



TH3075

Wokingham Vision 2035





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Communities Vision 2035

Crafted by the voices of local people

Welcome to the Communities Vision 2035, which has been created by using the views and experiences gathered from people across the Wokingham Borough.

We've heard from thousands of people and scores of community groups to capture the aspirations and experiences of those who live and work here. Vision 2035 reflects those conversations and aims to make Wokingham Borough the best place it can be over the years ahead.

From protecting our countryside to helping our towns thrive; from making sure everybody can lead fulfilling lives to ensuring everybody can share in the borough's prosperity; the vision sets out our communities' ambitions for the future.

Communities Vision 2035 will be used by partners to guide their actions, whilst working with communities to foster commitment from local people.

Working together is the only way we will deliver on our ambition to make Wokingham Borough a place where everyone has a chance to succeed, where nobody gets left behind and where everybody has a voice.

Nick Fellows

Chief Officer of the Wokingham Volunteer Centre
Chair of the Communities Vision Steering Group



Capturing the voices of our communities

The Communities Vision steering group was formed in the spring of 2023 by 18 partner organisations. All partners actively work in local communities across the borough, so they were able to gather views from a much wider number of people, beyond just an online survey. Twelve months on, enough feedback was gathered then analysed to create the 6 ambitions within this vision. Some of the quotes from the community have been included to reflect the future everyone wants to see.

What we mean by partners:

Representatives from business, education, faith groups, Wokingham Youth Council, health and voluntary sectors as well as the borough council form a steering group to guide the creation of the Vision 2035.

We would welcome other organisations who share the aspirations it sets out to join the Vision 2035 and become partners in achieving them.

Therefore, when this document refers to ‘partners’ it means those organisations that contributed to its creation but also those organisations willing to adopt it as a guide to their activities.

What we mean by everybody:

Everybody means just that - everybody, not just certain groups like adults. We want to be absolutely clear on that. But often it is read to just mean something else - just means adults or some other group. So, we want to be absolutely clear that, when this vision refers to ‘everybody’ or ‘all of us’ it includes you if you live, work or study in the borough.



505 Online surveys responses



30 Charities



34 Targeted events



51 Community groups

A vision crafted by community partners from the voices of local people



Community voices

Hopes and ambitions for the borough

There are things we love about our borough now. There is a strong sense of community and an enjoyment of our green spaces and countryside. There is an appreciation that the towns and villages that make up the borough have their own distinct character and attractions.

Many of us value the convenience, comfort and quality of life here. Our economic strength, transport connections, schools, safety, public services and facilities make this an attractive place for a lot of people.

But life here is experienced in different ways and we do not all fairly share the benefits the borough brings. While this is largely a safe and friendly place, some of us don't always feel secure, welcomed and valued for who we are. This is a borough of huge opportunities for many, but not all of us can take advantage of these at present. And while we rightly celebrate our community spirit, we know some are not made to feel they belong and cannot contribute as they would like.

Change has been a constant theme in our conversations. We worry it will mean losing the things we value but at the same time look forward to the opportunities it creates. Change brings challenges and opportunities, and we are aware that our response to these will define the borough's success in the future.

Our conversations have highlighted challenges - we worry that housing growth will destroy our green spaces, but we fear being a place young people cannot afford a home. We want to protect our environment but are unsure of the sacrifices that will require.

We are deeply concerned about congestion but uncertain of how to reduce it with our current lifestyles.

We know that our success is based on economic strength but hate that prosperity is not shared fairly.

We cherish our young people and are determined to see them succeed and yet, they worry about fitting in, affording homes, finding good things to do and staying safe.

These conversations with people have led to 6 ambitions for the borough:



Ambition for the future 1: Protecting and improving our places

We care about the environment and want to protect it. We love the green spaces and enjoy spending time in the countryside as well as our town and village centres. As a community we take pride in what it looks like and want high standards maintained.

But we are worried about the changes needed to reduce carbon emissions, loss of green space, unequal access to nature and potential threats to its clean and tidy appearance.

What we want the borough to be:

- Somewhere that looks and feels loved with clean, green and well-kept spaces for everybody to enjoy
- A place that is protected for future generations

“Preserve and safeguard its rural landscapes and communities”

“Be a place that brings a sense of community and doesn’t lose its heritage and countryside”

What we want to happen:

- Protect our environment by reducing pollution and carbon emissions and learn to live with climate change
- Make sure everybody can easily access and enjoy green spaces
- Support our town and village centres to thrive
- Maintain and celebrate our built and natural heritage
- Keep our public and private spaces clean and tidy





*“Have a defined sense of place,
that sets out its uniqueness”*

Working together to achieve our ambitions, we will:

- Consider how to reduce the environmental impact of all our decision and actions
- Support sustainable ways of working and living
- Protect heritage and green spaces within our power to do so
- Improve our towns and villages for all, in ways that are sympathetic to their past
- Make changes (small or large) to our lives that reduce our impact on the environment
- Show pride in the area by keeping it clean and tidy
- Use and respect our green spaces to have fun and improve our health and well-being
- Use our town and village centres for shopping, socialising and for the services they provide

Ambition for the future 2: Making it easy for people to access the things they want and need

There are great facilities, things to do and services across the borough but not everybody can get to them easily or even at all. Some people struggle to live the lives they want. We are frustrated that it's not always as easy getting around the borough as we would like, with congestion seen as an increasing problem and not all things or services accessible to all. Options such as public transport or cycling are not always sufficient.

What we want the borough to be:

- > Somewhere where the businesses, services and facilities people need are easily in their reach
- > A place with no barriers that prevent people from living fulfilled lives

“Be a place where all residents can benefit from great facilities”

“Do more to support less travel by car and more to keep people active”

What we want to happen:

- > Better public transport options and healthy ways to get around to reduce congestion
- > Everyone can access facilities and things to do where and when they need them



“Focus on good sustainable transport, roads, buses, cycle and walking paths - to minimise traffic congestion”

Working together to achieve our ambitions, we will:

- Champion accessibility for all in our decisions and actions
- Make sure the things we provide are accessible and available to everybody
- Promote and provide ways of travelling that reduce congestion
- Use and develop technology, including digital, to make life easier for everybody
- Support equal access to all services for all people
- Willingly and supportively share spaces and places with everybody
- Use alternatives to the car when practical
- Be open to using new technology and modernised ways of getting goods and services

Ambition for the future 3: Building and maintaining great communities

Community spirit is strong here. We have passionate charities and volunteers dedicated to making life better. This is a place most people find safe, welcoming and friendly. However, we want to strive for inclusion for all and places where everyone feels they belong. We must also make it easy and fulfilling to give our time to help others.

What we want the borough to be:

- > Somewhere everybody feels they belong and knows they are valued, with opportunities for all to contribute to local life in their own way
- > A place of kindness and safety where differences are celebrated and people can be themselves without fear, discrimination or prejudice

“Be a place where the people of the community work together for the common good, helping themselves to enjoy better more meaningful lives by sharing skills, knowledge, insights and their time”

“Friendly community, everyone looks out for each other”

What we want to happen:

- > Nurture a community spirit that all can share
- > Keep everybody safe and welcome
- > Make sure everybody is able and encouraged to volunteer in their community
- > Bring people of different backgrounds and generations together
- > Challenge all discrimination and celebrate differences



“Be more exciting, innovative and inspiring. It would be great to have initiatives that enhance the lives of residents and are a blueprint for other boroughs”

Working together to achieve our ambitions, we will:

- Build strong community bonds and break down barriers between people
- Make it easy and rewarding for everybody to volunteer in the community
- Work together to keep everybody safe
- Treat everybody with respect and dignity as individuals
- Be welcoming, understanding and friendly to everybody
- Help people and make life better for others
- Help prevent crime, including by calling out and reporting hatred and discrimination
- Respect each other’s differences and choices

Ambition for the future 4: Providing fair opportunities for everyone

The towns and villages of Wokingham are places of opportunity. Our schools are good and many of our young people are successful in a variety of ways. We must work together to maintain high standards and ensure they are shared by all. This is a great place to live with good facilities and local events that bring people together. It is also an expensive place to live with some people unable to afford its benefits and a concern about the future generations' ability to find a home here.

What we want the borough to be:

- Somewhere everybody can fulfil their potential, with excellent, equal chances to make a home and thrive in education, work, sport and leisure
- A place with plenty of things for everybody to do, where events and activities are accessible for everyone

“Care for its people equally and inclusively. Providing the right support to the right individuals in the right way”

“Become a place with more arts and culture offerings for all”

What we want to happen:

- Make sure everybody has a home that meets their needs
- Provide excellent training and education for all
- Encourage art, culture and sport which caters for everybody's talents and interests



“Engage more with diverse people and activities. I do enjoy the shops and restaurants but being on fixed income can’t always afford them”

Working together to achieve our ambitions, we will:

- Provide the services and things needed to give everybody a great start in life
- Work together to give opportunities for everybody to lead fulfilled lives
- Make life here affordable for everybody, with access to housing, appropriate subsidies and targeted support
- Provide a range of services for everybody
- Value learning for all young people and help them take advantage of the opportunities offered
- Look out for each other and help or find help for those who need it
- Act with compassion and understanding to those who may need more support than you
- Seek out the support, services and things to do locally and make use of them

Ambition for the future 5: Economic success that everyone is part of

There is economic strength in our borough. We are home to many businesses and a university of outstanding innovation. But we must adapt to a changing world and the needs of our communities. We will strive to make sure economic success is open to all and that nobody is left out.

What we want the borough to be:

- Somewhere innovation and entrepreneurship are supported by all with investment and hard work encouraged and rewarded
- A place where opportunity is growing and is being shared fairly for everybody's benefit

“Be kind and compassionate to those in need to promote recovery and community”

“Be the most sought-after area in the home counties, if not the country”

What we want to happen:

- Tackle poverty across our borough
- Make it easy to do business across the borough
- Encourage businesses to find a home here
- Create an environment, life-style and identity that attracts start-ups and employees
- Support everybody to find meaningful and satisfying employment
- Provide opportunities for businesses to contribute to the community and encourage them to do so



“Survive the economic crisis and come back as a leader in green jobs that support economic and environmental vibrancy”

Working together to achieve our ambitions, we will:

- Offer meaningful learning and employment opportunities for everybody
- Create a place that attracts businesses and supports innovation
- Work together to end poverty in the borough
- Recognise that businesses are a central part of the community and help them play as full a role as possible
- Work to the best of our abilities to support the local economy
- Support local businesses by buying things and services from them
- Support the charities and service providers dedicated to tackling poverty

Ambition for the future 6: Living happy, healthy and independent lives and help others do the same

The borough is one of the healthiest places in the country with a largely active and engaged population. People are well supported within the resources available, and help is at hand for those who need it. But health is experienced individually, not collectively and there are differences in experience that aren't equal, as well as concerns over mental wellbeing. We will work as a community to help everybody stay fit, well, happy and supported across our borough.

What we want the borough to be:

- Somewhere everyone can live a full and satisfying life
- A place where all people are understood and supported

“Be more exciting, innovative and inspiring. It would be great to have initiatives that enhance the lives of all residents and are a blueprint for other boroughs”

“Be inclusive of the whole community, including young people and all ethnicities”

What we want to happen:

- Help people to make healthy choices
- Support people to stay physically and mentally well and keep their independence
- Provide sporting and cultural opportunities for all ages and abilities
- Give everybody choice over their own lives and influence in their community
- Recognise individual, family and community strengths and use these to support better outcomes





“Become a place where communities thrive and work together”

Working together to achieve our ambitions, we will:

- Work together to reduce the inequality experienced in physical and mental health
- Provide opportunities for everybody to do things that keep them well in mind and body
- Support those in need as individuals in their communities
- Listen to all residents and plan services with people’s interests first
- Look after their own health and well-being and that of their friends, families and community
- Take up the opportunities on offer and use local facilities available
- Create welcoming communities for people with different needs
- Make time to understand local issues and then get involved to help support the community

Thanks to our community

It has been a privilege to chair the steering group and I'd like to thank all those who took the time to give their views or comments and help shape the Communities Vision 2035.

We have worked with community groups across the borough and heard from people online and in person to create this vision and we hope you can see yourself and your aspirations in it.

Things will change between now and 2035 and new challenges and opportunities will come up, but we've come together to agree the sort of place we want to live in – and that is a vital step.

But setting a vision is the start, not the end of the journey; we have made the first step but the next steps are more difficult. We now need to work together as a community to meet the aspirations we have agreed. Partners involved in the creation of the vision are committing to work towards it and will create measurable action plans for each of the ambitions.

Achieving these ambitions is not just down to voluntary groups, local government and services such as health and police. Everybody can help to make it happen and the steering group is looking forward to working with as many people across the community to turn the Communities Vision 2035 into a reality.

“On behalf of the steering group that has pulled together these views into key themes to set out what the borough should look like in the future and inform local planning, I am delighted to present the Wokingham Communities Vision and urge you to consider how you can play your part.”

Nick Fellows

Chief Officer of the Wokingham Volunteer Centre
Chair of the Communities Vision Steering Group





“Nice society for kids,
and lots of activities
you can do”

“Fun, enjoyable,
exciting, cool, happy,
friendly, lots of shops”

“Kind nice cool and lots of
things to do outside”

“Engage more with diverse
people and activities. I
do enjoy the shops and
restaurants but being on
fixed income can't always
afford them”

“Be inclusive of the whole
community, including young
people and all ethnicities”

“Be a place where all residents
can benefit from great facilities
that reduce the need for road
use and help enable strong
communities to form”



Words from our founding partners

“I am delighted to have had the opportunity to be part of the vision steering group in helping to shape what we can all do for our borough. Working with inspiring people from all sectors to nurture and form a vision which can deliver for everyone in the borough.”

Chris Martin

Head of Development
Housing Solutions

“The university is proud to be part of the vision steering group. We have enjoyed working with local partners and residents to ensure the voices of our community were heard and at the centre of shaping a vision for the future of our borough.”

Molli Cleaver

Community Engagement Manager
University of Reading

“This document truly captures the feedback and desires of the community and puts forward a vision to attract and retain the best talent for the growth of businesses operating within the borough.”

Sunil Shah

Managing Director, Acclaro Advisory

“Belonging to the vision steering group presents an unparalleled chance to mould the future of our borough. It involves working together with dedicated individuals to transform ambitious ideas into actionable strategies, guaranteeing our shared vision comes to fruition.”

Paul Brown

Head of Strategy & Impact / Safeguarding
Lead - Reading FC
Community Trust

“Involve Community Services was delighted to be asked and then to fully engage with this important undertaking. Creating a community vision that is fully informed by the people of the borough is critically important in a time of financial challenge and will help us all to home in on the areas that will make the most positive difference to residents.”

Phil Bell

CEO at Involve Community Services (the local Council for Voluntary Services)

“As a law firm in Wokingham, Blandy & Blandy is very pleased to have played a small part, alongside other leading organisations in the borough, in helping to shape the communities vision. Wokingham is a fantastic place to live, work and visit and we are proud to be a part of that community.”

Claire Dyer

Chair and Partner, Blandy & Blandy

“As both a local resident and representing an older peoples’ charity it has been great to take part in this work and see the communities vision forming- reflecting the views and comments of local people knowing this will influence for all what happens in the future!”

Fiona Price

CEO at Age UK Berkshire

“Being engaged in this project from the start has enabled me to bring in the wishes of so many residents and helped ensure the end product is really reflective of what the various communities in the borough aspire to. I look forward to the vision being adopted by as many people, organisations and communities as possible to help deliver the legacy this promises.”

Nick Fellows

Chief Officer, The Wokingham Volunteer Centre

“It was a privilege and a joy to be part of the vision steering group because it felt so absolutely focused on the flourishing of the entire borough and everyone who lives and works here. I loved the way that we all worked together, and listened, and put aside our role and our interests in order to produce something exciting and visionary together. And now the hard work begins, of turning dreams and hopes into lived daily reality through weaving strong borough values into who we are and what we do.”

**The Rev'd Canon
Richard Lamey**

The Diocese of Oxford
and Churches Together
in Wokingham

“Being part of this exciting project from the very beginning has empowered our members to actively shape the journey, ensuring their voices are heard and their input is valued equally. For me, it's been a privilege to collaborate with a dedicated team of passionate individuals, all united by a shared commitment to be part of building a brighter future with everyone in our borough.”

Debs Morrison

CEO at CLASP

“Working with the steering group has emphasised the importance of working collaboratively. The contribution of each partner together with the communities' voice has truly shaped the vision for the borough. We have enjoyed working with the partners and Wokingham Borough Council. Look forward to seeing the impact of this new initiative.”

Shamin Zafar, Engagement Officer
Alice Kunjappy-Clifton, Lead Officer
Healthwatch Wokingham

“I want to say a big thank you to the members of the steering group, who have helped to turn the original conception of a jointly authored vision for the borough into reality. The council has worked alongside partners in the voluntary and charitable sector, business, educators, healthcare providers, town and parish councils, faith groups, sports clubs, and the Youth Council. We have included as many voices as possible to ensure we are capturing the fullest range of perspectives. Now our Communities Vision will help to shape how the council develops its strategies and plans over the coming years.”

Cllr Stephen Conway

Leader of the council

“Being part of the Wokingham vision steering group with representatives from so many different groups has been a real eye opener, we've had some great debates along the way and I'm proud of the vision we are building.”

Eddie Pearce

GM Wokingham Today

“Working on the vision has been amazing, especially making sure it showed the views of the younger residents.”

Andrew Jones

Member of the Wokingham
Youth Council



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