



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

DECISION BOOK

Issue: 649 Date: 2 FEBRUARY 2022

Decisions set out in the book have been made under delegated powers by the Chief Executive, Executive Directors or the Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer, in consultation either with the relevant committee or Lead Councillor.

This issue of the decision book will be in public circulation up until **Saturday 12 February 2022**. During that period three Councillors may request in writing to the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services that a decision should be referred either to a committee, or to the Council (as appropriate) for formal resolution.

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<https://democracy.reading.gov.uk/mgListOfficerDecisions.aspx?bcr=1&BAM=0>

The officer reports accompanying the decisions are attached.

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DECISION BOOK - ISSUE 649 - 2 FEBRUARY 2022

1. APPOINTMENT OF SCHOOL GOVERNOR

<u>DECISION</u>	<u>LEAD COUNCILLOR(S)</u>	<u>WARDS AFFECTED</u>	<u>PAGE NO.</u>
1. APPOINTMENT OF SCHOOL GOVERNOR	COUNCILLOR PEARCE	PEPPARD	1

This report sets out the decision to appoint Local Authority governors to Reading schools.

It is the decision of the Director of Education, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Education that the proposals as set out in paragraph 4 be approved.

2. WOKINGHAM LOCAL PLAN UPDATE: REVISED GROWTH STRATEGY

<u>DECISION</u>	<u>LEAD COUNCILLOR(S)</u>	<u>WARDS AFFECTED</u>	<u>PAGE NO.</u>
2. WOKINGHAM LOCAL PLAN UPDATE: REVISED GROWTH STRATEGY	COUNCILLOR PAGE	BOROUGHWIDE	5

This report sets out the decision to respond to Wokingham Borough Council's consultation on the Revised Growth Strategy.

It is the decision of the Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport, to submit a response to Wokingham Borough Council's consultation on the Revised Growth Strategy as set out in Appendix 1

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR PEARCE - LEAD COUNCILLOR FOR EDUCATION		
DATE:	2 FEBRUARY 2022		
TITLE:	APPOINTMENT OF SCHOOL GOVERNORS		
SERVICE:	SCHOOL STANDARDS	WARDS:	PEPPARD
AUTHOR:	SARAH SHORTT	TEL:	07962 240 715
JOB TITLE:	GOVERNOR SERVICES	E-MAIL:	Sarah.shortt@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report sets out the decision to appoint Local Authority governors to Reading schools.

2. DECISION

2.1 It is the decision of the Director of Education, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Education that the proposals as set out in paragraph 4 be approved.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 As the Local Authority the Council has a duty to nominate governors for appointment to school Governing Boards in Reading.

4. THE PROPOSAL

That the following be nominated as an LA governor

Daniela Kelly for The Hill, Primary, Caversham

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 Equal Opportunities - To meet the needs of the diverse community in Reading, governors are recruited from within the local black and minority ethnic groups during each recruitment campaign.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

N/A

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The School Standards and Framework Act 1998, Schedule 9, paragraph 3, provides for the appointment of LA governors to school governing boards within the Reading Borough Council boundary.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Governing Boards may decide to pay governors' expenses from the individual school budget.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 Information regarding the applicant.

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR PEARCE - LEAD COUNCILLOR FOR EDUCATION		
DATE:	2 FEBRUARY 2022		
TITLE:	APPOINTMENT OF SCHOOL GOVERNORS		
SERVICE:	SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT	WARDS:	PEPPARD
AUTHOR:	SARAH SHORTT	TEL:	07962 240 715
JOB TITLE:	GOVERNOR SERVICES	E-MAIL:	Sarah.Shortt@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

BACKGROUND PAPER:

Information regarding the applicants: for appointment at: The Hill Primary, Caversham.

Name:

The applicant's relevant experience and skills are as follows:

Previous experience as a Clerk to Governors. Extensive people, project and operations management skills. Strategic and financial planning skills. Committee skills and an ability to work as part of a team, knowledge of SEN and research skills.

Supporting statement by the applicant:

The lasting impression I have from my time as a Governing Body Clerk some years ago, is the enormous complexity, responsibility and accountability within the role of Head Teacher and the Senior Leadership Team. The skills required to run a school are the same as those required to manage a commercial business, a charitable organisation, or a vital social care institution. I also recall how valuable was the depth and breadth of the experience, expertise and support the governors would bring to Governing Body meetings and, even then, thought it was a role I would like to take on at some point in the future.

I can bring to the GB many skills and much experience gained in the commercial world over a long and diverse career and various volunteer roles.

I am empathetic and pragmatic, adept at building relationships, defining objectives and bringing people along with me. I continue to be a sounding board for people who have worked with me in the past and have many contacts in different industries and organisations. I would hope to be someone upon whom fellow governors and school leadership could depend upon for sound, impartial views and practical transfer of past experience and expertise into the school context.

Application endorsed by:

Penny Fisher, close friend of many years.

I fully endorse Daniela's application, and have no doubt she would make an excellent and invaluable school governor. She has years of experience both in working environments and in voluntary roles, dealing with people from all different walks of life, which she would draw on and bring to the role. Daniela is fair-minded, open-minded and non-judgemental. When dealing with people, she is empathetic and refreshingly direct, qualities that mean she can rally people and achieve what she sets out to do. She also has a great sense of humour. He is perspicacious, and when faced with tough choices weighs up all the evidence and analyses the data to reach objective decisions. She is a great communicator, both on paper and on her feet, and has used this skill to advocate for all the causes she has championed over the many years I have known her. I couldn't recommend her more highly for the role.

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR PAGE - LEAD COUNCILLOR FOR STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT		
DATE:	2 FEBRUARY 2022		
TITLE:	WOKINGHAM LOCAL PLAN UPDATE: REVISED GROWTH STRATEGY		
SERVICE:	PLANNING	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
LEAD OFFICER:	MARK WORRINGHAM	TEL:	0118 9373337
JOB TITLE:	PLANNING POLICY TEAM LEADER	E-MAIL:	<u>mark.worringham@reading.gov.uk</u>

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report sets out the decision to respond to Wokingham Borough Council's consultation on the Revised Growth Strategy. The response is set out in Appendix 1.
- 1.2 Wokingham Borough Council is consulting on the next stage of preparing its Local Plan. This stage is a Revised Growth Strategy, which contains an amended strategy for accommodating Wokingham's development needs after the removal of the proposed Grazeley garden town. This involves identifying a number of new and expanded development sites, including a development at Hall Farm/Loddon Valley, between Shinfield, Arborfield and Sindlesham. Consultation will last until 24th January and will feed into a Proposed Submission draft of the plan expected later in 2022.
- 1.3 Appendices
Appendix 1: Response to Revised Growth Strategy

2. DECISION

- 2.1 It is the decision of the Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport, to submit a response to Wokingham Borough Council's consultation on the Revised Growth Strategy as set out in Appendix 1.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 Wokingham Borough Council's (WBC) existing development plan is set out in its Core Strategy (adopted 2010) and Managing Development Delivery document (adopted 2014), both of which have an end date of 2026. In common with other authorities in the area, there is a need for a new local plan for Wokingham to take account of changing national policy and ensure that there is an up-to-date policy position.
- 3.2 WBC has been preparing its new Local Plan for a number of years. It consulted on an Issues and Options report for a new Local Plan in 2016, and then undertook a Homes for the Future consultation in 2018/19. A full Draft Local Plan was published for consultation in February 2020. Reading Borough Council has made responses throughout the process.
- 3.3 The most significant development proposed in the 2020 Draft Local Plan was the Grazeley Garden Town proposal. This was a development of around 15,000 homes (not all of which would have been delivered in the plan period) together with employment and supporting facilities, on land spanning the boundary between Wokingham and West Berkshire. The proposal had been developed on the basis of considerable co-operation between WBC, RBC and West Berkshire District Council, as well as Homes England, Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership and the landowners. Capacity funding to develop the proposal was awarded through the Garden Communities programme. RBC was supportive of the proposal, as long as the significant infrastructure needed to support the development was to be delivered in a timely manner. However, a bid for £252 million funding under the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) was not successful.
- 3.4 In May 2020, the Detailed Emergency Planning Zone (DEPZ) surrounding the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) Burghfield was expanded to include a substantially larger area, including all of the proposed Grazeley garden town site. This led to objections to the plan from AWE and the Ministry of Defence and meant that the proposal was no longer likely to be deliverable. Given that the plan was reliant on considerable development at Grazeley, this meant a need to revise the spatial strategy.
- 3.5 Since the extension of the DEPZ, WBC have been examining proposals for further major development sites that could help to deliver the shortfall in meeting housing needs resulting from the loss of Grazeley. In particular, three locations have been considered:
- land to the south of the M4 between Shinfield, Arborfield and Sindlesham, known as Hall Farm/Loddon Valley;
 - land situated to the north of Wokingham (between the M4 and A329(M)); and
 - land to the east of Twyford in Ruscombe Parish.
- 3.6 On 22nd November, WBC published a Revised Growth Strategy for consultation. This is not a full draft revision of the Local Plan, but is instead an outline of

how the spatial strategy is proposed to be amended. The main changes are as follows:

- The removal of the Grazeley garden town;
- The identification of a new Strategic Development Location on land to the south of the M4 between Shinfield, Arborfield and Sindlesham, known as Hall Farm/Loddon Valley;
- The identification of a substantial opportunity within the South Wokingham Strategic Development Location;
- The identification of smaller scale new development within and on the edge of towns and villages across the borough; and
- The extension of the plan period to 2018/19-2037/38, and an associated update to the development needs such as the number of new homes.

3.7 The Hall Farm/Loddon Valley site is the most substantive change to the strategy, and the most relevant to Reading. This site is capable of providing a development of 4,500 homes, and the proposal is that at least 2,200 homes would be delivered in the plan period up to 2038. This would also include employment development in the vicinity of the Thames Valley Science Park, and also refers to potential to accommodate a relocated Royal Berkshire Hospital.

3.8 Consultation on the Revised Growth Strategy will take place until 24th January. The proposal is that the results will inform a pre-submission draft of the plan to be published for consultation later in 2022.

4. THE DECISION

4.1 It has been decided to submit a response from RBC to the consultation. This response is set out in Appendix 1.

4.2 The response focuses on the Hall Farm/Loddon Valley site, as the site with the most significant likely implications for Reading. In particular, it highlights concerns about the degree to which the proposal would provide the step-change in transport accessibility, in particular by public transport, necessary to support a development of this scale in this location. It states that further detail on transport is required before the Council could come to a view on whether the proposed development can be supported.

4.3 The response also clarifies that the comments made in the RBC response made to the Draft Local Plan in March 2020 continue to apply, other than those on the Grazeley Garden Town proposal.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 Continued engagement in Wokingham's Local Plan Update will contribute to the following priorities in the Corporate Plan 2021-22:

- Healthy environment;
- Thriving communities; and
- Inclusive economy.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Wokingham Borough Council declared a Climate Emergency in July 2019. Policies in the Draft Plan seek to address this issue. In terms of sustainable construction, standards are proposed to increase for all development, and the plan includes a requirement for major new residential development to be 'carbon neutral' (policy SS8). This will bring WBC's standards into line with those in the Reading Borough Local Plan.
- 6.2 The climate implications of the major development proposals in the Revised Growth Strategy will depend on a number of factors, in particular the extent to which the developments are accessible by walking, cycling and public transport. The proposed Council response addresses this in more depth. WBC has carried out a Sustainability Appraisal of the strategic options for growth which considers the effects of those options against a range of sustainability objectives, including climate change.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 7.1 Consultation on the Revised Growth Strategy takes place between 22nd November 2021 and 24th January 2022. The responses to this consultation will feed into the next stage of the Local Plan, which is expected to be a Proposed Submission Draft for consultation. Consultation on development plans is required to be in accordance with the authority's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). Wokingham's SCI was adopted in March 2019.

8. EQUALITY ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 Wokingham Borough Council has completed an Initial Equality Impact Assessment for the Draft Plan, which is available on WBC's website.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Local plans are produced under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The process for producing local plans is set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Regulation 18 states that a local planning authority should consult on what a local plan should contain. The Wokingham Local Plan Update: Revised Growth Strategy is prepared in accordance with this Regulation 18 requirement.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The response to the Wokingham Local Plan Update consultation has been managed from existing budgets.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are none.

APPENDIX 1: Wokingham Local Plan Update: Revised Growth Strategy Response from Reading Borough Council

1. Reading Borough Council (RBC) is grateful for the opportunity to make representations on the Revised Growth Strategy for the Wokingham Local Plan Update. RBC works closely with Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) on a range of strategic planning matters and looks forward to continuing this process throughout the Local Plan Update process. We welcome the progress that has been made on the Local Plan Update.
2. RBC provided comments on the Draft Local Plan Update in April 2020. With the exception of the removal of the Grazeley Garden Town proposal, the matters on which RBC commented at that time are not proposed to be amended by this Revised Growth Strategy. Therefore, our comments on the Draft continue to stand, with the exception of those comments on Grazeley. As such, in line with paragraph 1.19 of the Strategy, we do not repeat them here.
3. The only site within the Revised Growth Strategy on which RBC wishes to comment is the proposed Strategic Development Location at Hall Farm/Loddon Valley. The other additional sites proposed for development are of much smaller scale, mostly located some distance from the boundary with Reading, and are likely to have very limited implications for Reading.

Hall Farm/Loddon Valley SDL

4. RBC understands that a considerable amount of work has been carried out to consider other strategic development locations in the wake of the regrettable but understandable removal of the Grazeley Garden Town proposal from the Local Plan Update. RBC agrees that WBC's approach of identifying strategic development locations wherever possible represents the most sustainable approach, as it enables timely delivery of essential infrastructure. However, RBC is not in a position to support the identification of the Hall Farm/Loddon Valley SDL site at this stage.

Transport

5. RBC's main concerns at this stage relate to transport. In particular, we have not been provided with information to clearly demonstrate that a development on this scale can and will be highly accessible by public transport, walking and cycling to services, facilities and the rest of the transport network, including links into central Reading. We would want to see more clearly developed transport proposals before we could determine whether or not we agree with the proposal and therefore answer Q6a.
6. Given that the proposed SDL location sits between 4 and 7 kilometres from the centre of Reading, and is on the edge of the Reading urban area, accessibility to central Reading and the rest of the urban area is currently extremely poor. The M4 motorway and River Loddon and its floodplain form major barriers to movement. In the 4.8 km stretch of the M4 between the

A327 crossing at Shinfield and the B3030 crossing between Winnersh and Sindlesham, there are only two other crossings of the M4 - the pedestrian and cycle crossing at Cutbush Lane and the road crossing at Mill Lane. The latter has no footway and is not currently particularly safe for pedestrians, and frequently floods. Other than the M4, there is only one crossing of any form over the 3.7 km stretch of the River Loddon between the A327 and Sindlesham Mill. Public transport accessibility other than bus routes through Shinfield and Arborfield at the western end of the location is minimal. The location is in reasonable proximity to Winnersh and Winnersh Triangle stations, but these stations have stopping services on the Reading to Waterloo line only at approximate half-hourly frequency, and a public transport journey from the site to these stations followed by a rail journey would be a somewhat tortuous way of reaching central Reading.

7. As a result of the low level of current transport accessibility, any significant development in this location would therefore be dependent on a complete step-change in accessibility by public transport, walking and cycling in particular, which would have to be provided to a large extent upfront. In particular, accessibility to central Reading will be essential, as residents in this location are likely to rely on Reading for higher order services and facilities. Without this level of improvement in sustainable modes of transport, a development on this scale would risk being heavily reliant on the car and would likely overload the few existing access points to central Reading.
8. The Strategy talks in paragraph 5.47 about a “comprehensive package of infrastructure to incentivise sustainable behaviours and travel choices”. This is accepted in principle, but details on what this would entail are very light. A comprehensive walking and cycling strategy including a new connection over the M4 to Earley is mentioned, as is a new link to Hatch Farm Way and the partial closure of Mill Lane. The illustrative map in Appendix A on p72 does appear to show some potential measures, but does not significantly flesh out the proposals, not least because some of the notations on the map do not appear in the key. In our view, a more strategic direction of how links to central Reading and the wider urban area would work is necessary.
9. In particular, RBC would wish to see a planned, dedicated public transport link from the SDL across the M4 to Reading. This would require either a new public transport crossing (or dedicated public transport space on a new crossing) or use of an existing crossing such as the Cutbush Lane crossing which is currently for pedestrians and cycles only. This would potentially also require upgrades to public transport routes north of the M4 in the Earley/Lower Earley area, with bus priority measures around the Elm Lane/Pepper Lane/University of Reading area towards central Reading. This would avoid current bottlenecks on the A327 as it meets Lower Earley Way. It would require a joined-up approach between WBC and RBC.
10. At the eastern end of the SDL, improved links to Winnersh and Winnersh Triangle stations are required. These are not mentioned in the proposed

policy, and it is not clear on the extent to which a new link to Hatch Farm Way would incorporate any dedicated public transport connections. Ultimately, this could allow for a high-quality strategic public transport route incorporating bus priority between central Reading and Winnersh through the proposed site.

11. The need to safeguard land for a new motorway junction is set out in the proposed policy SS3. It is not clear from the text of the strategy or the policy what would trigger the need for a new motorway junction. It is assumed that a new junction is not required to support the development as currently proposed, as provision of that junction would otherwise be a requirement. We assume therefore that it is likely related to the potential inclusion of a relocated hospital. Clarity on this matter would be required.
12. RBC would therefore wish to continue co-operating with WBC in investigating proposals for this SDL location and undertaking more detailed work on transport proposals in particular. However, until there is the opportunity to view and consider more detailed transport assessment work and understand the transport proposals in full, we are not in a position to give a firm opinion on the suitability of this proposal.

Other matters

13. RBC has some other specific comments on the Hall Farm/Loddon Valley proposal.
14. Paragraph 5.47 states that the proposal for the SDL “potentially includes the full or partial relocation of the Royal Berkshire Hospital”. RBC is aware that the Royal Berkshire Hospital NHS Foundation Trust is considering its options, including relocation or refurbishment/redevelopment on its current site. Whilst this is not a decision for the Local Plan, RBC does wish to clarify that it believes that the most appropriate location for the hospital is at the heart of the community which it serves. This issue is anticipated within policy ER3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan, as follows:

“Any long-term proposal for moving the hospital to a new site in the Reading area would be supported where it would ensure that such a move would enhance its accessibility to residents of Reading and the rest of its catchment, would not lead to a reduction in standards of care, and where it would comply with other policies in the Plan.”

15. Therefore, RBC’s key concerns are around accessibility to the hospital for those who require it, and this includes being highly accessible by all modes of transport. As set out elsewhere in this response, in our view the site currently does not provide anything approaching the level of accessibility required, and this would be the case unless a dramatic improvement in public transport accessibility is provided at the outset. It is not therefore possible to currently support the relocation of the hospital.

16. The proposed policy SS3 states that “Development should incorporate measures to protect and retain the permanent physical and visual sense of separation of Arborfield, Arborfield Cross and Shinfield”. Presumably this should also include Sindlesham.
17. Proposed policy SS3 also includes the provision of gypsy and traveller accommodation. RBC has previously commented on its own unmet needs for gypsy and traveller provision, and therefore welcomes the inclusion of provision within this area and would further welcome discussion over whether there is scope for this provision to include meeting unmet needs from Reading. As previously stated, RBC would be open to discussion of how any proposal that also incorporated needs from Reading could be resourced.

Housing Need

18. RBC has commented on housing need in relation to the Draft Local Plan, and will not revisit these comments here. However, in relation to paragraph 4.3, the methodology behind the figure of 15,513 over the plan period is a little unclear and could benefit from further explanation. Using the methodology described in footnote 2, the total figure appears to be 15,492, so further clarity would be helpful.