

DELIVERING THE BEST FOR OUR BOROUGH

**The Conservative Manifesto for the
Wokingham Borough Council elections
on 3 May 2018**



Vote Conservative

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A personal message from the Conservative Group Leader

Dear Resident,

We are an innovative, productive and ambitious Council that looks for opportunities to provide the best for our community.

We deliver the Council vision of high quality, efficient services that protect our most vulnerable and promote equality of opportunity.

We don't waste your money. Instead, we listen to you and invest in the things you say are most important.

We protect the vital services that you use every day, and invest in new and exciting facilities.

Thanks to a Conservative Council, our Borough continues to be one of the best places to live and raise a family in the UK.

This manifesto shows how we have delivered — and will continue to deliver — the best for Wokingham Borough.

Charlotte Haitham Taylor



HOMES, COMMUNITIES AND PLANNING



The Prime Minister and WBC councillors opening the council-built affordable housing estate at Phoenix Avenue

A Record of Action

- Your Conservative-led Council delivered New Country Parks at our four major development sites
- We built the brand new Secondary School at Arborfield, and have built, or are building, seven new Primary Schools
- across the Borough
- We successfully defended 74% of planning appeals for applications that were unsuitable or unsustainable

Cllr David Lee, Executive Member for Strategic Highways and Planning:

“We are committed to addressing the problem of the need for affordable homes, particularly for our younger residents. Wokingham Borough continues to face issues with developers seeking ever higher numbers of planning permissions for new houses, when they haven’t built the homes they already have permission for. This ‘land banking’ means that the Planning Inspector is forcing us to build homes in places that aren’t sustainable. We continue to press the Government to change planning rules so that the more than 9,000 permissions granted by the Council are taken into account during planning appeals.”



Key facts

- This year, WBC built over 500 affordable homes for our Borough residents, of which WBC's wholly-owned housing companies built 120
- Last year, WBC investigated 770 potential breaches of planning control, and issued 14 enforcement notices as a result of those investigations
- WBC determined over 3,600 applications during 2017

A Promise of More

Going forward, your Conservative-led Council will:

1. Introduce a "Rent to Buy" scheme, allowing prospective first-time buyers to use part of their Council rent towards a deposit to buy their own home
2. Help more residents have their own homes by creating a Self-Build programme
3. Continue to increase our current house building programme through the housing companies wholly-owned by the Council
4. Continue to challenge the housing numbers imposed on the Borough, whilst ensuring that enough affordable homes are built in the right locations
5. Continue to work with our residents and town and parish councils to fight inappropriate planning applications in unsustainable locations
6. Stop inappropriate development across the Borough by continuing to press Central Government to change the law around 'land-banking'



Cllr Simon Weeks, Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement:

"In the first 8 months of 2017/18, 1183 new homes were built and we have identified a further 1,467 homes currently under construction. This improved delivery trend has allowed us to recalculate our 5 year land supply as now standing at 6.8 years. This will assist us defending less appropriate sites from speculative developers. 770 potential cases of breaches of planning permission were investigated in 2017. We are now also using the Proceeds of Crime Act to ensure that those who persistently break planning rules will lose income."

ROADS AND TRANSPORT

Cllr Keith Baker, Executive Member for Highways and Transport

“Thanks to our approach of delivering infrastructure along with new housing, we have been able to build new and important community facilities, particularly roads. All of these have been achieved mainly through Developer Contributions. In order to ease traffic congestion, we are investing in roads and public transport, making it easier for residents to get where they need to go.”



A Record of Action

- Your Conservative-led Council delivered major new roads, including the Station Link Road at Wokingham Railway Station and the first phase of the Nine Mile Ride extension
- Other major roads are either at the planning or design stages for Arborfield, Winnersh, and North and South Wokingham, and are planned to be in place as new houses are built
- We are constructing two new railway bridges to alleviate traffic congestion
- The Council established a Highways Consultation Group to engage local residents and communities in jointly solving issues with our roads
- Wokingham Borough Council worked with Reading University to open the new science park and the Shinfield Relief Road
- We introduced Civil Parking Enforcement to give the Council more control over parking and to reduce anti-social parking across the Borough

Key facts

In 2016-17, WBC:

- **Filled 2,032 potholes**
- **Maintained 1,831 roads**
- **Repaired 236 roads**
- **Resurfaced 17 roads, totalling 7.1km in length**



Repaired road surface in Meldreth Way in Earley

A Promise of More

Going forward, your Conservative-led Council will:

1. Invest £124million to develop major new roads in the Borough to meet the demands of new and existing residents
2. Ensure effective car parking charges through the trial taking place across the Borough
3. Review household parking permit schemes across the Borough in order to promote fair and effective parking measures
4. Review the implementation of Civil Parking Enforcement, where parking restrictions are in place to ensure their effectiveness in preventing anti-social parking
5. Invest in alternatives to car journeys across the Borough, including public transport and greenways, to help residents make the journeys they need

Key facts

- WBC maintains 450 miles of roads and 500 miles of pavements — if the roads were placed end to end, it would get you all the way to Barcelona
- WBC will be investing more than £4.5million in park and ride schemes over the next three years

ADULT SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH, WELLBEING AND SOCIAL HOUSING



Cllr Richard Dolinski at Fosters, which has 34 homes with 24 hour on-site care and support for older people

A Record of Action

- Your Conservative-led Council consistently outperforms its neighbouring authorities in reducing delayed discharge from hospitals for our older residents, by providing a very effective and unique convalescence programme for those who are unable to go home directly from hospital
- Our older persons Mental Health Service is rated outstanding by the Care Quality Commission; the Service currently has no waiting list
- The number of people with a Learning Disability in paid employment, who also live in their own homes or with their families, has increased substantially
- Wokingham Borough Council has consistently delivered a significant number of affordable housing, resulting in a substantial reduction in the housing waiting list for those who are in most need of a permanent home
- Not one homeless family has had to wait for more than a year to move from temporary accommodation to a permanent home, the majority being rehoused within 6 months

Key facts

- 1,500 people receive long-term adult social care from WBC
- 90% of those using our services say that they feel safe
- WBC is 10th best in the UK for helping our adults with learning disabilities get into work



Cllr Richard Dolinski, Executive Member for Adults' Services, Health, Wellbeing and Housing:

"Wokingham Borough Council has been enormously successful in adult social care, looking for innovative solutions to deal with challenging circumstances. The number of adults requiring access to our Adult Social Care services has increased by 40% over the last three years, creating enormous pressure. By planning for these increases, we have some of the best health and wellbeing services in the country. On top of this, last year we delivered more affordable homes than in any year since Labour's financial crash, and this year we are on course to double that figure."

A Promise of More

Going forward, your Conservative-led Council will:

1. Commit to delivering record numbers of affordable homes, including those built by our nationally acclaimed council owned housing company, by investing £42million in affordable housing over the next three years
2. Continue to meet the growing demand of our ageing population by building more specialist homes and maintaining excellent relationships with extra care providers
3. Make reducing social isolation and loneliness a major focus in adult social care services
4. Ensure our tenants have a strong voice in shaping and designing their community and neighbourhood, including our redevelopment of Gorse Ride
5. Develop stronger partnerships with the voluntary sector in order to deliver better services for the benefit of all our residents
6. Continue providing innovative schemes to help the small number of homeless living on our streets to get into permanent accommodation, including working in partnership with local voluntary groups
7. Reduce the number of those who are in the greatest need waiting on the Housing Needs Register, through our investment in building new affordable homes
8. Work with our NHS partners and local voluntary groups to ensure the best mental health and wellbeing outcomes for our residents, including setting up a Recovery College for vulnerable adults and carers

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Cllr Mark Ashwell, Executive Member for Children's Services:

"This Council recognises that education is not a by-product of our society; it is part of our society itself. It has to occupy an equal status with our government, our businesses and our community. As a result this Council has been at the vanguard of investment into education and into the care of our children and young people. Our Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is a wonderful example of getting the right service to the right people at the right time."



A Record of Action

- Your Conservative-led Council has been very successful in building new schools and upgrading existing schools
- 92% of Wokingham Borough pupils attend Good or Outstanding Schools
- Wokingham pupils outperformed all other South East Authorities for GCSE Maths and English in 2017
- A child brought up in Wokingham Borough can expect an excellent education in a low crime area with a wide range of extra-curricular activities
- Wokingham Borough has regularly appeared in the 'Best Place to Bring up a Child' lists in recent years
- Your Council recruits, retains and truly values our Wokingham Borough Foster Carers, resulting in 97% of our children and young people coming into care being placed locally in 2017
- The majority of our children who have received social work support do not require our services for a second time

Key facts

- **26,315 pupils educated in 69 schools**
- **2,678 children aged between 2 and 4 attend our 126 Early Years settings**
- **WBC is a Corporate Parent for 100 children in care, and last year supported 50 Care Leavers**



A Promise of More

Going forward, your Conservative-led Council will:

1. Ensure more young people are engaged in decision-making
2. Improve education and skills, and focus on every child and young person achieving their potential
3. Enable our schools and colleges to be central to our communities by enhancing the shared use of their resources, such as halls, sports facilities, etc.
4. Continue to work with schools to close the achievement gap for all vulnerable children including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities
5. Ensure our children are ready for school by continuing to improve the 0-5 year old offer in the Borough, which is the vanguard of the 30 hours free childcare provision
6. Continue to invest in the needs of our children in care as they move into adulthood by keeping them as close to their community as possible

Key facts

- Over 76% of children aged 0-5 in the Borough are assessed as having a Good Level of Development, compared to 71% nationally
- In the last 12 months, WBC has supported over 800 adults and over 1,000 children through programmes such as Early Years Foundation Stage and Ready for School

ENVIRONMENT, SPORTS, LEISURE AND LIBRARIES

A Record of Action

- The Conservatives decided to maintain weekly collections of general household waste and recycling – eight months before the Opposition Liberal Democrats announced it was their policy
- We installed and opened a new artificial grass football pitch at Ryeish Green
- We opened a new 3G full sized floodlit artificial pitch at Arborfield
- We built new all weather tennis courts at Cantley Park and a new tennis pavilion
- The Conservative Executive gave the go ahead for complete rebuild of an improved Bulmershe Leisure Centre (subject to planning permission)
- We agreed to proceed with a new 3G pitch at Emmbrook (subject to match funding and planning permission)
- We obtained planning permission for the new Carnival Pool complex in Wokingham
- We made improvements to California Country Park
- The Conservatives announced the intention to add a separate

Key facts

- **3.4million refuse and recycling collections in 2016/17, with around 29,000 tonnes of waste recycled**
- **WBC are investing more than £22.6million on sports and leisure facilities over the next three years**

food waste collection to increase recycling

- We appointed a new contractor to more thoroughly clean the roadside drains around the borough
- We supported a re3 initiative to encourage recycling of glass currently going into general waste
- We built and opened a greenway from the new Arborfield Green development to Finchampstead
- We improved drainage in Barkham, Spencers Wood and Sonning, thus alleviating the threat of flooding of houses

Key facts

- WBC manages over 380 hectares of countryside sites, as well as 100 children's play areas
- Last year WBC worked with over 1,400 children on environmental education programmes

A Promise of More

Going forward, your Conservative-led Council will:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduce separate food waste collection to increase recycling 2. Through improved technology, increase the type of plastics that can be recycled 3. Improve the cutting of grass in informal play areas around the Borough 4. Make further improvements to California Country Park 5. Build more Greenways and | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> improve byways to increase access for all residents to the countryside 6. Open Ryeish Green Leisure facilities in 2018 7. Demolish and rebuild an enhanced Bulmershe Leisure Centre to be opened in 2019 8. Rebuild an enhanced Carnival Pool leisure centre and incorporate a new Wokingham Library facility |
|--|--|



Cllr Norman Jorgensen, Executive Member for Environment, Sports, Leisure, Libraries and Environmental Health:

“Despite our financial challenges, we have been really ambitious in delivering recreational and environmental schemes. Our neighbours in Reading are closing their leisure centres and have moved to fortnightly bin collection. In Wokingham Borough, we’re investing in massive refurbishment plans for a number of our leisure centres, as well as keeping weekly bin collection, and boosting our recycling by introducing separate food waste collection and increasing the number of plastics being recycled. ”

BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION



Cllr Stuart Munro Executive Member for Business & Economic Development:

“The Wokingham Town Centre regeneration is now well under way, bringing new businesses and new cultural and leisure facilities into the town. Regeneration for Wokingham will help deliver an income to fund services for all our residents, and will lay the groundwork for regeneration and investment in other parts of the Borough. We have also set up an investment portfolio that will allow us to invest in assets that will fund our vital services – particularly important in the context of a disappearing Government grant.”

A Record of Action

- Your Conservative-led Council’s Regeneration Programme is on track in Wokingham, with planning permissions received, and the project on budget at no cost to residents
- The £3million projected income from the regeneration is now expected to be £4million - in the future this can benefit the whole Borough
- The Council got underway with works on creating a new cultural and leisure centre for town, including a new cinema and a new children’s play area – all to be completed in the next few years
- We set up an Investment Portfolio to investigate opportunities that will generate money to pay for vital Council services across the Borough and keep Council Tax low
- We have undertaken extensive business engagement, including a Federation of Small Businesses event, running a business ‘World Café’ with some of our biggest local employers in March 2018, and consulting with businesses in Wokingham about the ongoing regeneration of the town centre

Key facts

- **Last year, WBC opened a new 529 space multi-storey car park in Wokingham**



Artist's impression of the planned new buildings at Elms Field

A Promise of More

Going forward, your Conservative-led Council will:

1. Complete the regeneration of Peach Place with new cafés and shops around a new square, bringing new businesses into the town centre
2. Develop 22 affordable homes in Peach Place for key workers such as nurses, teachers etc.
3. Build a Market Place fitted with specialised facilities for day and night time events and activities
4. Extend the cultural and social opportunities for all our residents in the town centre, including building a new cinema which will also broadcast live cultural events and a 400 seat concert hall facility at the new Carnival Pool complex
5. Deliver a new town park with 21st Century equipment for outdoor concerts and cultural events at Elms Field
6. Build a brand new and improved play area for children and young people in Elms Field
7. Work with our town and parish councils to identify opportunities for further investment across the Borough, improving infrastructure and developing communities
8. Ensure greater involvement with businesses in the Borough to allow businesses to both invest in the community and become a key part of it
9. Invest in opportunities to develop an ongoing funding stream to protect vital Council services

Key facts

- **Superfast broadband extension has reached 95% of homes in the Borough, and will reach 99.53% of homes by 2019**

FINANCE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES

Cllr Julian McGhee-Sumner, Executive Member for Finance:

“Wokingham Borough Council continues to be the worst-funded local authority in the country. The Council’s Revenue Support Grant (the main Government grant) has been reduced down to nothing. Yet, thanks to our careful financial management and innovation, we have protected our services, invested in schemes and developments across the Borough, and kept Council Tax and charges low. You only get these things with the Conservatives in charge of your money.”



A Record of Action

- Your Conservative-led Council has consistently delivered balanced budgets, keeping Council Tax low without cutting services
- By boosting external funding and developer contributions, we have planned half a billion pounds of investment over the next three years in the things that matter to residents
- Our wholly-owned Council companies have gone from strength to strength, delivering new homes and reducing the cost of adult social care
- The Council has one of the best Council Tax collection rates in the country, ensuring that residents get value for money
- We are delivering more services online, with over 24,000 residents now using a customer account online at their convenience

Key facts

- In 2018/19, Reading gets £37.40 per person in Revenue Support Grant from Central Government
- Wokingham gets nothing
- Band D Council Tax is £1,826.63 for 2018/19 in Reading
- Band D Council Tax in Wokingham is £1,433.89 for 2018/19 (excluding parish precepts)

Berkshire Councils, Revenue Support Grant Per Head of Population 2018/19



A Promise of More

Going forward, your Conservative-led Council will:

1. Make it easier and more efficient for residents to access Council services by completing our 21st Century Council programme
2. Maintain a high standard of service through our Customer Services, and ensure that they respond to residents' needs
3. Continue to look for investment opportunities that will produce an income for the Council to
4. Deliver sound financial management and efficient services in order to keep Council Tax and other charges as low as possible

protect vital services

Key facts

- Over the next three years, WBC will be investing half a billion pounds in things that matter to our residents, including:
 - Roads
 - Housing
 - Schools
 - Leisure centres

