

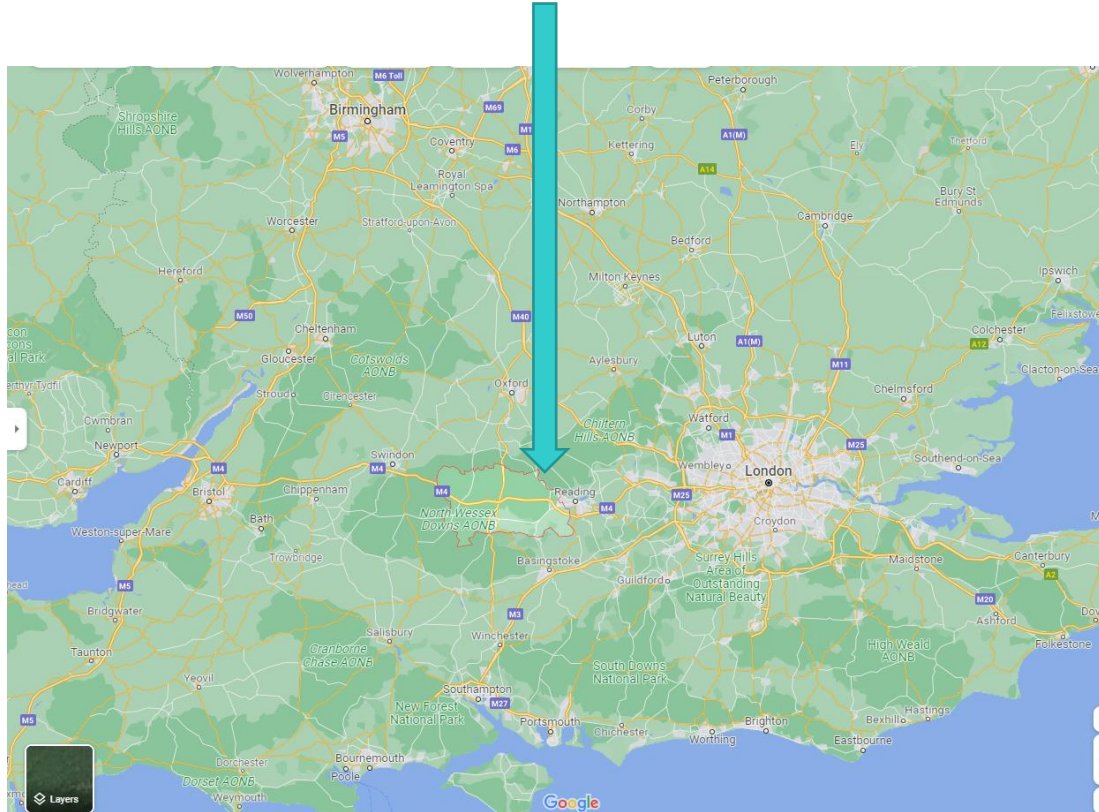


Using Innovative Methods to Raise Funds

The Financial Management in Local Government Conference 2022

Joseph Holmes - Executive Director (Resources)
West Berkshire Council

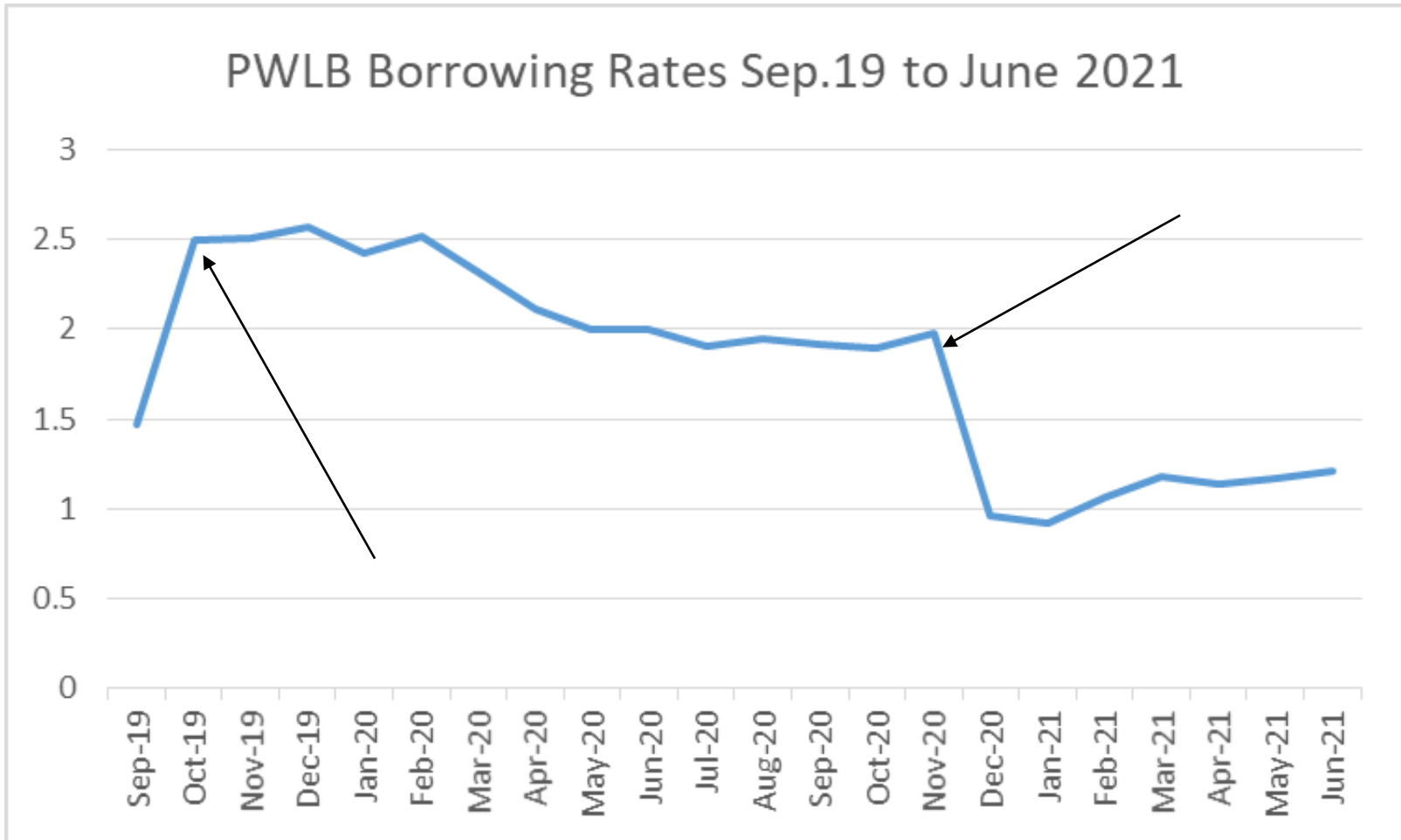
West Berkshire



Why we were interested

- ❑ Borrowing rates have increased – anything lower than PWLB rates net of fees reduces costs to all taxpayers
- ❑ Method of financing schemes that we control
- ❑ Want to invest in our Environment Strategy
- ❑ Greater engagement with our residents
- ❑ Independent research to be completed on what the impact has been

PWLB Rates – 2019/20



What is this scheme?

- ❑ We have an underlying need to borrow @15m p.a.
- ❑ Enables residents to invest in the Council and receive a return on their investment through a bond
- ❑ Minimum investment of £5
- ❑ WBC is working with an organisation called Abundance to administer the scheme
- ❑ Initial offering of a £1m bond
- ❑ Part of a pilot with external funding for local authorities

What happened?

- ❑ UK's first scheme like this
- ❑ Launched in mid July
- ❑ 3 months end date
- ❑ Aim for £1m
- ❑ Achieved this by early Oct
- ❑ Lot of engagement locally and nationally

Councils tap small investors to fund local green projects



The Phoenix Centre in Newbury is one of six sites where solar panels are being installed with the help of local investment
YOUTUBE

What have we done with the funds

- ❑ Since the launch, we have successfully begun implementing schemes from our [Environment Strategy](#)
- ❑ This includes £520k for six Solar PV roof-based projects
- ❑ The remaining £0.5m has been used for a variety of schemes including:
 - Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) Capital Improvements
 - Urban Tree Planting
 - New footpaths and rural access schemes
 - Active travel infrastructure improvements
 - Tree planting and habitat creation as part of flood alleviation projects
 - Energy efficiency upgrades for traffic signals and street lighting

Investors

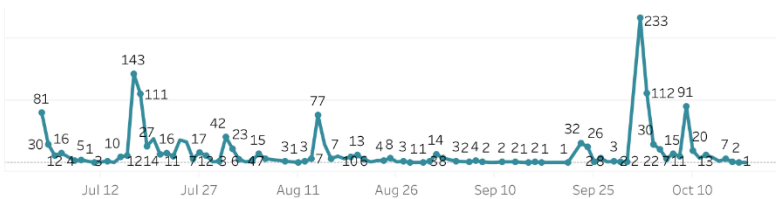
Number of investors Total investment Average investment

640 £1,000,000 £1,563

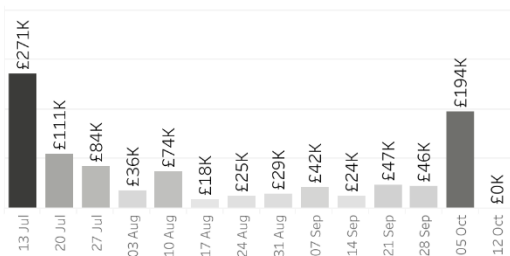
Local investors Local investment Average investment

65 £225,832 £3,474

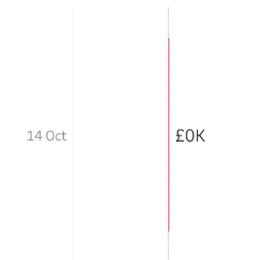
Visits from WestBerks.gov.uk



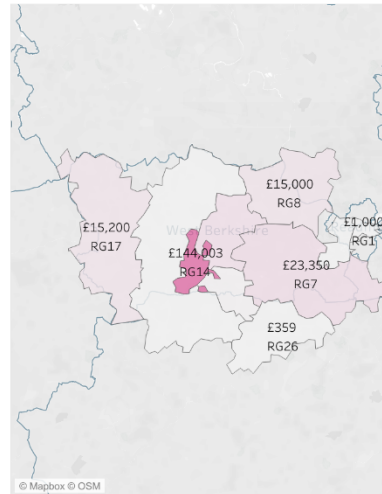
Investment by week



Investment by day



Where has the local investment come from?



Where has the national investment come from?



Investment amounts

	# of customers	Investment
Less than £100	163	£7,312
£100 - £499	199	£44,416
£500 - £999	93	£54,045
£1000 - £4999	192	£355,901
>£5000	55	£541,526
Grand Total	640	£1,000,000



Donation option – additional 2,300 wildflower seeds



Reflections

- ❑ Considering next steps and applicability for other areas of activity e.g. housing
- ❑ Appears to work well for shorter term borrowing – 5/10 years
- ❑ Does take longer time to get the funding vs PWLB
- ❑ We will still need PWLB / other forms of borrowing for longer periods
- ❑ Commercial outlook / due diligence
- ❑ Very useful different tool to have