RBWM	Social Care and Early Help	Placement Sufficiency	Children in Care placement review	Review of all Children in Care placements identifying where appropriate changes in provision and reduction in costs, whilst meeting the child's needs. Identify existing and new Children in Care placed with Independent Fostering Agencies that could be provided in-house, or by a return to family members.	RED	RED	475	475	475	475	455	455 Risk that children are not ready to change placements leading to an unachievable saving. Deputy Director of Social Care to chair regular review meetings to maximise saving achievable whilst supporting the wellbeing of children.
RBWM	Social Care and Early Help	Placement Sufficiency	Limit acceptance of National Transfer Scheme Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children	Only accept new National Transfer Scheme requests when the authority has the resources to keep them safe.	RED	RED	500	0	0	0	0	0 Reputational risk of not supporting the Home Office to place young people. Risk that the national quotas are increased and the Home Office introduces mandatory cohorts. DCS to monitor the position and keep threshold under review as well as to review position with Local Authority if needed.
RBWM	Social Care and Early Help	Social Care Transformation	Reduction in reliance on External Legal Services	Service to gate-keep use of external legal services and significantly restrict the use on a risk assessed basis.	AMBER	AMBER	300	0	0	0	0	0 Risk that cases / practitioners do not receive appropriate legal advice and support. Deputy Director Social Care to monitor the position and ensure the threshold for advice is at a safe level.
RBWM	Business Services	Workforce transformation	Reduction in the workforce development training for employees	Prioritise the Workforce Development training budget to essential, statutory elements only.	AMBER	GREEN	40	0	0	0	0	0 Risk that the reduced workforce development offer reduces staff skill set and retention. Statutory training to be promoted and free non statutory offer to be promoted with staff.
RBWM	Social Care and Early Help	Workforce transformation	Reduction in reliance on agency workers	Recruitment of a dedicated Human Resources Recruitment specialist who will actively work with managers to reduce agency by supporting them in recruiting of permanent frontline staff.	AMBER	RED	144	40	0	0	0	0 Risk that agency staff want to remain on interim contracts because of monetary incentives, risk that the workforce ratio of agency to permanent worsens. AD Workforce to track and report on progress so that invest to save post can be adjusted if needed.
RBWM	Social Care and Early Help	Workforce transformation	Removal of workforce retention initiatives	Reduction in budget for 'refer a friend' scheme to reflect actual take up	GREEN	GREEN	10	0	0	0	0	0 Risk that the number of referrals significantly increases. Referrals are still likely to lead to longer term savings and so limited risk.
RBWM	Various	Workforce transformation	Full Year Effect of Prior Year MTFP Growth & Savings 2022/23	Reduced budget for national insurance to match change in national policy, reduced budget for premature retirement payments to reflect historic usage, reduced growth for actual employer pension contribution change, alignment of stability bonus budget to actual cost	GREEN	GREEN	272	0	0	0	0	0 Risk that actual budget required for national insurance / pensions increases to a higher level than has been needed historically. Head of Finance to monitor as part of budget monitoring.
TOTAL							5,835	2,176	1,026	548	463	

ACHIEVING FOR CHILDREN TREASURY PLAN 2023/24

Introduction

1. AfC is not allowed to enter into any borrowing, credit facility or investment arrangement (other than trade credit in the normal course of business) unless it has been approved by the Councils. The Financial Plan (the Plan) provides the authorisation for AfC to borrow and invest in the particular situations specified and the Plan has to be approved by the Members, as the owners of AfC. The decision to approve the Treasury Plan has been delegated to the Ownership Board (formerly Joint Committee) as a Band Three Reserved Matter.
2. The Plan will be reviewed at least annually and when events require a review in order to ensure that the Company's banking and treasury activities are operating efficiently and that risks are being appropriately managed in order to comply with the Councils' treasury policies.

Borrowing

3. AfC will only borrow from the Councils and in accordance with the terms set out in the Revolving Credit Facility (RCF).

Investment

4. AfC will only invest surplus funds, including sums borrowed under the RCF, in order to manage its cash flow to make payment of its obligations in a timely manner without having to borrow on a frequent basis from the Councils.
5. Such investment will be on the following basis:
 - a) Investment will be in deposit/instant access bank accounts that can be withdrawn at notice on the same day
 - b) Investment will be in banks approved by the Councils
 - c) Investment in each bank will be subject to a maximum amount (or limit) invested at any time
 - d) The aggregate of investments in all banks will also be subject to a maximum amount
 - e) The banks that AfC can make investments in and the limits are as follows:

BANK	LIMIT OF INVESTMENT
Barclays	£4,000,000
Nationwide	£3,000,000
NatWest bank	£5,000,000
Svenska Handelsbanken	£2,000,000
Total Investment	£14,000,000

The total aggregate investments that AfC can have outstanding at any time is £14 million

6. At any time the Councils can jointly agree to
 - a) remove approval or vary the investment limits for any of the banks, and vary the total aggregate investments
 - b) approve additional bank(s) with appropriate limits on investment, and
 - c) any such changes shall be agreed in writing (email) by the Finance Directors of each Council and AfC (or their appointed deputies for this purpose) and shall be reported to the next meeting of the Ownership Board and adopted as a change to the Plan as soon as practical and appropriate.
7. The treasury management and banking functions in AfC will be supervised by the Chief Operating and Finance Officer and undertaken by appropriately experienced staff within the finance section of AfC. Treasury activity will be planned and reviewed weekly and longer term plans prepared at least annually.
8. AfC will take advice and act on instructions from the Councils, acting jointly, on its treasury activities and investments.

**Proposed arrangements for the procurement of temporary staff
January 2023**

1. MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION

- 1.1 Procurement decisions that could lead to expenditure in excess of £10 million are reserved to Achieving for Children's (AfC) three owning councils. AfC currently spends in excess of £4m per year on temporary staff and the shortage of key workers nationally as well as many staff moving from permanent workforce to interim could mean that this will increase.
- 1.2 AfC currently uses a neutral vendor called Matrix to procure temporary staff. Agencies register with Matrix, who negotiate agency fees and other terms and conditions. AfC then posts vacancies and all the agencies register prospective candidates. This approach supports AfC to reach a wider pool of prospective candidates and to secure better rates and terms and conditions.
- 1.3 The contract with Matrix will come to an end during 2023 and so AfC needs to undertake a procurement exercise to secure a provider for upcoming years.
- 1.4 Following consultation with procurement advisers it is recommended that AfC uses the M-Star Framework to procure a new provider.
- 1.5 It is recommended that this procurement activity is undertaken with a view to appointing a new provider by July 2023. It is proposed to procure a provider for a minimum of three years with 2 optional extensions of a year. The maximum value of the contract with all extensions is therefore likely to be between £20 million to £22.5 million.
- 1.6 As a joint procurement decision is needed from all three of AfCs owning councils it is recommended that the final procurement decision is delegated to the Director of Children's Services in consultation with the relevant Lead member. This will ensure that a timely decision can be taken, following a compliant procurement process.
- 1.7 AfC will be supported by specialists from the South London Legal Partnership and Kingston Procurement Team in undertaking the procurement exercise.

2. CONTEXT

- 2.1 The cost of temporary staffing presents a challenge for most public sector organisations. This paper outlines the challenges AfC are facing and identifies the approach AfC is recommending to secure future arrangements for appointing temporary staff. The aim is to provide the organisation with a temporary worker solution which is streamlined, efficient, legally compliant and offers value for money.
- 2.2 As with many local authorities across the UK, AfC has experienced recruitment and retention challenges which has led to a reliance on agency workers to keep caseloads in front line teams reasonable. The consequence has been escalating workforce costs and a less stable workforce, as there is more turnover with interim staff.
- 2.3 AfC has signed up to regional social work agency pay memoranda of understandings for all three boroughs but it is generally recognised that these agreements are not having the impact that was hoped. Local Authorities often break the agreement to keep critical services supported and

agencies are finding creative ways around the agreed rates and terms. The memoranda are attempting to establish a more balanced social work workforce, to control agency worker rates and ensure accurate performance feedback on candidates. The recent changes to the agreements have put additional pressure on agency workers meaning that movement amongst the local agency workforce has decreased significantly, leaving AfC in a difficult position as hiring managers are struggling to appoint new staff.

3. CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS

- 3.1 In January 2021, AfC consolidated the recruitment of agency staff for all three boroughs into a single arrangement with Matrix. Matrix is a neutral vendor and was appointed through the Mstar framework. This route meant that suppliers were assessed as to whether they could provide resourcing for the broad range of personnel that AfC requires and AfC were also able to secure competitive rates.
- 3.3 The current neutral vendor service now manages most contracted staff on behalf of AfC and this has provided clear improvements in terms of visibility, control, compliance and governance. The arrangement has enabled AfC to have greater scrutiny over the use of agency workers including recruitment checks and rates paid.
- 3.4 The consolidation of the arrangements for all three boroughs into one has provided closer alignment between AfCs HR strategy and policy development functions as well as workforce and organisational development services.
- 3.5 The current supplier also enables AfC to manage workers whose roles have been deemed as inside IR35, but were not signed up with an employment agency. This then mitigates the risk of fines from HMRC and ensures that we are working within the IR35 legislation.
- 3.6 AfC currently spends over £4m on agency staff through the Matrix arrangement each year.

Type of cost	Charges (2021-2022)
Total client Net Spend	£ 4,006,532.41
Total number of hours	114,258
Total number of timesheets	3,482
Total agency fees	£ 239,989.11
Total MSP fee	£ 19,041.31

- 3.7 The amount per borough varies from year to year but broadly speaking 20% of the cost relates to Windsor and Maidenhead based staff with the remaining 80% being used on joint Kingston and Richmond teams.

4 POTENTIAL PROCUREMENT APPROACHES

- 4.1 There are three commissioning options for the appointment of an agency provider
- Use of a Framework where goods and/or services are defined and priced, and against which AfC can simply place an order with the supplier that best meets our requirements, usually known as a direct award

- Use of a Framework which includes both a call-off and a further competition option – where, if the solutions meet AfC’s needs we can simply place an order, or we can run a further competition if appropriate,
- Not to use a Framework and undertake a full procurement process, reaching out to the market.

4.2 Utilising a framework can ensure best value and avoid a lengthy procurement exercise. Frameworks are widely accessed by Local Government to support the sourcing of goods and services and therefore this route is recommended as the most appropriate procurement route.

5 RECOMMENDED PROCUREMENT APPROACH

5.1 Following a review of available options, it is recommended that AfC uses the MSTAR framework. This framework was successfully utilised in the last procurement exercise and our owning Councils have negotiated their own agency contracts through this route.

5.2 The MSTAR framework has been commissioned by the Local Government Professional Services Group and supported by the Efficiency Reform Group and the Department for Education. It has been designed, through extensive consultation with local authorities, to meet a range of user requirements, and has been structured to enable authorities to call off or mini-compete to find the option that best meets their needs.

5.3 The pre-selection of suppliers has already been completed, meaning the suppliers on the framework have been pre-qualified as meeting the minimum capacity and capability for the contract.

5.4 In addition the framework offers the following benefits

- This framework is compliant with UK/EU procurement legislation
- It will enable an efficient procurement process
- Service Providers listed on the framework have been assessed for their financial stability, track record, experience and technical & professional ability
- There are no additional charges and therefore comparisons on cost is far easier
- There are pre-agreed terms & conditions to underpin all orders
- The ESPO framework has proven experience, market knowledge and procurement know-how in the temporary staffing market

5.5 The ESPO MSTAR framework has the following relevant lots available to AfC

- Lot 1 - Managed Service Provision
- Lot 1a Neutral Vendor: MSP to manage a supply chain of Agencies.
- Lot 1b Master Vendor: MSP to generate a pool of staff, from which they will fill vacancies. Further tiers of agencies may also be used where necessary.

5.6 After a review of all Lots, the recommendation is that AfC utilise the MStar framework to access providers in Lot1a, the Neutral Vendors. Remaining with a neutral vendor enables AfC to continue to meet its policy objectives, which in general will mean reducing the amount of public money spent via the engagement of individual recruitment agencies.

5.7 Engaging with a Neutral Vendor ensures that AfC is able to continue to resource its temporary workforce through a commercial, sustainable and efficient model that will operate in the best

interests of AfC. This route has been beneficial over the last contract period.

- 5.8 A Neutral Vendor Managed Service is an unbiased provider of temporary staff, instead of filling roles directly themselves, they manage supply chains of agencies and local Small or Medium Enterprises giving all agencies on their supplier list fair access to all roles released.
- 5.9 This option enables AfC to have access to a broad supply chain immediately, there would be fair opportunity for all agencies to secure assignments (including the smaller recruitment agents), this can allow AfC to target current off contract suppliers to join the framework, there would be reduced cost and time to hire, a broader group of workers to attract to posts and options to reduce the spend off contract workers.
- 5.10 The drivers to continue with this route include greater AfC management control and oversight of the contract. In addition this includes the providers ability to:
- attract and negotiate with our current off contract suppliers to join their supply chain
 - provide reassurance on the following:
 - transparency and accurate management information sharing - enabling improved monitoring of the service, including equality and diversity performance
 - commitment to work with the local community and local businesses - offering opportunities to engage with AfC to even the small providers
 - experience of meeting KPIs and reporting on findings and outcomes
 - compliance with regulations - for example the Agency Worker Regulations, Implementation of the Terms and Conditions review for Temps and the London Wide Memorandum of Understanding for Qualified Social Workers.
- 5.11 Additional benefits of this arrangement include;
- Access to one provider who can offer a simple system solution that enables our managers to engage with and complete in a few steps to advertise an agency position, the system would need to be web based and mobile friendly, allowing managers to access on a range of devices.
 - AfC are likely to require supply staff similar to other local authorities and we know that the London Collaborative have successfully procured suppliers through the Mstar framework, demonstrating that they are able to meet demands of a range of children and social care requirements similar to AfC's needs.
- 5.12 It is recommended that a supplier is appointed for a minimum of three years with two optional extensions for a year each.

6. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 The reality of the current recruitment market and shortfalls of qualified and experienced staff in key children's services professions means that appointing a vendor that can offer competitive rates and quality staff is critical to supporting value for money in children's services over the coming years.
- 6.2 The vast majority of the contract value is paid in salaries to the recruited workers. The fee to the agency for recruitment services is a smaller proportion of the contract value than we would expect to see if we were to go to the open market. It is important that the future arrangement remains effective in negotiating these agency fees down.

6.3 The proposed framework approach will support AfC to appoint an experienced vendor. The procurement criteria will need to ensure that competitive pay and agency rates are prioritised as well as quality and quantum of available agencies and staff.

6.4 AfC will continue to monitor and discuss performance through the AfC Workforce Board and AfC Board of Directors.

7 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 AfC requires the provider to have comprehensive risk management procedures in place, including a published and regularly reviewed disaster recovery and contingency plan to ensure continuity of service in the event of any incident. A risks and issues log is maintained and available at operational meetings and at any other times as requested by AfC. The risks to AfC include

- The legal implication of contracting directly. By using the framework it ensures AfC are following legislation on procurement and the framework has already undertaken due diligence. AfC legal advisors have already reviewed the proposed contracts to assess if there are any legal risks to AfC. This will be captured at the contracting stage with our legal team, a significant amount of due diligence has also been met by the London Collaborative in using this framework and provider.
- Financial risk as the demand for agency workers increases, we are already seeing an increase between last year and this year. This must be mitigated through the continual effort to recruit permanent workers.
- Delay in procurement, this could result in having to renegotiate higher fees with current providers until the new provision starts.
- Our People and Payroll Team's capacity to meet the demands of the increase in use of agency workers as well as other conflicting priority work. This will be mitigated through a strong project plan and a timeframe for implementation that is achievable.

8. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 ESPO is a Central Purchasing Body as defined by the EU Combined Procurement Directive 2004/18/EC. The Framework Agreement is open to the entire wider public sector, including but not limited to, local government, educational establishments, the Police, Fire and Rescue Service and registered charities within the UK. AfC has confirmed access to this framework.

8.2 The MSTAR Framework Agreement is national in scope and has been established for use by the wider public sector. AfC can utilise the 'call off' as part of the framework. This will only be placed after the appropriate procurement requirements have been satisfied.

8.3 A robust procurement process should take place under the ESPO framework - with legal support to ensure that due process is followed.

8.4 AfC is required to publish details of the award on Contracts Finder as required by regulation 108 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and enter the details in the relevant contract register.

8.5 A legal review of the ESPO framework and its terms and conditions should take place. It should be noted that the terms and conditions of the framework are mandatory. However, there remains the

ability for AfC to add specific clauses and schedules that meet its specific needs. A final internal legal review should be requested on completion of these specific additions and prior to contract award.

9. EQUALITY IMPACT CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.1 Analysis of the current temporary agency workers' profile shows that ethnicity, age and gender are varied, confirming no group will be disadvantaged as a result of changing the contract arrangements.
- 9.2 Within the framework it is made clear that the Service Provider shall not unlawfully discriminate within the meaning and scope of Equality Legislation or any other Law relating to discrimination (whether in age, race, gender, religion, disability, sexual orientation or otherwise) in employment. This will also be made clear in the specification to the provider.
- 9.3 Equality and diversity are embedded throughout the ESPO framework and suppliers must reflect this requirement within their tenders. By signing up to the framework providers, and consequently all agencies supplying temporary labour to AfC, will have to agree to the equality and diversity requirements set out within the framework agreement. This addresses our Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirements under the Equality Act.
- 9.4 A full impact assessment will be conducted at the point of awarding the contract to a chosen provider and on-going contract management will also address any equality and diversity considerations when relevant to ensure AfCs obligations are met.

10. CONTACTS

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AD Workforce
Achieving for Children
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Report Title:	Datchet Neighbourhood Plan Referendum
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	No - Part I
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Haseler Cabinet Member for Planning, Parking, Highways & Transport
Meeting and Date:	Cabinet – 23 February 2023
Responsible Officer(s):	Andrew Durrant – Executive Director of Place
Wards affected:	Datchet

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REPORT SUMMARY

This report recommends that Cabinet agrees to act upon the recommendations of the Examiner's Report on the draft Datchet Neighbourhood Plan, accept the recommended modifications and proceed to a referendum.

1. DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

RECOMMENDATION: That Cabinet notes the report and:

- i) **Agrees to accept the Examiner's suggested modifications, issue a Decision Statement and progress the Datchet Neighbourhood Plan to referendum on May 4th, 2023.**
- ii) **Delegates authority to the Head of Planning in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning, Parking, Highways and Transport to make minor non material amendments to the draft Neighbourhood Plan prior to the referendum being announced.**

2. REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Options

Table 1: Options arising from this report

Option	Comments
Accept the Examiner's suggested modifications as accepted by the Datchet Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group; issue a decision statement to this effect and approve the draft Datchet Neighbourhood Plan to proceed to referendum. This is the recommended option.	This is the next step in the process of preparing a neighbourhood plan. The referendum will enable the local community as a whole to express their support (or otherwise) for the planned vision and management of growth within their area as set out in the draft neighbourhood plan.
Do not approve or delay approval for the Plan to proceed to referendum. This option is not recommended.	This will delay or deny the opportunity for the local community to express their formal support (or not) of the neighbourhood plan, and risk loss of confidence in the neighbourhood planning process. It would also prevent the referendum from being held alongside elections

Option	Comments
	in May causing unnecessary inconvenience for residents and increased public expenditure.
Do Nothing	This will delay or deny the opportunity for the local community to express their formal support (or not) of the neighbourhood plan, and risk loss of confidence in the neighbourhood planning process. It would also prevent the referendum from being held alongside elections in May causing unnecessary inconvenience for residents and increased public expenditure.

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Localism Act (2011) give local communities direct power to develop their shared vision for their neighbourhood and deliver the sustainable development they need. The formal making of the plan is the final stage of the neighbourhood plan production process.
- 2.2 The Royal Borough is encouraging neighbourhood planning. There are currently six neighbourhood plans which have been formally made and are part of the development plan: Ascot, Sunninghill and Sunningdale in 2014, Hurley and the Walthams in 2017, Eton and Eton Wick in 2018, Old Windsor in 2019, Horton and Wraysbury in 2020 and Windsor in 2021.
- 2.3 Following publication of the draft plan, the neighbourhood plan was submitted for examination by an independent examiner. The examiner was appointed by the Royal Borough, with the agreement of the Datchet Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. The examiner's report (see Appendix B) states that, subject to his recommendations (see Appendix C), the Neighbourhood Plan will meet the basic requirements and should proceed to referendum. These modifications as considered necessary by the independent examiner, would ensure the neighbourhood plan meets the Basic Conditions, as required by the Localism Act.
- 2.4 The Basic Conditions for neighbourhood plans that a draft neighbourhood plan must meet if it is to proceed to referendum are set out in schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990:
- Having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State it is appropriate to make the neighbourhood plan.
 - The making of the neighbourhood plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.
 - The making of the neighbourhood plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority

- The making of the order (or neighbourhood plan) does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations.
 - Prescribed conditions are met in relation to the Order (or plan) and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the order (or neighbourhood plan).
- 2.5 National regulations require the Council to make a decision on the Examiner's Report and whether the Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to referendum within 5 weeks of receipt of the report (unless an alternative longer timescale is agreed with the Parish Council).
- 2.6 Where, as in this case, an examiner has concluded that the Neighbourhood Plan meets the Basic Conditions (with or without modifications) and is legally compliant, and therefore that the Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to referendum, the Council has limited options in how to respond. The Council can either:
- Act upon the conclusions in the Examiner's Report, including making any recommended modifications to the Neighbourhood Plan, and proceed to referendum, provided that the Council confirms that the Basic Conditions have been met, or
 - Take a decision substantially different from the Examiner's conclusions, wholly or partly as a result of new evidence or fact, or a different view is taken by the Council as to a particular fact, including that the Council is unable to confirm that the Basic Conditions have been met.
- 2.7 The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group are currently considering the Examiner's recommendations. Council Officers have advised the Steering Group that there are no compelling reasons for the Council to not act upon the conclusions of the Examiner's Report, including making the recommended changes and proceeding to referendum. Subject to the Steering Group's agreement to make the necessary changes to the Neighbourhood Plan, it is currently anticipated that the referendum would be held on 4th May 2023 to coincide with the local elections. The Electoral and Democratic Services Manager has advised that in order to achieve the referendum on this date, the Decision Statement would need to be issued by 22nd March.
- 2.8 If the Steering Group do not agree to making the necessary changes, the referendum will not take place on 4th May 2023. It is hoped that the Council will have received confirmation from the Steering Group of their intentions in advance of the 23 February 2023 Cabinet Meeting.
- 2.9 The question used in the referendum is set out in the Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012 and must be, "Do you want the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead to use the neighbourhood plan for Datchet to help it decide planning applications in the area?"
- 2.10 If more than 50% of those voting in the referendum answer "Yes", The plan would then form part of the Development Plan for the Royal Borough once it is "Made" (adopted) by the Royal Borough following a decision by Full Council.

3. KEY IMPLICATIONS

Table 2: Key Implications

Outcome	Unmet	Met	Exceeded	Significantly Exceeded	Date of delivery
A decision statement is published confirming that the Neighbourhood Plan will proceed to referendum.	Planning proposals that would not accord with the provisions of the emerging neighbourhood plan may be granted	The neighbourhood plan is given significant weight in planning application decision making ahead of the referendum	Planning decisions are made with the support of the emerging neighbourhood plan	The wider aspirations of the neighbourhood plan can begin to be delivered ahead of the referendum	Before 22 March 2023.
An adopted neighbourhood plan that delivers the wishes of the community	Neighbourhood plan receives less than 50% of voters choosing "Yes"	Neighbourhood Plan receives 50-65% of voters choosing "yes".	Neighbourhood Plan receives 65-80% of voters choosing "yes".	Neighbourhood Plan receives 80%+ of voters choosing "yes"	Day of referendum
Development in accordance with policies of the neighbourhood plan.	Panel and appeal decisions do not give weight to the plan policies.	Planning applications and appeals are determined in accordance with the neighbourhood plan.	Majority of applications submitted comply with the policies of the neighbourhood plan.	All applications submitted comply with the policies of the neighbourhood plan.	

4. FINANCIAL DETAILS / VALUE FOR MONEY

- 4.1 Based on the written representations procedure, the examination of the draft Datchet Neighbourhood Plan is estimated to take 8 days at a total cost of £6,000 + VAT. This will be paid for using existing revenue budgets but will be claimed back from the Government. Local Planning Authorities can claim £20,000 from the Government when they issue a decision statement detailing their intention to send the plan to referendum (as set out under Regulation 18 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012). The £20,000 would also cover some or all the costs of holding the referendum.

Table 3: Financial impact of report's recommendations

REVENUE COSTS	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Additional total	£0	£6,000 plus VAT	£0
Reduction	£0	£20,000	£0
Net Impact	£0	£0	£0

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Localism Act (2011) and The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations (2012) give power to Local Planning Authorities to approve a neighbourhood plan to proceed to referendum. Under the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 if the referendum results in a simple majority 'Yes' vote the Neighbourhood Plan will immediately form part of the Development Plan for the Royal Borough. Following this Act the Council should 'have regard to a

post-examination neighbourhood development plan when dealing with an application for planning permission, so far as that plan is material to the planning application’.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

Table 4: Impact of risk and mitigation

Threat or risk	Impact with no mitigations in place or if all mitigations fail	Likelihood of risk occurring with no mitigations in place.	Mitigations currently in place	Mitigations proposed	Impact of risk once all mitigations in place and working	Likelihood of risk occurring with all mitigations in place.
There is a risk of legal challenge if the examiner's recommendations are not accepted.	Major	Medium	N/A	Accept examiner's recommendation and proceed to referendum	Low	Low
There is a risk that if the referendum does not take place, this will result in the community not having an opportunity to guide development in their area	Moderate	Medium	N/A	Accept examiner's recommendation and proceed to referendum	Low	Low
There is a risk that if the referendum does not take place, it may result in development in the area continuing to receive significant levels of objection from residents and not meet some local needs.	Moderate	High	N/A	Accept examiner's recommendation and proceed to referendum	Low	Low

7. POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Equalities.

- 7.1 The neighbourhood plan has been subject to examination by an independent examiner. One of the basic conditions that the examiner is required to be satisfied on is that the Plan is compatible with Convention Rights (Human Rights Act 1998). The Examiner confirmed this to be the case and noted that:

In the above regard, information has been submitted to demonstrate that people were provided with a range of opportunities to engage with plan making in different places and at different times. A Consultation Statement was submitted alongside the Neighbourhood Plan and the role of public consultation in the plan-making process is considered later in this Report.

Officers have also completed a EQIA screening report and conclude that the plan does not require an Equality Impact Assessment.

Climate change/sustainability.

- 7.2 Another of the Basic Conditions is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The neighbourhood plan was supported by a Strategic Environmental Assessment screening and report, that concluded that the plan would not trigger significant environmental effects. One of the key objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan is to ensure that development is sustainable and sensitively designed to be attractive, to minimise flood risk, mitigate climate change, promote biodiversity, reduce our carbon footprint, and enhance the existing community's wellbeing.

Data Protection/GDPR.

- 7.3 The Regulation 16 'submission' consultation was carried out by the Council between 5th September and 17th October 2022. This was undertaken in accordance with the GDPR regulations.

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1 During the production of the Neighbourhood Plan the Forum undertook several consultations and engagement events with Local Stakeholders in the Neighbourhood Plan Area, including a dedicated website, leaflet distribution and information stalls at various events. After the draft Neighbourhood Plan was submitted to the Royal Borough a formal process of consultation was undertaken by planning officers and the results of this were forwarded to the independent examiner for their consideration during the examination process. The independent examiner is expected to conclude that the consultation process has met the legal requirements.

9. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- 9.1 Implementation date if not called in: Immediate. The full implementation stages are set out in table 5.

Table 5: Implementation timetable

Date	Details
Not after March 22nd	Issue Decision Statement
4 May 2023	Hold referendum
Summer 2023	If a majority vote "yes" in the referendum, "make" the plan if agreed by Full Council.

10. APPENDICES

- 10.1 This report is supported by 3 appendices:
- Appendix A – Equality Impact Assessment
 - Appendix B – Examiner's Report

11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

11.1 This report is supported by 5 background documents:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>
- Localism Act (2011) <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/contents/enacted>
- Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations (2012)(as amended) [The Neighbourhood Planning \(General\) Regulations 2012 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/24/contents/enacted)
- Neighbourhood Planning (Referendum) Regulations (2012) [The Neighbourhood Planning \(Referendums\) Regulations 2012 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/25/contents/enacted)
- Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/20/contents/enacted>

12. CONSULTATION

Name of consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
<i>Mandatory: Statutory Officer (or deputy)</i>			
Adele Taylor	Executive Director of Resources/S151 Officer	17/01/2023	20/01/23
Emma Duncan	Director of Law, Strategy & Public Health/ Monitoring Officer	17/01/2023	17/01/23 and 10/02/23
<i>Deputies:</i>			
Andrew Vallance	Head of Finance (Deputy S151 Officer)	17/01/2023	
Elaine Browne	Head of Law (Deputy Monitoring Officer)	17/01/2023	
<i>Mandatory: Data Protection Officer (or deputy) - if decision will result in processing of personal data; to advise on DPIA</i>			
Samantha Wootton	Data Protection Officer	17/01/2023	02/02/23
<i>Mandatory: Equalities Officer – to advise on EQiA, or agree an EQiA is not required</i>			
Ellen McManus-Fry	Equalities & Engagement Officer	17/01/2023	27/01/2023
<i>Other consultees:</i>			
<i>Directors (where relevant)</i>			
Tony Reeves	Interim Chief Executive	17/01/2023	
Andrew Durrant	Executive Director of Place	17/01/2023	17/01/22
<i>Heads of Service (where relevant)</i>			
Adrien Waite	Head of Planning	17/01/2023	17/01/22

Confirmation relevant Cabinet Member(s) consulted	Cllr Haseler, Cabinet Member for Planning, Parking, Highways and Transport	Yes - 17/01/2023
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REPORT HISTORY

Decision type:	Urgency item?	To follow item?
First entered into the Cabinet Forward Plan: 13/01/2023	No	No

Report Author: Adrien Waite, Head of Planning

Appendix A

Equality Impact Assessment

For support in completing this EQIA, please consult the EQIA Guidance Document or contact equality@rbwm.gov.uk

www.rbwm.gov.uk



1. Background Information

Title of policy/strategy/plan:	<u>Datchet Neighbourhood Plan</u>
Service area:	<u>Planning</u>
Directorate:	<u>Place</u>

Provide a brief explanation of the proposal:

- What are its intended outcomes?
- Who will deliver it?
- Is it a new proposal or a change to an existing one?

This report recommends that Cabinet agrees to act upon the recommendations of the Examiner's Report on the draft Datchet Neighbourhood Plan act upon the Examiner's Report on the draft Datchet Neighbourhood Plan, accept the recommended modifications and proceed to a referendum.

This is a new proposal linked to ongoing work.

The referendum will be delivered by Council officers in the Electoral Services team.

2. Relevance Check

Is this proposal likely to directly impact people, communities or RBWM employees?

- If No, please explain why not, including how you've considered equality issues.
- Will this proposal need a EQIA at a later stage? (for example, for a forthcoming action plan)

Yes, the Neighbourhood Plan will directly impact people in the Borough. The principal purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan is to guide development within Datchet Parish. If approved at referendum, the document would become part of the Council's Development Plan.

If 'No', proceed to 'Sign off'. If unsure, please contact equality@rbwm.gov.uk

3. Evidence Gathering and Stakeholder Engagement

Who will be affected by this proposal?

For example, users of a particular service, residents of a geographical area, staff

Predominantly, it will be residents of Datchet Parish who will be directly affected by the Neighbourhood Plan should more than 50% of the people voting in the referendum vote for the Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan to help decide planning applications.

Council Planning Officers will also be affected as they would have to take the Document into account during their decision-making process in relation to any planning applications received within the Datchet Parish area.

Among those affected by the proposal, are protected characteristics (age, sex, disability, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, marriage/civil partnership) disproportionately represented?

For example, compared to the general population do a higher proportion have disabilities?

Disabilities may have made it more difficult to participate in the previous consultation events, which were arranged by Datchet Parish Council and not RBWM. In Datchet, 5.4% of residents have limited activity due to their health. It may also have been the case that some parts of the community were less likely to have taken part in some events, for example, poverty and ethnicity can be major barriers that need to be tackled if real inclusion is to be achieved. At 27.5% Datchet has one of the highest proportions of non-white ethnicities in the entire Borough. Furthermore, 10.6% of the population of Datchet live in Social Housing, with the Datchet area ranking highly within the Borough on the indices of multiple deprivation measurement. This could suggest that some residents may not have been represented proportionately during the production of the Neighbourhood Plan up to this point.

What engagement/consultation has been undertaken or planned?

- How has/will equality considerations be taken into account?
- Where known, what were the outcomes of this engagement?

Yes, engagement has taken place throughout the various previous stages of the Plan's production, mainly by the parish council but more recently by RBWM. Several consultation and engagement events have been held with Local Stakeholders in the Neighbourhood Plan Area, including a dedicated website, leaflet distribution and information stalls at various events. After the draft Neighbourhood Plan was submitted to the Royal Borough a formal process of consultation was undertaken by planning officers and the results of this were forwarded to the independent examiner for their consideration during the examination process.

What sources of data and evidence have been used in this assessment?

Please consult the Equalities Evidence Grid for relevant data. Examples of other possible sources of information are in the Guidance document.

The Council's Datchet ward profile and the Council's Equalities Evidence Grid.
The Datchet Neighbourhood Plan (submission version).

4. Equality Analysis

Please detail, **using supporting evidence**:

- How the protected characteristics below might influence the needs and experiences of individuals, in relation to this proposal.
- How these characteristics might affect the impact of this proposal.

Tick positive/negative impact as appropriate. If there is no impact, or a neutral impact, state 'Not Applicable'

More information on each protected characteristic is provided in the Guidance document.

	Details and supporting evidence	Potential positive impact	Potential negative impact
Age	The Datchet Neighbourhood Plan contains Policy DAT1: Housing Suitable for the Needs of Older people.	✓	
Disability	The Datchet Neighbourhood Plan contains Policy DAT12: Key Movement Routes states that pedestrian routes should ensure that access by disabled users, those with sensory impairments and users of mobility scooters is secured.	✓	
Sex	There is no policy within the Neighbourhood Plan which is considered to disproportionately impact or discriminate against a person on the basis of their sex.	Not applicable.	
Race, ethnicity and religion	There is no policy within the Neighbourhood Plan which is considered to disproportionately impact or discriminate against a person on the basis of their race, ethnicity or religion.	Not applicable.	
Sexual orientation and gender reassignment	There is no policy within the Neighbourhood Plan which is considered to disproportionately impact or discriminate against a person on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender.	Not applicable.	
Pregnancy and maternity	There is no policy within the Neighbourhood Plan which is considered to disproportionately impact or discriminate against a person who is pregnant or a mother.	Not applicable.	
Marriage and civil partnership	There is no policy within the Neighbourhood Plan which is considered to disproportionately impact or discriminate against a person on the basis of their marital status.	Not applicable.	
Armed forces community	There is no policy within the Neighbourhood Plan which is considered to disproportionately impact or discriminate against a person who is in the armed forces community.	Not applicable.	
Socio-economic considerations e.g. low income, poverty	There is no policy within the Neighbourhood Plan which is considered to disproportionately impact or discriminate against a person on the basis of their socio-economic situation.	Not applicable.	
Children in care/Care leavers	There is no policy within the Neighbourhood Plan which is considered to disproportionately impact or discriminate against a person who is in care or a care leaver.	Not applicable.	

5. Impact Assessment and Monitoring

If you have not identified any disproportionate impacts and the questions below are not applicable, leave them blank and proceed to Sign Off.

<p>What measures have been taken to ensure that groups with protected characteristics are able to benefit from this change, or are not disadvantaged by it? For example, adjustments needed to accommodate the needs of a particular group</p>
<p>The Neighbourhood Plan is subject to a referendum and will only come into force where a majority of those entitled to vote in the referendum support the proposals/policies. This will ensure that the groups less likely to participate in developing the Neighbourhood Plan will have an opportunity to express their views. Where persons with protected characteristics are adversely affected, this would increase the likelihood of the referendum not demonstrating the required level of popular support. However, the Election Team will ensure that persons with disabilities or with other protection characteristics are able to use the polling stations and vote at the referendum.</p>
<p>Where a potential negative impact cannot be avoided, what measures have been put in place to mitigate or minimise this?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For planned future actions, provide the name of the responsible individual and the target date for implementation.
<p>Where persons with protected characteristics are adversely affected, this would increase the likelihood of the referendum not demonstrating the required level of popular support. However, as stated above, all sections of the community, including those with disabilities, will be able to vote at the referendum as measures are put into place such as ramps into polling stations and specially designed booths.</p>
<p>How will the equality impacts identified here be monitored and reviewed in the future? See guidance document for examples of appropriate stages to review an EQIA.</p>
<p>If the referendum is successful and the Neighbourhood Plan becomes part of the Council's Development Plan, the policies could be reviewed in the future by formally inviting all local planning authorities and groups representing potentially affected groups to advise us on any equality impacts that they have become aware of.</p>

6. Sign Off

Completed by: Garry Thornton	Date: 25/01/2023
Approved by: Adrien Waite	Date: 01/02/2023

Appendix B – Examiner’s Report – included as a PDF attachment

Appendix C – Summary Table of Examiner’s Suggested Modifications

Location of change	Page of Plan	Proposed Change
Introductory Section	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Para 1.1, change first sentence to: “The Neighbourhood Plan for Datchet covers the period 2022-2033.” • Delete Para 1.3, which is unnecessary and appears confusing • Para 1.4, replace “jurisdiction” with “scope” • Para 1.5, change to: “The Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the development plan...”
Policy DAT1	27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delete the wording of Policy DAT1 • Replace with a newly worded Policy DAT1: “Major residential development must provide a mix of dwelling types to include units designed meet the needs of older people.” • Add new paragraph of supporting text, following on from Para 4.10: “New homes designed to meet the needs of older people may include the following: (PROVIDE THE FOUR BULLET POINTS (a. to d. from the deleted policy wording) HERE.
Policy DAT2	31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy DAT2, delete second sentence in the opening paragraph and replace with: “...Guide 2021. Development proposals should:” • Policy DAT2, change criteria to reflect the above: “a. respond to...b. utilise and/or augment the...c. integrate the...” • Policy DAT2, policy wording on page 32, replace “must” with “should” in column one line 5, line 8, line 18 and line 23; and in column two, line 1, line 7 and line 13. For clarity, it is recommended that the word “must” is replaced by the word “should” in all seven instances of the Policy criteria included in Section B.
Policy DAT4	36	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delete the wording of part B of Policy DAT4 and replace with: “In respect of development proposals that have a direct or indirect effect on non-designated heritage assets, consideration will be given to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.”
Policy DAT5	40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy DAT5, last line of part A, delete “retained and” • Policy DAT5, second line of part B, replace “preserve” with “conserve” • Para 7.2, line 9, change sentence to “...undergrowth. Nevertheless, it is important that such views for those using the Thames Path are respected, are improved where possible and are not adversely impacted by riverside development. Moreover... • Para 7.3, change last line to “...small – are protected from harm.” • Para 7.4, change last sentence to “It is important that views of the spire are protected from harm.”
Policy DAT6	41	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy DAT6, delete the wording of the Policy and replace with: “Development impacting on Datchet Common and Gravel Pits, and/or Queen Mother Reservoir Local Wildlife Sites must enhance biodiversity and must not result in any significant harm.” • Change the title of the Policy to “Biodiversity” • Para 7.6, change to: “...are protected. As well as seeking to ensure that development minimises its impact on wildlife, national policy is clear in establishing that development has a role to enhance the natural environment by providing net gains for biodiversity (see also Policy DAT8).”

Policy DAT7	47	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy DAT7, delete part B and replace with: “The management of development within areas of Local Green Space will be consistent with that for development within Green Belts, as set out in national policy.”
Policy DAT9	49	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy DAT9, change part A to: “...be retained. Development should seek to provide new grass verges where possible. These should be designed to prevent degradation, for example, by preventing vehicles from driving over them or from using them for parking. • Policy DAT9, change part B to: “B. The protection and/or enhancement, including biodiversity enhancement, of existing grass verges will be supported.”
Policy DAT10	52	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy DAT10, part B, line 3, change “must” to “should” • Policy DAT10, part C, first sentence, add “...for new development in areas at risk of flooding subject to... • Policy DAT10, part E., line 3, change “must” to “should” • Policy DAT10, part F., lines 1 and 8, change “must” to “should” • Para 7.35, delete first sentence (“Datchet’s...capacity.”)
Policy DAT12	60	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy DAT12, delete part A. and replace with: “A. The development of segregated cycle and pedestrian routes that provide for suitable access by disabled users, those with sensory impairments and users of mobility scooters, will be supported.” • Policy DAT12, delete part B. (To ensure...Policies Map) • Policy DAT12, part C, change to: “The protection and/or enhancement of the positive features of Key Movement Routes, including the protection and maintaining of existing trees and the provision of new trees, hedging, verges and/or pollution mitigating planting, will be supported.” • Policy DAT12, delete part D and replace with: “Development should not result in harm to highway safety or to the accessibility of Key Movement Routes.” • Para 9.4, delete wording and replace with “The Parish Council will promote enhancements to Key Movement Routes. Suggested improvements are listed and described in Appendix A.”
Policy DAT13	61	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy DAT13, delete part A and replace with: “The development of new dwellings should provide for secure cycle parking and storage.” • Para 9.5, retain first sentence and delete the rest of the paragraph (“The housing...AL39”). Add new sentence to follow the retained sentence: “To encourage cycling, the development of new housing will be expected to include provision for cycle parking and for thoughtfully-designed secure storage allowing for easy access.”
Other Matters		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update the Contents, paragraph and page numbering to take into account the recommendations contained in this Report Chapter 10, Issue Numbers 30, 31 and 36 change start of “Possible actions” by deleting “DPC and RBWM to” and changing to “DPC to work with RBWM and...”

DATCHET NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2022 - 2033

Datchet Neighbourhood Plan Examination
A Report to the Council of the Royal Borough of Windsor and
Maidenhead

by Independent Examiner, Nigel McGurk BSc (Hons) MCD MBA MRTPI

January 2023

Contents

1, Summary

2, Introduction

3, Basic Conditions and Development Plan Status

4, Background Documents and the Datchet Neighbourhood Area

5, Public Consultation

6, The Neighbourhood Plan: Introductory Section

7, The Neighbourhood Plan: Policies

8, The Neighbourhood Plan: Other Matters

9, Referendum

1. Summary

- 1 Subject to the recommendations within this Report, made in respect of enabling the Datchet Neighbourhood Plan to meet the basic conditions, I confirm that:
 - having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State it is appropriate to make the neighbourhood plan;
 - the making of the neighbourhood plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
 - the making of the neighbourhood plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area);
 - the making of the neighbourhood plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, European Union (EU) obligations; and
 - the making of the neighbourhood plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

- 2 Taking the above into account, I find that the Datchet Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic conditions¹ and I recommend to the Council of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead that, subject to modifications, it should proceed to Referendum.

¹ It is confirmed in Chapter 3 of this Report that the Datchet Neighbourhood Plan meets the requirements of Paragraph 8(1) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. Introduction

The Neighbourhood Plan

- 3 This Report provides the findings of the examination into the Datchet Neighbourhood Plan (referred to as the Neighbourhood Plan) prepared by the Datchet Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group on behalf of Datchet Parish Council.
- 4 As above, the Report recommends that the Neighbourhood Plan should go forward to a Referendum. At Referendum, should more than 50% of votes be in favour of the Neighbourhood Plan, then the Plan would be formally *made* by the Council of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.
- 5 The Neighbourhood Plan would then form part of the relevant development plan and as such, it would be used to determine planning applications and guide planning decisions in the Datchet Neighbourhood Area.
- 6 Neighbourhood planning provides communities with the power to establish their own policies to shape future development in and around where they live and work.

“Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood Plans can shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development.”
(Paragraph 29, National Planning Policy Framework)
- 7 Datchet Parish Council is the *Qualifying Body*, ultimately responsible for the Neighbourhood Plan. Paragraph 1.6 of the Basic Conditions Statement, submitted alongside the Neighbourhood Plan, confirms that the Neighbourhood Plan relates only to the designated Datchet Neighbourhood Area. There is no other neighbourhood plan in place in the Datchet Neighbourhood Area.
- 8 The above meets with the aims and purposes of neighbourhood planning, as set out in the Localism Act (2011), the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) and Planning Practice Guidance (2014).

Role of the Independent Examiner

- 9 I was appointed by the Council of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead to conduct the examination of the Datchet Neighbourhood Plan and to provide this Report.
- 10 As an Independent Neighbourhood Plan Examiner, I am independent of the Qualifying Body and the relevant Local Authority. I do not have any interest in any land that may be affected by the Neighbourhood Plan and I possess appropriate qualifications and experience.
- 11 I am a chartered town planner and have over ten years' direct experience as an Independent Examiner of Neighbourhood Plans and Orders. I also have over thirty years' land, planning and development experience, gained across the public, private, partnership and community sectors.
- 12 As the Independent Examiner, I must make one of the following recommendations:
 - that the Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to Referendum, on the basis that it meets all legal requirements;
 - that the Neighbourhood Plan, as modified, should proceed to Referendum;
 - that the Neighbourhood Plan does not proceed to Referendum, on the basis that it does not meet the relevant legal requirements.
- 13 If recommending that the Neighbourhood Plan should go forward to Referendum, I must then consider whether the Referendum Area should extend beyond the Datchet Neighbourhood Area to which the Plan relates.
- 14 Where modifications are recommended, they are presented as bullet points and highlighted in **bold print**, with any proposed new wording in *italics*.

Neighbourhood Plan Period

- 15 A neighbourhood plan must specify the period during which it is to have effect.
- 16 The title page of the Neighbourhood Plan refers to the plan period as "2022 – 2033."
- 17 Taking this into account, the Neighbourhood Plan meets the requirement in respect of specifying the period during which it is to have effect.

Public Hearing

- 18 According to the legislation, it is a general rule that neighbourhood plan examinations should be held without a public hearing – by written representations only.
- 19 However, it is also the case that *when the Examiner considers it necessary* to ensure adequate examination of an issue, or to ensure that a person has a fair chance to put a case, then a public hearing must be held.
- 20 Further to consideration of the information submitted, I determined not to hold a public hearing as part of the examination of the Datchet Neighbourhood Plan.
- 21 However, further to consideration of the submission documents, I wrote to the Qualifying Body in respect of matters where further information was sought. At the same time, in line with good practice, the Qualifying Body was provided with an opportunity to respond to representations received during the Submission consultation process.

3. Basic Conditions and Development Plan Status

Basic Conditions

- 22 It is the role of the Independent Examiner to consider whether a neighbourhood plan meets the “*basic conditions.*” These were *set out in law*² following the Localism Act 2011.
- 23 Effectively, the basic conditions provide the rock or foundation upon which neighbourhood plans are created. A neighbourhood plan meets the basic conditions if:
- having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State it is appropriate to make the neighbourhood plan;
 - the making of the neighbourhood plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
 - the making of the neighbourhood plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area);
 - the making of the neighbourhood plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, European Union (EU) obligations; and
 - prescribed conditions are met in relation to the neighbourhood plan and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the neighbourhood plan.
- 24 Regulations 32 and 33 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) set out two additional basic conditions to those set out in primary legislation and referred to above. Of these, the following basic condition, brought into effect on 28th December 2018, applies to neighbourhood plans:
- the making of the neighbourhood development plan does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations.³

² Paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

³ *ibid* (same as above).

- 25 In examining the Plan, I am also required, as set out in sections 38A and 38B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Localism Act), to check whether the neighbourhood plan:
- has been prepared and submitted for examination by a qualifying body;
 - has been prepared for an area that has been properly designated for such plan preparation (under Section 61G of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended));
 - meets the requirements to i) specify the period to which it has effect; ii) not include provision about excluded development; and iii) not relate to more than one Neighbourhood Area and that:
 - its policies relate to the development and use of land for a designated Neighbourhood Area in line with the requirements of Section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (PCPA) 2004.
- 26 An independent examiner must also consider whether a neighbourhood plan is compatible with the Convention rights.⁴
- 27 I note that, in line with legislative requirements, a Basic Conditions Statement was submitted alongside the Neighbourhood Plan and this sets out how, in the Qualifying Body's opinion, the Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic conditions.

⁴ The Convention rights has the same meaning as in the Human Rights Act 1998.

European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) Obligations

- 28 I am satisfied, in the absence of any substantive evidence to the contrary, that the Neighbourhood Plan has regard to fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed under the ECHR and complies with the Human Rights Act 1998.
- 29 In the above regard, information has been submitted to demonstrate that people were provided with a range of opportunities to engage with plan-making in different places and at different times. A Consultation Statement was submitted alongside the Neighbourhood Plan and the role of public consultation in the plan-making process is considered later in this Report.

European Union (EU) Obligations

- 30 In some limited circumstances, where a neighbourhood plan is likely to have significant environmental effects, it may require a Strategic Environmental Assessment. In this regard, national advice states:
- “Draft neighbourhood plan proposals should be assessed to determine whether the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects.”*
(Planning Practice Guidance⁵)
- 31 This process is often referred to as “screening”⁶. If likely environmental effects are identified, an environmental report must be prepared.
- 32 The Council of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead produced a Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report for the Neighbourhood Plan. This concluded that:
- “...the Datchet Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects...(and) does not itself need to be subject to SEA.”*

⁵ Planning Guidance, Paragraph 027, Ref: 11-027-20150209.

⁶ The requirements for a screening assessment are set out in in Regulation 9 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

- 33 The statutory bodies, Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency were all consulted. Each of the statutory bodies agreed with the conclusion that there are unlikely to be any significant environmental effects and that a full SEA is not required.
- 34 In addition to SEA, a Habitats Regulations Assessment identifies whether a plan is likely to have a significant effect on a European site, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects. This Assessment must determine whether significant effects on a European site can be ruled out on the basis of objective information⁷. If it is concluded that there is likely to be a significant effect on a European site, then an appropriate assessment of the implications of the plan for the site must be undertaken.
- 35 In the case *People Over Wind & Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta* (“*People over Wind*” April 2018), the Court of Justice of the European Union clarified that it is not appropriate to take account of mitigation measures when screening plans and projects for their effects on European protected habitats under the Habitats Directive. In practice this means that if a likely significant effect is identified at the screening stage of a habitats assessment, an Appropriate Assessment of those effects must be undertaken.
- 36 In response to this judgement, the government made consequential changes to relevant regulations through the Conservation of Habitats and Species and Planning (Various Amendments) (England and Wales) Regulations 2018, allowing neighbourhood plans and development orders in areas where there could be likely significant effects on a European protected site to be subject to an Appropriate Assessment to demonstrate how impacts will be mitigated, in the same way as would happen for a draft Local Plan or a planning application.
- 37 The Council of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead produced a Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Report alongside the Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report referred to above.
- 38 This Report assessed whether the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan would give rise to the potential for a likely significant effect on Natura 2000 European sites.

⁷ Planning Guidance Paragraph 047 Reference ID: 11-047-20150209.

- 39 The Report noted that, whilst the South West London Water Bodies Special Protection Area (SPA) is located within 5km of the Neighbourhood Area, the Neighbourhood Plan:

“...is in compliance with adopted BLP policy NR2 which ensures that designated sites of international and national importance will be maintained, protected and enhanced...There will be no significant effects from the Neighbourhood Plan on the SAC.”

- 40 Each of the statutory bodies were consulted as part of the process and none demurred from the Council of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead's conclusion.

- 41 Further to this, I am mindful that national guidance establishes that the ultimate responsibility for determining whether a draft neighbourhood plan meets EU obligations lies with the local planning authority:

“It is the responsibility of the local planning authority to ensure that all the regulations appropriate to the nature and scope of a neighbourhood plan proposal submitted to it have been met in order for the proposal to progress. The local planning authority must decide whether the draft neighbourhood plan is compatible with EU regulations (including obligations under the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive)” (Planning Practice Guidance⁸).

- 42 The Council of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead has no outstanding concerns in respect of the Neighbourhood Plan's compatibility with EU obligations.

- 43 Taking this and the recommendations contained in this Report into account, I am satisfied that the Neighbourhood Plan is compatible with European obligations.

⁸ ibid, Paragraph 031 Reference ID: 11-031-20150209.

4. Background Documents and the Datchet Neighbourhood Area

Background Documents

- 44 In completing this examination, I have considered various information in addition to the Datchet Neighbourhood Plan. I also spent an unaccompanied day visiting the Datchet Neighbourhood Area.
- 45 Information considered as part of this examination has included the following main documents and information:
- National Planning Policy Framework (referred to in this Report as "*the Framework*") (2021)
 - Planning Practice Guidance (2014, as updated)
 - Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
 - The Localism Act (2011)
 - The Neighbourhood Plan Regulations (2012) (as amended)
 - The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Plan 2013-2033 (2022) (referred to in this Report as the "Local Plan")
 - Basic Conditions Statement
 - Consultation Statement
 - Supporting Documents
 - Representations received
 - SEA/HRA Screening Report

Datchet Neighbourhood Area

- 46 The boundary of the Datchet Neighbourhood Area is identified on a plan on page 6 of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 47 The Datchet Neighbourhood Area was designated by the Council of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead in March 2013.
- 48 The designation of the Neighbourhood Area satisfies a requirement in line with the purposes of preparing a Neighbourhood Development Plan under section 61G (1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

5. Public Consultation

Introduction

- 49 As land use plans, the policies of neighbourhood plans form part of the basis for planning and development control decisions. Legislation requires the production of neighbourhood plans to be supported by public consultation.
- 50 Successful public consultation enables a neighbourhood plan to reflect the needs, views and priorities of the local community. It can create a sense of public ownership, help achieve consensus and provide the foundations for a 'Yes' vote at Referendum.

Datchet Neighbourhood Plan Consultation

- 51 A Consultation Statement was submitted to the Council of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead alongside the Neighbourhood Plan. The information within it sets out who was consulted and how, together with the outcome of the consultation, as required by the neighbourhood planning *Regulations*⁹.
- 52 Further to a number of aborted starts, Neighbourhood Plan consultation commenced with the creation of the Datchet Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group in 2016. An introductory leaflet was produced and widely distributed throughout the Neighbourhood Area in March 2017. This was accompanied by an online survey. A Neighbourhood Plan website and social media presence were established in the same year.
- 53 Between 2018-2020, a number of Character Assessment Walks were scheduled, publicised and carried out. Residents were invited to join the walks. The resulting 15 assessments were published for comment and a related drop-in event was held in January 2019.

⁹ Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

- 54 During the plan-making process, the Steering Group attended numerous events to engage with various groups, disseminated leaflets and carried out surveys including surveys relating to open spaces, climate change and movement. Feedback informed the Pre-Submission Draft Neighbourhood Plan, the consultation on which took place between March and May 2022.
- 55 Consultation was promoted via a leaflet, delivered to all households, via articles in local publications and via posters, emails and social media. Comments received were duly recorded, considered and led to amendments to the emerging plan.
- 56 Taking the Consultation Statement and the above into account, I find that there is considerable evidence to demonstrate that public consultation was central to the plan-making process, that there were opportunities for people to have a say and that matters raised were duly considered.
- 57 Taking this and the submitted information into account, I am satisfied that the consultation process for the Datchet Neighbourhood Plan was robust and that it complied with the neighbourhood planning regulations referred to above.

6. The Neighbourhood Plan – Introductory Section

- 58 Some parts of the Neighbourhood Plan have been overtaken by subsequent events¹⁰.
- 59 Taking this into account and for clarity, I recommend the following changes (in *italics*) to the introductory section of the Neighbourhood Plan:
- **Para 1.1, change first sentence to: “*The Neighbourhood Plan for Datchet covers the period 2022-2033.*”**
 - **Delete Para 1.3, which is unnecessary and appears confusing**
 - **Para 1.4, replace “jurisdiction” with “*scope*”**
 - **Para 1.5, change to: “*The Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the development plan...*”**

¹⁰ In this regard, I also note that the Joint Central and Eastern Berkshire Minerals and Waste Plan was adopted in November 2022 by all four participating Councils, including the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.

7. The Neighbourhood Plan – Neighbourhood Plan Policies

Housing Needs of Specific Groups

Policy DAT1: Housing Suitable for the Needs of Older People

- 60 Paragraph 60 of the Framework supports the objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes to, amongst other things, ensure:

“...that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed...”

- 61 Local Plan Policy HO2 (“*Housing Mix and Type*”) sets out clear and specific requirements in respect of how new housing should deliver accessible, adaptable and wheelchair-friendly dwellings.
- 62 In contrast to the clarity of the above, Policy DAT1 appears vague. It is predicated on a situation whereby development “*is required to provide 2- and 3-bed units,*” but provides no indication of where, or even whether, such a thing might occur within the Neighbourhood Area. In considering housing mix and type, Local Plan Policy HO2, referred to above, does not specify 2 and 3 bed units.
- 63 Policy DAT1 then goes on to set out a general list of things that “*may*” be included within a development to meet the needs of older people. It is not clear why the Policy draws a direct link between 2 and 3 bed units and older people. Indeed, the supporting text indicates that there is a general need for 2 and 3 bed dwellings, rather than a specific need for 2 and 3 bed dwellings for older people. In this regard, the supporting text states that the majority of the population is under the retirement age and that there is a need for 1-bed units in the affordable sector.

- 64 Further to the above, in the absence of any substantive information, it is not clear why all 2 and 3 bed units within major developments must meet the needs of older people; and in addition, the list of things which “*may*” be included appear ambiguous and open to wide interpretation.
- 65 For example, it is not clear how “*generous*” (storage space) and “*spacious*” (living areas, bathrooms) might be measured, who by and on what basis; or how large a space must be to “*accommodate outdoor activities,*” what a “*quiet position*” is, or what a “*good outlook*” might be.
- 66 Use of the word “*may*” means that the criteria in Policy DAT1 are not requirements and as such, they simply provide general ideas as to what might be useful in respect of the design for a home for use by an older person or persons. This adds to the ambiguous nature of the Policy, which is contrary to national guidance, which requires planning policies to be unambiguous¹¹:

“A policy in a neighbourhood plan should be clear and unambiguous. It should be drafted with sufficient clarity that a decision maker can apply it consistently and with confidence when determining planning applications. It should be concise, precise and supported by appropriate evidence. It should be distinct to reflect and respond to the unique characteristics and planning context of the specific neighbourhood area for which it has been prepared.”

- 67 The Policy does not provide a decision maker with a clear indication of how to react to a development proposal, having regard to Paragraph 16 of the Framework:

“Plans should...contain policies that are clearly written and unambiguous, so it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals.”

¹¹ Planning Guidance, Paragraph: 041 Reference ID: 41-042-20140306.

68 Taking all of the above into account, I recommend:

- **Delete the wording of Policy DAT1**
- **Replace with a newly worded Policy DAT1:**

“Major residential development must provide a mix of dwelling types to include units designed meet the needs of older people.”

- **Add new paragraph of supporting text, following on from Para 4.10: “New homes designed to meet the needs of older people may include the following: (PROVIDE THE FOUR BULLET POINTS (a. to d. from the deleted policy wording) HERE.**

Design and Character

Policy DAT2: High Quality Design and Character

69 National planning policy recognises that:

“Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.”

(Paragraph 126, the Framework)

70 Local Plan Policy QP3 (“*Character and design of new development*”) requires all development to contribute towards achieving sustainable high quality design.

71 Policy DAT2 seeks to ensure that all new development is in keeping with the attractive qualities of the Neighbourhood Area’s character. In this way, the Policy has regard to national policy and is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan.

72 Use of the phrase “*In particular, this means:*” in the opening paragraph of the Policy, when combined with the use of the word “*must*” within the criteria that follow, effectively results in *guidance* becoming a *requirement*, without substantive evidence to demonstrate that each of the requirements set out are, in all cases, necessary to make development acceptable in planning terms, directly related to development, and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development. Thus, as worded, the first paragraph of the Policy does not have regard to Paragraph 57 of the Framework.

73 As an example, there is no evidence to justify a requirement for a household extension to demonstrate that it responds to negative key features of the character area or that it maximises potential to achieve biodiversity net gain. Similarly, an absolute requirement for no reduction in green screening is not supported by, for example, substantive quantitative information setting out the amount of green screening that currently exists.

74 Whilst the above matters are matters addressed in the recommendations below, I am mindful that the purpose of Policy DAT2 ties in well with the Datchet Design Guide, which itself provides a wealth of information to help support and guide development proposals within the Neighbourhood Area and provide a positive land use planning framework for good design.

75 I recommend:

- **Policy DAT2, delete second sentence in the opening paragraph and replace with: “...Guide 2021. *Development proposals should:*”**
- **Policy DAT2, change criteria to reflect the above:**

“a. respond to...b. utilise and/or augment the...c. integrate the...”
- **Policy DAT2, policy wording on page 32, replace “must” with “*should*” in column one line 5, line 8, line 18 and line 23; and in column two, line 1, line 7 and line 13.**

For clarity, it is recommended that the word “must” is replaced by the word “*should*” in all seven instances of the Policy criteria included in Section B.

Policy DAT3: Shopfront Design

- 76 The Neighbourhood Area enjoys a wealth of attractive, historic built development features which make a significant positive contribution to local character. These features include traditional shopfronts and evidence has been provided to demonstrate that the local community would like to see these conserved for the benefit of residents and visitors.
- 77 Chapter 12 of the Framework, "*Achieving well-designed places,*" recognises the importance of ensuring that development is sympathetic to local character and history, as well as the importance of ensuring that development helps to maintain a strong sense of place.
- 78 Further, Local Plan Policy QP3 ("*Character and design of new development*") is explicit in requiring development to retain existing high quality townscapes and to incorporate interesting frontages and design details to provide visual interest at pedestrian level.
- 79 Policy DAT3 establishes a clear planning policy framework for the protection of the Neighbourhood Area's high quality shopfronts. In so doing, it has regard to national policy and it is in general conformity with the Local Plan.
- 80 Policy DAT3 meets the basic conditions and no changes are recommended.

Heritage

Policy DAT4: Non-Designated Heritage Assets

- 81 Chapter 16 of the Framework, "*Conserving and enhancing the historic environment*," recognises that the nation's heritage assets comprise an irreplaceable resource.
- 82 Paragraph 189 of the Framework requires all heritage assets to:
- "...be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance..."*
- 83 The Framework requires the significance of a non-designated heritage asset to be taken into account when determining planning applications and specifically requires that in:
- "...weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset."*
(Paragraph 203, the Framework)
- 84 Local Plan Policy HE1 ("*Historic Environment*") affords protection to heritage assets in line with national policy.
- 85 The first part of Policy DAT4 identifies a number of non-designated heritage assets in the Neighbourhood Area. The identification of these assets has emerged through the plan-making process. The approach set out does not prevent other non-designated assets being identified and it provides prospective applicants with useful information.
- 86 However, the second part of Policy DAT4 introduces criteria for the consideration of an application affecting a non-designated heritage asset which go beyond requirements set out in Chapter 16 of the Framework, "*Conserving and enhancing the historic environment*." No substantive evidence is provided to support an approach which is different to and which does not have regard to national policy. Consequently, I am unable to determine that part B of the Policy meets the basic conditions.

- 87 In its representations to the submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan, the Council of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead suggested various additions to the Policy and to the supporting text. Whilst I note that such additions might provide further information, they do not comprise changes that are necessary to ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic conditions.
- 88 As noted earlier in this Report, neighbourhood planning provides communities with the power to establish their own policies to shape future development in and around where they live and work. In this case, plan-makers have sought to focus on non-designated heritage matters in the manner that they have and subject to the recommendations below, Policy DAT4 meets the basic conditions.
- 89 I recommend:
- **Delete the wording of part B of Policy DAT4 and replace with: *“In respect of development proposals that have a direct or indirect effect on non-designated heritage assets, consideration will be given to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.”***

Green and Blue Environment

Policy DAT5: Views

- 90 National policy, in Chapter 12 of the Framework, "*Achieving well-designed places,*" recognises the importance of identifying the special qualities of a Neighbourhood Area and requires planning policies:

"...to ensure that developments...are sympathetic to local character."
(Paragraph 130, the Framework)

- 91 Policy DAT5 identifies river views and views of St Mary's Church spire as having special qualities that contribute significantly to local character. The Policy seeks to ensure that development does not harm these views and in so doing, it has regard to national policy.
- 92 As worded, however, Policy DAT5 requires the "*retention*" of river views. Views can change over years, seasons, months, days and even on an hourly basis. Given this and in the absence of knowing precisely what must be "*retained,*" the Policy and its supporting information provide insufficient information to make it evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals, having regard to Paragraph 16 of the Framework.
- 93 Deletion of the word "*retention*" addresses this matter and together, other parts of part A of the Policy prevent significant adverse impacts arising from development and require development to respect local character.
- 94 St Mary's Church is a designated heritage asset and as such, planning policy affords protection to both the Church and its setting. Whilst a minor point, rather than "*preserve*" the significance of heritage assets, national policy affords weight to conservation and this is reflected in the recommendations below.
- 95 As with the first part of Policy DAT5, part B seeks to ensure that development does not have a significantly adverse impact on views of St Mary's Church spire – which are an attractive and distinctive feature of the village – and in so doing, this part of the Policy meets the basic conditions.

96 I recommend:

- Policy DAT5, last line of part A, delete “retained and”
- Policy DAT5, second line of part B, replace “preserve” with “conserve”
- Para 7.2, line 9, change sentence to “...undergrowth. *Nevertheless, it is important that such views for those using the Thames Path are respected, are improved where possible and are not adversely impacted by riverside development. Moreover...*”
- Para 7.3, change last line to “...small – are protected *from harm.*”
- Para 7.4, change last sentence to “It is *important that views of the spire are protected from harm.*”

Policy DAT6: Waterside Activities

- 97 The Framework requires planning policies to contribute to and enhance the natural environment by

“...minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity...”

(Paragraph 174, the Framework)

- 98 The supporting text to Policy DAT6 identifies Local Wildlife Sites in Datchet, two of which are subject to pressures from commercial activity. Given this, the purpose of Policy DAT6 is to ensure that appropriate levels of protection are in place to prevent development resulting in adverse impacts on wildlife habitats.

- 99 National policy, in Chapter 15 of the Framework, *“Conserving and enhancing the natural environment,”* states that plans should identify and safeguard local wildlife-rich habitats (Paragraph 179) and:

“...if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided...adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.”

(Paragraph 180, the Framework)

- 100 Whilst, in general terms, Policy DAT6 seeks to achieve the above, its wording results in ambiguity and uncertainty, to the extent that it would fail to provide the protection sought.

- 101 In effect, as set out, the Policy could provide support for development not requiring direct access to water to harm its surroundings, so long as there are no other suitable sites in the local area where its activities can take place.

- 102 As set out, the Policy would also require a decision maker to make a judgement on the impacts of a proposal, without any base-line information on which to formulate such a decision; and would, in part, only consider harm relating to impacts on tranquility and the natural environment.

103 I recommend:

- **Policy DAT6, delete the wording of the Policy and replace with:**

“Development impacting on Datchet Common and Gravel Pits, and/or Queen Mother Reservoir Local Wildlife Sites must enhance biodiversity and must not result in any significant harm.”
- **Change the title of the Policy to “Biodiversity”**
- **Para 7.6, change to: “...are protected. As well as seeking to ensure that development minimises its impact on wildlife, national policy is clear in establishing that development has a role to enhance the natural environment by providing net gains for biodiversity (see also Policy DAT8).”**

Policy DAT7: Local Green Space

104 Local communities can identify areas of green space of particular importance to them for special protection. Paragraph 101 of the Framework states that:

“The designation of land as a Local Green Space through local and neighbourhood plans allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them.”

105 Paragraph 103, of the Framework requires policies for the managing of development within a Local Green Space to be consistent with those for Green Belts. A Local Green Space designation therefore provides protection that is comparable to that for Green Belt land. Consequently, Local Green Space comprises a restrictive and significant policy designation.

106 Given the importance of the designation, Local Green Space boundaries should be clearly identifiable. The Neighbourhood Plan provides an overview plan showing all areas of Local Green Space (*Figure 7.3*) on page 42 and supplements this with four plans at a larger scale, which clearly identify the boundaries of each Local Green Space, on pages 44 – 47. This precise approach ensures that the Neighbourhood reduces any scope for dispute in respect of Local Green Space boundaries.

107 The Local Green Space tests set out in the Framework are that the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves; that it is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and that it is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

108 The Neighbourhood Plan provides clear and detailed evidence to demonstrate why the areas of Local Green Space identified are demonstrably special. This meets the national policy tests set out in the Framework.

- 109 National policy is explicit in respect of requiring policies for managing development within a Local Green Space to be consistent with those for Green Belts. National Green Belt policy is precise. National Green Belt policy does not limit development to that demonstrating “*very special circumstances*” but rather, amongst other things, it identifies development that is not inappropriate in the Green Belt.
- 110 The wording of the second part of Policy DAT7 introduces scope for inconsistency with national Green Belt policy, as set out in Chapter 13 of the Framework, “*Protecting Green Belt land,*” and this is a matter addressed in the recommendations below.
- 111 I recommend:
- **Policy DAT7, delete part B and replace with: “*The management of development within areas of Local Green Space will be consistent with that for development within Green Belts, as set out in national policy.*”**

Policy DAT8: Provision for Wildlife in New Development

112 As noted earlier in this Report, the Framework requires planning policies to contribute to and enhance the natural environment by:

“...minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity...”
(Paragraph 174, the Framework)

113 Local Plan Policy NR2 (*“Nature Conservation and Biodiversity”*) supports and sets out requirements for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity.

114 Policy DAT8 requires development to protect habitats and species and to deliver net biodiversity gains. Policy DAT8 has regard to national policy and is in general conformity with the Local Plan.

115 Policy DAT8 meets the basic conditions and no changes are recommended.

Policy DAT9: Roadway Verges

116 National policy states that:

“The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve.”

(Paragraph 126, the Framework)

117 It goes on to state that planning policies should ensure that developments:

“...will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development...are visually attractive as a result of...effective landscaping...establish or maintain a strong sense of place...”

(Paragraph 130, the Framework)

118 There are numerous grass verges between roads and pavements in the Neighbourhood Area. Many of these make a significant positive contribution to the attractive and distinctive character of Datchet. The Neighbourhood Plan has identified local community aims to not only protect grass verges from damage - their location adjacent to highways can result in inappropriate parking and damage – but also to encourage their enhancement and ideally, to encourage the creation of new grass verges.

119 Policy DAT9 seeks to achieve this and in this respect, it has regard to national policy.

120 As set out, the Policy places a requirement on all development to maximise the provision of grass verges and to ensure that existing verges will not be degraded by day-to-day activity, but this approach is not supported by evidence in respect of deliverability, having regard to Paragraph 16 of the Framework, which requires planning policies:

“...to be prepared positively, in a way that is aspirational but deliverable.”

121 The recommendations set out below address this matter whilst enabling Policy DAT9 to encourage the creation of new grass verges alongside the protection of existing ones, to the benefit of local character.

122 Taking all of the above into account, I recommend:

- **Policy DAT9, change part A to: “...be retained. *Development should seek to provide new grass verges where possible. These should be designed to prevent degradation, for example, by preventing vehicles from driving over them or from using them for parking.***
- **Policy DAT9, change part B to: “*B. The protection and/or enhancement, including biodiversity enhancement, of existing grass verges will be supported.*”**

Policy DAT10: Flooding, Drainage and Water Efficiency

- 123 The supporting text to Policy DAT10 highlights that flooding is one of the topics raised most frequently by residents during consultation. This is reflective of Datchet's location within an area where there are four main rivers and an extensive range of smaller watercourses, drains and ditches.
- 124 Policy DAT10 sets out a comprehensive approach to ensuring that development takes account of flood risk, having regard to Chapter 14 of the Framework, "*Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change*" and in general conformity with Local Plan Policy NR1 ("*Managing Flood Risk and Waterways*").
- 125 As set out, the use of the word "*must*" in the Policy results in it setting requirements not supported by substantive evidence in respect of deliverability, or in respect of having regard to the tests for planning obligations, as set out in Paragraph 57 of the Framework and this is a matter addressed in the recommendations below.
- 126 A representation made during the Submission stage consultation flags up that part C of Policy DAT10 applies to all forms of development, rather than to new development in areas at risk of flooding; and that Para 7.35 includes a general, unsubstantiated reference. These are also matters addressed in the recommendations below.
- 127 Whilst the same representation suggests the inclusion of further information in the supporting text, the text suggested appears open-ended and would not add clarity to the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 128 A further representation made during Submission stage consultation proposed that the Neighbourhood Plan should specify "*water-compatible development*" that falls outside the exceptions test in respect of flood risk. However, subject to the recommendations below, Policy DAT10 would not prevent appropriate exemptions. It is not necessary to specify the types of development that may be exempted from the exception test in order for the Neighbourhood Plan to meet the basic conditions.

129 Taking the above into account, I recommend:

- Policy DAT10, part B, line 3, change “must” to “*should*”
- Policy DAT10, part C, first sentence, add “...for new development *in areas at risk of flooding* subject to...”
- Policy DAT10, part E., line 3, change “must” to “*should*”
- Policy DAT10, part F., lines 1 and 8, change “must” to “*should*”
- Para 7.35, delete first sentence (“Datchet’s...capacity.”)

Community Assets

Policy DAT11: Provision of Community Infrastructure

130 National policy promotes the creation of healthy and safe communities and states that, in order to provide the facilities and services the community needs, planning policies should:

"...plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities..."

(Paragraph 93, the Framework)

131 Policy DAT11 supports the provision of new community facilities and in so doing, the Policy has regard to national policy.

132 No changes are recommended.

Getting Around

Policy DAT12: Key Movement Routes

133 National policy, in Chapter 9 of the Framework, "*Promoting sustainable transport,*" requires plans to take:

"...opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use..."
(Paragraph 104, the Framework)

134 The Framework goes on to require development to consider the design of streets and to:

"...address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility..."

135 Policy DAT12 aims to encourage sustainable modes of transport, the securing of safe access for mobility-impaired people and the reduction of air pollution through good design and the protection of trees. In these ways, it has regard to national policy.

136 As set out, the policy runs the risk of supporting any form of development so long as it includes improvements to cycling and walking. This could give rise to inadvertent support for inappropriate forms of development and it is a matter addressed in the recommendations below.

137 The Policy also includes an onerous requirement for all development to "*ensure safe and continuous pedestrian routes that connect to Key Movement Routes.*" There is no evidence to demonstrate that this is a deliverable requirement, having regard to Paragraph 16 of the Framework, or that such a requirement passes the tests for planning obligations set out in Paragraph 57 of the Framework:

"Planning obligations must only be sought where they meet all of the following tests: a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms; b) directly related to the development; and c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development."

138 The Policy also includes vague and ambiguous references, including to unidentified “*busy*” and “*adjacent*” routes and to “*unacceptable impacts*,” making it difficult for a decision maker to react to a development proposal, having regard to Paragraph 16 of the Framework.

139 I recommend:

- Policy DAT12, delete part A. and replace with: “*A. The development of segregated cycle and pedestrian routes that provide for suitable access by disabled users, those with sensory impairments and users of mobility scooters, will be supported.*”
- Policy DAT12, delete part B. (To ensure...Policies Map)
- Policy DAT12, part C, change to: “*The protection and/or enhancement of the positive features of Key Movement Routes, including the protection and maintaining of existing trees and the provision of new trees, hedging, verges and/or pollution-mitigating planting, will be supported.*”
- Policy DAT12, delete part D and replace with: “*Development should not result in harm to highway safety or to the accessibility of Key Movement Routes.*”
- Para 9.4, delete wording and replace with “*The Parish Council will promote enhancements to Key Movement Routes. Suggested improvements are listed and described in Appendix A.*”

Policy DAT13: Provision for Cycle Storage and Parking

- 140 National planning policy, in Chapter 9 of the Framework, "*Promoting sustainable transport*," encourages cycling and the promotion of the provision of cycle parking in Policy DAT13 has regard to this.
- 141 The Policy refers explicitly to a site that has already been allocated in the development plan. Site allocations in adopted plans have already undergone a robust examination process and it is not the role of Neighbourhood Plans to seek to impose additional planning requirements upon existing development allocations.
- 142 Further to the above, the first paragraph of the Policy is confusingly worded such that it requires cycle parking to be provided "*commensurate*" with a calculation relating flats above ground floor level without individual ground floor storage space regardless of the form of development proposed. This results in an unclear Policy which does not provide a decision maker with a clear indication of how to react to a development proposal, having regard to Paragraph 16 of the Framework.
- 143 I recommend:
- **Policy DAT13, delete part A and replace with: "*The development of new dwellings should provide for secure cycle parking and storage.*"**
 - **Para 9.5, retain first sentence and delete the rest of the paragraph ("The housing...AL39"). Add new sentence to follow the retained sentence: "*To encourage cycling, the development of new housing will be expected to include provision for cycle parking and for thoughtfully-designed secure storage allowing for easy access.*"**

8. The Neighbourhood Plan: Other Matters

- 144 The recommendations made in this Report will have a subsequent impact on Contents, including paragraph and page numbering.
- 145 The Neighbourhood Plan cannot impose requirements on the Local Planning Authority and the recommendations below highlight changes to the "*Possible actions*" section of Chapter 10 of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 146 A representation made during Submission stage consultation stated that the Neighbourhood Plan should recognise the potential for minerals development and infrastructure improvements to come forward during the plan period. There is no requirement for the Neighbourhood Plan to do this in order to meet the basic conditions.
- 147 I recommend:
- **Update the Contents, paragraph and page numbering to take into account the recommendations contained in this Report**
 - **Chapter 10, Issue Numbers 30, 31 and 36 change start of "*Possible actions*" by deleting "*DPC and RBWM to*" and changing to "*DPC to work with RBWM and...*"**

9. Referendum

148 I recommend to the Council of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead that, subject to the recommended modifications, **the Datchet Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to a Referendum.**

Referendum Area

149 I am required to consider whether the Referendum Area should be extended beyond the Datchet Neighbourhood Area.

150 I consider the Neighbourhood Area to be appropriate and there is no substantive evidence to demonstrate that this is not the case.

151 Consequently, I recommend that the Plan should proceed to a Referendum based on the Datchet Neighbourhood Area approved in March 2013.

Nigel McGurk, January 2023
Erimax – Land, Planning and Communities