



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS
FOR THE PERIOD**

25 May 2020 to 25 June 2020

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Susan Parsonage'.

Susan Parsonage
Chief Executive
Published on 26 June 2020



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Our Vision

A great place to live, learn, work and grow and a great place to do business

Enriching Lives

- Champion outstanding education and enable our children and young people to achieve their full potential, regardless of their background.
- Support our residents to lead happy, healthy lives and provide access to good leisure facilities to complement an active lifestyle.
- Engage and involve our communities through arts and culture and create a sense of identity which people feel part of.
- Support growth in our local economy and help to build business.

Safe, Strong, Communities

- Protect and safeguard our children, young and vulnerable people.
- Offer quality care and support, at the right time, to prevent the need for long term care.
- Nurture communities and help them to thrive.
- Ensure our borough and communities remain safe for all.

A Clean and Green Borough

- Do all we can to become carbon neutral and sustainable for the future.
- Protect our borough, keep it clean and enhance our green areas.
- Reduce our waste, improve biodiversity and increase recycling.
- Connect our parks and open spaces with green cycleways.

Right Homes, Right Places

- Offer quality, affordable, sustainable homes fit for the future.
- Build our fair share of housing with the right infrastructure to support and enable our borough to grow.
- Protect our unique places and preserve our natural environment.
- Help with your housing needs and support people to live independently in their own homes.

Keeping the Borough Moving

- Maintain and improve our roads, footpaths and cycleways.
- Tackle traffic congestion, minimise delays and disruptions.
- Enable safe and sustainable travel around the borough with good transport infrastructure.
- Promote healthy alternative travel options and support our partners to offer affordable, accessible public transport with good network links.

Changing the Way We Work for You

- Be relentlessly customer focussed.
- Work with our partners to provide efficient, effective, joined up services which are focussed around you.
- Communicate better with you, owning issues, updating on progress and responding appropriately as well as promoting what is happening in our Borough.
- Drive innovative digital ways of working that will connect our communities, businesses and customers to our services in a way that suits their needs.

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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF
THE EXECUTIVE
HELD ON 28 MAY 2020 FROM 7.00 PM TO 8.25 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: John Halsall (Chairman), John Kaiser, Parry Batth, UllaKarin Clark, Charlotte Haitham Taylor, Pauline Jorgensen, Charles Margetts, Stuart Munro, Gregor Murray and Wayne Smith

Other Councillors Present

Andy Croy
Lindsay Ferris
Guy Grandison
Pauline Helliard-Symons
Graham Howe
Sarah Kerr
Dianne King
Tahir Maher
Andrew Mickleburgh
Angus Ross
Imogen Shepherd-DuBey
Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey

118. ONE MINUTE SILENCE

The Leader of Council acknowledged that tonight was the last “clapping for the NHS” and advised that although he would not be stopping the meeting at 8.00pm this was not intended to be an act of disrespect as the Council very much valued the work of NHS staff.

Councillor Halsall then led the meeting in a minutes silence for those who had sadly died and suffered during the Covid-19 pandemic.

119. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence received.

120. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 22 April 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and would be signed by the Leader of Council at a later date.

121. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillors Stuart Munro and Gregor Murray declared prejudicial interests in Agenda Item 122, Small Business Discretionary Payment, by virtue of the fact that their businesses may be eligible for such a payment. Councillors Munro and Murray therefore left the meeting during consideration of the report and did not take part in any discussions or the vote.

122. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

In accordance with the agreed procedure the Chairman invited members of the public to submit questions to the appropriate Members.

122.1 Simon Cooper asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

Question

Following the fatal accident at my home in January and the one three years prior to that and the other five serious accidents outside my property in the last 7 years, please can the Council provide a thorough update as to the progress being made (please be very specific in your answer) and what timescales are being followed to resolve this matter, please also in your answer include the data gleaned from the speed surveys conducted in March (happy for the data to be anonymised to protect the innocent).

Answer

The Council notes your continued interest in the progress being made with regard to traffic safety in Mortimer Road, Grazeley and I can confirm that, despite the current public health demands we are coping with, the Council has met all of the commitments made to you in the previous Executive responses and this has been directly communicated to you in email communications by Officers.

In particular, traffic speed surveys have been concluded at four locations, as agreed with Thames Valley Police and as advised to you by Officers at a meeting on site. The data from these surveys have been analysed and results confirm that conditions remain much as they were prior to the fatal collision, with traffic speeds remaining broadly compliant with the speed limit. A copy of the survey data has also been provided to you in response to a Freedom of Information request that you made and the same data has also been passed to the Police, to assist in their undertaking of traffic management and fatal collision investigations which, as you are aware, have yet to be concluded.

The Council may not see the outcome of these investigations until reports are passed to the Coroner and it would be therefore inappropriate for it to take any specific action with regard to infrastructure improvement, until the outcome of any inquest is known along with any specific requirements for action that the Coroner might impose upon the Council in its role as the highways authority.

Notwithstanding this, you have been informed of the Council's investigation into the potential for average speed enforcement cameras, at appropriate locations along Mortimer Road, which has now concluded and I can advise you that we will be seeking both the support of the police and the local community through a formal public consultation process, once the outcome of the Coroner's inquest is known.

The Council's programmed resurfacing work for Mortimer Road is now rescheduled to be undertaken in June, following which road markings will be reinstated and this will reinforce the traffic safety measures already in place.

I would take this opportunity, once again, to acknowledge your continued anxiety and extend every sympathy in respect of the current circumstances. Members are just as keen to see the conclusion of this phase of the investigation as quickly as they are, in order that the next phase can move forward but, until that is possible, we must patiently await the police and Coroner's reports.

122.2 Mike Smith had asked the Leader of the Council a question but this was subsequently withdrawn following publication of the agenda.

122.3 Darryl Campbell asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Question

It was with great delight that I met the Government's recent announcement that English authorities will receive advanced funding for walking and cycling to the tune of £250m. How does Wokingham Borough Council plan to spend this money?

Answer

Yes we were pleased too. We are currently considering options for using the funding. We have been in regular contact with the DfT and they have told us we should know what our allocation is likely to be very shortly. We anticipate that it is going to be a lump sum based on fixed criteria rather than a bidding process but we do not know actually know how much money we have got yet. There is no time for a competitive process to take place.

Officers have been discussing a number of plans as well as considering ideas put forward from the public, businesses and elected Members and once we know the level of funding available we will be able to determine what we can achieve.

As you know we have got an excellent active modes of sustainable transport team called My Journey who were recently awarded Local Authority /SGO Host School Partner of the Year at the 2020 national Bikeability Awards, beating Manchester and Lincolnshire CC who were joint runners-up. We want to continue this excellent track record and continue to provide the skills needed as well as the facilities such as Greenways and the London Road Cycle route, currently under construction. I am sure we will be able to utilise this funding to make a difference in the short term but I also hope that there will be a legacy so what we would like to do is do something that improves cycling now and also improves it in the future. I would be interested in your ideas actually.

122.4 Sam Turvey had asked the Executive Member for Finance and Housing the following question but due to his inability to attend the meeting a written response was provided:

Question

Given the recent spate of burglaries across the Borough, and rising crime rates more generally over the last year, is the Executive satisfied that recent increases in council tax bills for policing and crime prevention has been money well spent?

Answer

Thank you for your question, firstly I would like to clarify that policing is not a direct responsibility of this Council and the costs associated with the police force does not sit within the Council Tax for Wokingham Borough Council, these costs fall within a precept we collect on behalf of Thames Valley Police. We do however work in partnership with the Police and other agencies to reduce crime where we can.

Fortunately, Wokingham remains a very safe place to live and work. However due to the affluent nature of the Borough it remains an attractive place for traveling criminals to target.

123. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

In accordance with the agreed procedure the Chairman invited Members to submit questions to the appropriate Members

123.1 Imogen Shepherd-DuBey asked the Executive Member for Finance and Housing the following question:

Question

We realise the Council Finances are being severely affected by the Coronavirus Crisis. Please can you detail what affect this will have on WBC's Capital Projects? Will any works be delayed or affected?

Answer

It is likely that there are going to be some delays in the capital projects within the programme, as the Covid-19 pandemic will undoubtedly affect the supply chain for the Council's various contractors. This is also the same for the builders and the providers for some of the S106 money. However early signs are that the economy is starting to move again and the construction industry is returning to work, in accordance with the guidance on social distancing, and following the key messages of 'stay alert, control the virus and save lives'.

The Council's senior leadership are currently reviewing the capital programme with a view to considering any impact of Covid-19 on resourcing and potential changes to the service requirements. Proposed changes to the Capital Programme will be reported back to Executive if there are any.

Supplementary Question

Obviously I mean we see John Halsall's statement on the front of the Wokingham paper this week and we obviously know that the Council's finances are going to be affected. I would like to know some idea of where you are going to recoup some of the money that we obviously need to scrape back from the Covid crisis?

Supplementary Answer

The simple answer to that Imogen is that we do not know the extent of the issue. Obviously we cannot if we do have a problem recovering CIL and S106 from developers, and there is no saying that we will, if we do it may be a deferral which will mean that we will have to fund that somewhat longer. Unfortunately, or fortunately depending on where you are standing, we decide to forward fund as much as we possibly can. So roads and that sort of thing we would like to try and get those in before the development. Of course that means that we have to borrow that money albeit at a decent rate until we get the payment from the developers.

Now if we find ourselves in the situation there may be some of the nice to do things that we have got in our Capital Programme, which enhances the ambiance and the culture of the Borough, which we may have to seriously think hard about. I would hope that we do not stop anything. We may just find ourselves in the situation where we have to delay some of the stuff in the programme.

123.2 Angus Ross asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

Question

Please can you let me know the status of the Local Plan?

Answer

As you know the Core Strategy Local Plan and the Managing Development Delivery (MDD) Local Plan, alongside the joint minerals and waste focused local plans, form the statutory development plan for the Borough. Planning law requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. We need an up to date and fully approved Local Plan to ensure that we have a defence against speculative development. At the moment our position is that we do not know what the Covid crisis will have done to our 5-year land supply.

Both the Core Strategy and the MDD are working to manage development in ways which meet the objectives of the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). They are therefore broadly up-to-date.

Work continues on preparing new local plans. When completed, the Local Plan Update will replace both the Core Strategy and the MDD, and the Joint Central and East Berkshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan will replace the current joint minerals and waste plans.

The NPPF confirms that emerging plans are a material consideration and that weight may be given to relevant policies according to:

- a) the stage of preparation of the emerging plan;
- b) the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies; and
- c) the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the NPPF.

As you know we prepared a Local Plan update consultation. Responses were received from residents and other interested parties. The update was contingent on certain paradigms: the existing economic environments; the development of Grazeley would be infrastructure led with £1¼bn HIF bid for infrastructure; and no adverse consequence from the review of the AWE emergency plan action zone. The emergency plan action zone has been extended well into our Borough and encompasses what was included in the Plan as the Grazeley settlement. Notwithstanding Homes for England working with us for some considerable time and the Government's declaration of a garden settlement at Grazeley the HIF bid failed.

More importantly however the Coronavirus emergency has completely changed the economic environment. Because of the replies received and the changes in the paradigms we shall need to review our Plan update and hope to be in the condition to publish a revised Plan as soon as possible.

Supplementary Question

Thank you for that detailed update of where we are Mr Chairman I think I was asking about really what the status of that Local Plan update is. I think you have mainly covered it but perhaps just to say what we should be seeing next.

Supplementary Answer

There is a lot of work going on at the Council as to what we should do given the response to the consultation and we shall publish something, a revised plan, as soon as possible. We need to do so because we have already had threatening noises from speculative developers and I understand that several applications are being considered. So we need to put our defences up and the only absolute defence against speculative development is an up to date and fully developed Local Plan.

123.3 UllaKarin Clark asked the Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Services the following question:

Question

Do you feel that the care homes in the Borough have done all they can to limit the spread of Coronavirus and is our statistical base now solid?

Answer

Our care homes have worked tirelessly through this extremely difficult time to help support their residents and I would like to voice my thanks to all of them.

Care homes in Wokingham are usually run by private or voluntary sector service providers. Private care homes are run for profit by private organisations and individuals. Voluntary sector homes are not-for-profit and are run by registered charities, sometimes religious organisations and housing associations.

There are 53 CQC registered care home settings within Wokingham; this is a broad definition and includes many different services i.e. older people care homes, residential and nursing, and learning disability.

Wokingham Borough Council has taken ground-breaking action to help protect its care homes during the Covid-19 crisis.

Last month the Borough Council took the unprecedented decision to go against national Government guidelines by refusing to take patients discharged from hospital into care homes unless it was certain they did not have coronavirus. At the same time, the Council with its partners in the health service, set up a 'task force' of specialists to work with care homes to make sure they were ready to cope with patients who had the virus and that their infection control procedures were of the highest standards. The 'task force' has now worked with 14 care homes in our Borough to make sure they can start to take hospital discharges again.

As with all care homes across the country, those in Wokingham have been coping with a very difficult situation. People have died of Covid-19 in our homes and our thoughts are with them, their loved ones and the staff who are the people who care for them.

In the first period of the pandemic we became very concerned that the situation in care homes was worsening so we lobbied our MPs and the Local Resilience Forum for increased testing of those discharged from hospital, for those in homes, the staff and for improved supplies of PPE. We increased our support to local care homes providing emergency supplies of PPE and forming a 'task force', which I mentioned before.

Despite this lobbying Government guidelines continued to allow the discharge of patients which is why we took the decision to stop discharges unless the patient has tested negative, is without symptoms or our 'task forc'e was certain the care home could cope with positive cases.

We now, as I said, have visited 14 care homes and they are at a place where we can take people safely into these homes. I would like to personally thank all the care home staff and management for the immense effort they have put in to keep people supported in the most difficult of situations.

We have also supported care homes in other ways:

- We have offered an improved funding deal for care homes who we contract to with the ability to get additional temporary funding;
- We have offered help with the supply of PPE. 231,000 pieces of PPE have been supplied to our care homes;
- We have offered regular advice and guidance. We have been ringing the management and staff regularly to provide support. Over 300 calls to registered care homes;
- We have tested staff with symptoms, more than 250 so far plus others who have self-referred themselves; and
- The offer of access to staff in an emergency and infection control hotline has been established.

123.4 Guy Grandison asked the Executive Member for Children's Services the following question:

Question

How have Children's Services managed to continue to deliver services in these challenging times especially in respect to our most vulnerable families?

Answer

In response to Covid-19, Children's Social Care has adapted and amended how we deliver our services to ensure that both children and workers are safe and the risks are mitigated. Our changes are based on the Government's advice and guidance such as: social distancing, good hygiene and not undertaking unnecessary journeys. The changes to our practice and service delivery could be summarised as:

- Risk assessments and mitigation of risks;
- Visiting the families we are most worried about and having the correct Protective Equipment when necessary, such as masks and gloves;
- Adapting our offer and supporting families differently depending on their needs; and
- Of course we now have digital technology which has supported us in our engagement with families; and
- Also of course remote working.

We are focused on keeping children safe and keeping our staff safe as well as our statutory duties. This is, as you can imagine, a delicate balancing process.

Most workers are now working from home and this has been possible because of the new IT equipment we have. We have also changed the way we do recording so that we accurately capture how our visits are taking place; if it was by phone, video call or face to face.

All Child Protection visits in the Borough are ongoing and are face to face using all safety precautions as required. Child Protection Conferences and Looked After Reviews are taking place remotely via conference calls.

All 'Looked After Children' cases have been reviewed and where possible visit time frames amended; in line with the statutory requirement of each case. The availability of new apps

and software has supported the use of video calling to communicate with children regularly. In addition to this the Bridges Resource Centre is continuing to offer a residential respite service, although it has been slightly reduced.

All court applications for Public Law (where we need to protect a child) and Youth Justice are being completed remotely via video link. The number of contacts made to our 'front door' i.e. duty, triage and assessment has reduced and we are using some of the capacity created to support pressures and gaps in other teams and assist with visits.

Finally we are meeting weekly with the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children's Partnership, which includes Health and the Police, to identify and address any issues or themes as they arise.

Supplementary question

It sounds like you are doing good work. In the question you mentioned technology but one part I did not catch you speaking about there in regard to schooling. So how has the virtual school been performing in this time period within the children in their cohort?

Supplementary Answer

Students are provided with work packages and on-line learning materials and in addition our Looked After Children, as you know we are all in locum parentis as a Councillor i.e. Corporate Parents and for them we have provided on line encyclopaedia, and they also have 1:1 tutoring.

123.5 Graham Howe asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

Question

Whist there is much to congratulate the Officers and participating Members for their dedication and action during the Covid emergency, it has invoked much change in priorities, operations and outcomes.

Can the Leader outline what the Council has done well, not done well, that is within and outside the Council's control and as part of the answer, could the Leader outline lessons that have been learnt for the future operations of the Council?

Answer

It is almost three months to the day that I was first notified of a Covid case in Wokingham Borough. It has been a long three months.

The Chief Executive, Directors and the Members of the Executive have been magnificent. All our Officers have been exemplary during this period and prepared to turn their hands to anything. The voluntary sector worked with our Officers to achieve the unachievable and I am hugely grateful to both. Residents have volunteered in huge numbers and largely espoused the conditions which have been forced upon them. There have been innumerable local volunteer groups supporting each other. Councillors from all parties have contributed massively to our efforts and suspended political activities although I know they are creeping back. A big thank you to you all.

The impact of Covid-19 on Council services has been very profound. It has affected all the aspects of the Borough Council and the Borough. We have focussed on the very immediate matters such as supporting care homes and working with our valuable partners on our community response. We have sought to deliver our universal services in the same

way as far as possible. We have redeployed staff extensively throughout the organisation to ensure we have staff in the right places and flexible arrangements to ensure we can easily change should that be required.

My Executive colleagues will all have covered in more detail our actions regarding care homes, our community response and Children's Services and my focus will be on our universal services and lessons learnt.

We have done all that we can to keep those services going that most affect, if not all of our residents eg. waste collection and recycling, and highways maintenance. We have not only achieved this in most services, we have also escalated improvement and repair work to the Borough's highways, taking advantage of the opportunity of far fewer cars on the network. This has included 'hard to do' works including Showcase Roundabout. Works have started on a programme of seventeen accelerated carriageway resurfacing schemes on 6th April 2020 and should be completed by mid-June. At the same time we quickly suspended civil parking enforcement.

We decided to continue to collect garden waste, and as a result, whilst the Re3 Partnership was forced to close the household waste recycling centres, which have now re-opened, we have not seen exceptional increases in fly-tipping that have been reported elsewhere in the country. Our Localities Enforcement Team have continued working and dealing with a full range of issues.

We have kept our country parks open, unlike our neighbours, allowing residents to enjoy open space and whilst we have had to close the car parks for the early weeks of the emergency, we have now reopened them and provided additional staff resources to ensure that social distancing is maintained.

Despite most of our staff working from home we have managed to maintain a full front-line service to residents contacting the Borough through our Customer Delivery service, with staff dealing with online and telephone requests. We are largely paperless and can access the information we need. We have only stopped those services such as weddings, citizenship ceremonies and birth registrations where the Government has requested us to do so.

We acted fast to provide safe emergency accommodation for homeless households, rough sleepers, children in care and repatriated residents as well as temporary accommodation for key workers. We have liaised with local bus operators to ensure that the much reduced levels of service still meet the essential needs of residents and key workers.

Whilst we have had to close our libraries in line with Government restrictions we have expanded and promoted our range of online services to include electronic books and magazines, added free music streaming and a whole series of online virtual events. A large proportion of the library staff were rapidly redeployed to provide additional assistance to the most vulnerable.

Using staff redeployed from services which have had to scale down this has meant that funding crucial for their survival has been allocated quickly and efficiently.

Lessons learnt for future operations. Fundamentally we have learnt that our resilience and business continuity plans are sound, and have worked well. The Council's investment in

digital technology to enable our staff to work from home has proved its worth beyond doubt.

We have also learnt that we are able to flex and adapt fast and that our vital relationships with key contractors, such as our waste and highways contractors, are strong and have enabled us to keep delivering when some other authorities have struggled or stopped.

Our experience of social distancing will be built into all future arrangements including reception points and libraries when they reopen.

We hope to continue to build on and expand our range of online and telephone assisted services and continue to offer organised telephone/video appointments going forward for the convenience of our residents and customers.

In the future we will develop our relationships with local businesses further particularly regarding promoting and accessing grants, and assisting with health checks, and look to see how we can build on any benefits/opportunities around climate emergency.

Similarly the fantastic work that we have built with the voluntary and community sector will be the foundation of our future relationship. At the same time because our contact with vulnerable people in the Borough has been extensive, using many extra staff, we now know much about the community which can be fed into our future thinking about service provision.

As we are still very much in the midst of our response, we are not in a position to have identified all the lessons; we will do this in the coming weeks and months.

Supplementary Question

Thanks for that answer which covers a great breadth of work done by the Council and it is, as you say, early days and very much a work in progress to make change. As unlocking and understanding the new norm evolves it would be easy to slip back into the old ways and lose momentum in making improvements for all Wokingham Borough's residents. What do you think we should be putting in place to avoid any such slippage?

Supplementary Answer

This Administration has been in post for just 12 months and a key ambition was to build morale within the Council staff and create a can-do attitude where staff are encouraged to make decisions and take risks, learn from mistakes and be open about them. Our response to Coronavirus has been just that. Officers at all levels took decisions quickly and courageously. They did and are continuing to do a magnificent job.

Another key ambition was to focus on serving our residents and I am sure that everybody will agree that the Borough was an exemplary. We will not go back to our old ways we will build a Council where Officers are proud to serve our residents who in turn are proud of their Borough Council.

I am pleased to announce that we have created a new post, with a Director Keeley Clements, to focus on our resident services and localities and Keeley started this week.

Another key ambition was to create a new environment to work with our voluntary sector partners and so during the next few months we will be working hard as our current level of support diminishes to ensure that the co-operation achieved continues.

But it does not end there we have been working well with our excellent GPs, throughout the Borough, and NHS partners with whom we wish to extend this relationship.

Lastly, but not least, we need to build on the excellent relationships we have enjoyed with the Police and other blue light services.

123.6 Dianne King asked the Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Services the following question:

Question

Please could you give us an update on Wokingham's community response to Covid-19?

Answer

I can confidently say that I have been amazed and humbled by the speed and quality of the response the Council and its community partners have delivered at this difficult time. It is a real credit to Wokingham that we have been able to support our vulnerable so well and I would like to thank every single person who has been involved.

The Wokingham Borough Community Response (WBCR) provides a single point of contact for residents to access support during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Citizens Advice Wokingham provides a 'One Front Door' service for residents. Wokingham Borough Council staff and Citizens Advice staff and volunteers, take phone calls and respond to emails requesting support. They work together to assess residents' needs, provide advice and get people support from the right scheme and directing them to services such as:

- the Link Visiting Scheme's Talking Buddies programme for people feeling isolated and lonely;
- the Wokingham Foodbank for those struggling to access food;
- Wokingham Volunteer Centre have supported collecting and delivering pharmacy prescriptions as well as helping to track down other volunteers; and
- First Days Children's Charity has supported the Food Hub to deliver food parcels across the Borough.

Wokingham Volunteer Centre and The Link have supported the recruitment of 600 additional volunteers. AgeUK has expanded their Home from Hospital Service to provide additional support.

Now to give you the latest up to date figures, because obviously the figures which are in the press pack are going to be two weeks out of date. So far we have helped:

- 1,922 households;
- Delivered nearly 3,700 food parcels to 872 households;
- 677 people aged 70 or plus have received food parcels;
- 438 households have received regular deliveries;
- Dealt with 744 prescription referrals;
- Called almost 7,500 people basically on a regular basis to check that they are ok.
- Those people who needed welfare support and 45 people supported at home on the Home to Hospital Scheme.

You find out what a community is all about basically when it is an issue like this and I know from comments I have had from other people, outside of this Borough, what we have here is something we should all be very proud of.

Supplementary Question

I would like to echo your thanks to all those amazing organisations and individuals that have gone out of their way to help in this very difficult situation. Whilst the situation continues are there plans going forward on how we can deal with this?

Supplementary Answer

We have been working on a plan for probably the last month now in conjunction with our voluntary sector partners to extend this support towards the end of the year because the reality is that some people are going to need it. Trying to encourage people where possible to seek other routes but providing support for those who cannot find it anywhere else. We have done the hard part and we are not going to let these people down now.

Aside from that just before Covid, in the pre-Covid days, we had spent a lot of time trying to work with the voluntary sector to work towards a plan where we could work together more effectively going forward. Now this scheme has shown how well we can work together when we have a common purpose at heart. So discussions are going on longer term about how to button the voluntary sector in wherever possible to our Voluntary Care Strategy and to try and continue this level of co-operation going forwards.

123.7 Abdul Loyes had asked the Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Services the following question but due to his inability to attend the meeting a written response was provided:

Question

It would appear on the face of it, the incidents of deaths in care homes from Covid-19 is higher in Wokingham than our neighbouring authorities. Can you please confirm if this is the case and if so, why?

Answer

Any local death is an extremely important issue for Wokingham Borough Council.

Our Council staff have been working hard to support local care homes during the pandemic since March and I have outlined all this support in the previous/prior answer I have given.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) publishes data on Covid-19 related deaths within all care homes across the country.

This ONS data shows that between the 1st January and 1st May 2020, 52 (Covid-19 related) deaths occurred within Wokingham care homes. This appears the second highest number of Covid-19 deaths reported among boroughs in Berkshire

However, the public are advised to take extra caution when comparing Covid-19 deaths between neighbouring authorities. This is because different Boroughs have different population sizes, with different age structures and some with more elderly residents than others.

Therefore, in order to make fairer comparisons, it is crucial that we standardise the ONS data for the number of residents, their ages, their vulnerabilities, and the number of care homes across each borough. We are publishing this data now on our website.

Here are three separate publications; each of which use a standardised approach to comparing deaths between Wokingham and neighbouring boroughs:

- Excess Mortality for all causes of deaths in Wokingham residents (ONS data) 1st January to 1st May:
 - The ONS publish weekly updates on all deaths caused by Covid-19/and or other causes ('all cause' mortality);
 - The UK's Chief Medical Officer has recommended this particular publication as the best approach for comparing the impact of Covid-19 between boroughs;
 - The data shows that excess Wokingham deaths are occurring at a similar rate to neighbouring boroughs in Berkshire.
- Age standardised mortality rates: 1st March to 17th April:
 - In addition, the ONS have published comparable Covid-19 death rates which take into account different age structures between boroughs;
 - All things being equal, Wokingham reported a lower Covid-19 death rate (32 deaths per 100,000 residents) compared to most neighbouring boroughs. Wokingham also reported a lower Covid-19 death rate than the national average (37 deaths per 100,000).
- Comparing deaths by total number of care homes:
 - Another way to make fairer comparisons is to consider the differing sizes of each care home population; because some boroughs have more care home residents than others;
 - Wokingham has a high number of care homes in Berkshire:
 - There are 53 care homes in Wokingham registered with the CQC;
 - By comparison, there are 14 care homes in Bracknell.
 - If we compare rates of care home deaths as a proportion of the total care homes within each borough, Wokingham reports the third-lowest Covid-19 death rate between boroughs in Berkshire. This ranges between 29 and 142 deaths per 100 care homes with Wokingham at 98.

As with care homes across the country, those in Wokingham Borough have been coping with a very difficult situation during this crisis. People have died of Covid-19 in our homes and our thoughts are with them, their loved ones and the staff who are care for them. We have and continue to lobby for solutions and offer all the support we can to our care homes.

123.8 Rachel Shepherd-DuBey asked the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure the following question:

Question

How will you maintain social distancing with probable increased patronage if we reopen car parks at country parks?

Answer

As you know the car parks have been open now for a good number of days and you have asked specifically about the social distancing measures.

The Council actually took a full risk assessment in advance of reopening the car parks at the country parks and these have focussed mainly on the social distancing to protect the safety of our residents and our staff. Measures to secure this include: only a partial opening of all car parks at our main sites to keep visitor numbers to a manageable level; a combination of social distancing marshals patrolling these parks; give way signage at pinch points; keep left posters on bridges; and one way routes on narrow paths and boardwalks. Where social distancing cannot be maintained facilities such as the park toilets will remain closed.

We feel confident that these measures will be sufficient to maintain social distancing but we have to rely on our residents to ensure that they adhere to the guidelines when they visit the country parks to enable the car parks to remain open. I must say and admit that our residents behave very responsibly to all this response and this will be kept under constant review to ensure that safety of staff and residents is maintained at all times and contingencies are in place to work with the Police, Highways and our parking partner NSL as and when required.

Can I take this opportunity to thank all our Officers and our staff for ensuring the safety of our residents.

Supplementary Question

If you have not been to Dinton lately you will realise that people are not doing social distancing properly. They do not seem to be doing that and I have not seen anybody actually telling people to split up. There are lots of people having picnics together and unless they have some very interesting family groups they seem to be teenagers walking together, hand in hand, things like this. I do not they are actually married to each other or living with each other. If they are it is a little bit of a strange situation.

So what are we actually doing about this?

Supplementary Answer

I visited the park myself and I also keep in constant touch with the staff and the management there. They have reported no misbehaving of our residents and I am confident and really pleased that everybody is behaving themselves. Like you say if you see couples holding hands we do not know if they are married or not or whether they are living together.

Additional Question

At 16 I doubt they are married besides which I walk in Dinton Pastures every day with my dog and I have seen a lot of people not doing that so it would be nice to have more people actually telling people. Saying can you separate a little bit please like that.

Additional Answer

Our staff have been very, very, good at that and if they see anything that is untoward they will take action and we have additional marshals on site on busy days and social distancing is being practised and respected as far as I am concerned. I do take note of what you say Rachelle and will raise it with the management at Dinton Pastures to make sure that we do respect all this.

123.9 Andrew Mickleburgh asked the Executive Member for Children's Services the following question:

Question

I have heard some very positive feedback from parents about the help provided by schools in our Borough to support continued studies during the lockdown. However during lockdown, inevitably for multiple reasons, potentially quite large numbers of pupils will have fallen behind their peers in terms of learning. In some cases this gap is likely to be significant, with the potential for a long-term negative impact in term of learning and self-confidence. Is WBC planning to offer any targeted support to schools that could help pupils who have fallen behind their peers during lockdown to quickly catch up again?

Answer

It is important to remember that the schools have been open for key workers' children and for vulnerable children. For those children studying at home our Officers have worked very closely with the schools sharing on-line resources for home learning.

Our Officers are currently working with schools through a range of meetings and round table discussions on how we best can help to school them and initial advice, as you know, is that the schools should open slowly and in a controlled way starting with reception, Year 1 and Year 6. This depends on the five tests being met to reduce the national alert level to 3, to provide a greater focus on pastoral support that enables pupils to re-engage with the process of class based learning. This means that the teachers will have time to assess the level of the impact that home learning will have had on each individual pupil, which by its very nature will be different depending on the child's circumstances and they will then have to adapt the learning curriculum so that the children can get back to the way they were before the lock-down happened.

Where there is a need for specific targeted responses to particular schools or individual students, Children's Services will be working again with the schools, and other services, to help the Heads and teachers to identify the best way to meet the individual child's needs.

Supplementary Comment

I do not have a question but I would like to say that I, and many parents and pupils, are very grateful for this much needed support so thank you very much.

123.10 Sarah Kerr asked the Executive Member for Children's Services the following question:

Question

Like many parents right now, I am feeling quite nervous about the prospect of sending my young children back to school. Socially distancing children is not easy, and many of us know from experience how easy it is for various illnesses to get transmitted. Many parents will not feel confident yet that the school environment is safe for them, their family and school staff. How is WBC planning to approach this issue?

Answer

Firstly I would like to say that every school will do a risk assessment and they will decide whether they are ready to open or not. As you are aware no school is being forced to open; it is up to the individual school to decide if they are going to open and for them to arrange the schooling for the individual students. Children's Services are in daily contact with the headteachers and are working with them on developing a response to ensure that the emerging guidance is implemented in advance of opening the school.

The latest scientific advice from Government is that children of all ages have less severe symptoms than adults if they should contract the virus and there is a great deal of confidence that younger children are less likely to become unwell if infected with the virus. However it is up to the parents if they want to send their children back to school or not and I think that is the correct way of doing it. If a parent is worried and does not feel confident then they can keep their children at home.

We will be working with schools to manage limited attendance and will be creating small teaching groups of no more than 15 students so that they can maintain strict social distancing. That means that we will have, for example, staggered drop off and pick ups, lunch and break times will be different so that children in different teaching groups will not mix.

We will also be supporting schools to implement additional protective measures. We will be helping them with cleaning materials and equipment necessary.
(At this point in the meeting the connection with Councillor Clark was lost)

Supplementary question

I did not hear all of the answer. I heard a lot about whether it is safe or not for children to go back. My concern is not just about the virus but about the mental health of our children. What I specifically did not catch anything of was how families who choose not to send their children back to school - what support is going to be there? I appreciate that a lot of that comes from the schools but I am assuming that the Council is going to be supporting schools to not only look after and teach the children that are going back into school but providing support to those families that have chosen to stay at home as well. I couldn't hear any of that I am afraid.

Supplementary Answer provided by the Leader of Council

Wokingham Borough Council's policy on schools is that we have very competent teachers. We have very competent governors and our role is to support them in doing their job. We are not going to encourage or penalise parents for putting their children in school and we will support them as well. So in the context of what we can do we will support the schools in the children being at school, or the children not being at school, and we have a massive job which is identifying the children who may or may not be falling behind to bring them up to scratch.

Supplementary Answer provided at the end of the meeting by Councillor Clark

We will continue to work with the headteachers to ensure that those children are being given a good education although they are staying at home. So they are not going to be forgotten about and as I said before it is a parental choice whether they are going to send the children to school or not and there will be no penalty if they decide to keep them at home. So I think we have to be sure that there is a good risk assessment at the school but if parents still do not want to send their children it is their decision. It is also the school's

decision whether they are going to open or not so whether parents decide not to go, or if schools decide not to open, the Council will still be working with the school to ensure that the children are receiving a good education.

123.11 Tahir Maher asked the Executive Member for Finance and Housing the following question:

Question

Unfortunately, the proposed Revenue outturn for 2019/20 will be affected due to the current pandemic. The Council has had time to assess the impact from Covid-19 on the revenue outturn for 2019/20, consequently, what is the forecast and possible variance from the original outturn for 2019/20?

Answer

The 2019/20 outturn report has presented already in the accounts the impact on the Council's accounts of the Covid-19 pandemic for that financial year. The direct costs in 19/20 were £104k, but these were offset by the first tranche of Government funding from the Government which was received before the year end. Indirect costs were also absorbed by the services as these were minimal because we were very early into it. Mainly in the last week of March and these figures are also in the outturn figures already; which I will be reporting on tonight.

The main impact on the Council will be in the current financial year, which is 2020/21. The grant funding, less that used in 19/20, has been carried forward into the current year; even with this and the second allocation from central Government, the Council will still face pressure on its 20/21 budgets as a result of the response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Although our financial management arrangements remain sound we have unprecedented challenges as a result of this crisis and therefore we must continue to ensure our resources are targeted at those most in need in the community.

Supplementary Question

I think it has been partly answered but I will just highlight it again. It is just really looking at the forecast for 20/21 and the likely variance again budget. Is there anything to be really cautious about there that you may have foreseen now although I know it is a bit early?

Supplementary Answer

We feel we are on top of the numbers Tahir and they are not very appetising when you see how much money we are spending to support residents, to support care homes, but what we are doing we work on a regular basis with the Leaders of the other parties, your Leader as well, and we report on the financials on a weekly basis. Once we get to the first outturn of this year we will hopefully be in the position that we will be able to give a clearer picture as to what it is going to look like going forward.

123.12 Pauline Helliard-Symons asked the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure the following question:

Question

Can you tell me how Wokingham Borough Council has managed to maintain 100% waste collection when so many others did not?

Answer

This has been a real testament to the strength of our partnership working. The Wokingham Borough Council waste collection service is delivered by, as you know, Veolia who have worked with the Council throughout the crisis in an adaptable, flexible and pragmatic way to ensure that the best possible service is delivered to our residents, whilst following Government guidelines to ensure the safety of the workforce and the public.

A range of alternative operational practices have been implemented by Veolia to reduce staff contact and secure social distancing at the same time. Personal Protective Equipment and testing have been made available to Veolia's staff. Where staff have self-isolated, additional agency staff have been employed to maintain that 100% collections within the Borough that you mentioned.

I would like to thank Veolia for their magnificent efforts which epitomises our partnership working with them since 2012. I would also like to thank our Customer Delivery Team and the Community Transport Unit who worked together to continue the deliveries of blue bags and garden waste sacks to residents following the closure of the Council's libraries and community hubs.

We will continue to do our utmost to support our service and we are aware of how much residents appreciate the service being provided during these very difficult times. We have had quite a lot of positive feedback from many residents appreciating our continued service to maintain the 100% waste collection and long may that continue.

Supplementary Question

Please will you ensure the front line workers know how much we Councillors and residents appreciate what they are doing?

Supplementary Answer

I will do Pauline and I share your support there and we will all do our best to pass our thanks and our support to our contractors and their staff.

124. OFFICER RESPONSE TO ADOPTION OF ESTATE INFRASTRUCTURE REVIEW

The Executive considered a report setting out the Officer response to the Adoption of Estate Infrastructure Review which was undertaken by an Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group.

Councillor Andy Croy, the Chairman of the Task and Finish Group, introduced the report and advised that the review was carried out because residents had informed the Council that the adoption of new estate infrastructure i.e. highways, open spaces etc had often not proceeded as they had hoped and this had often lead to a lot of distress. The purpose of the Task and Finish Group was therefore to look at the issues surrounding adoption and to see if recommendations could be made to the Executive which would allow for a smoother and more transparent adoption process. The aim was for the Borough, and particularly affected residents, to be provided with better quality infrastructure more quickly.

The Leader of Council went through the recommendations from the Task and Finish Group and the Officers' responses related to each was noted.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, Councillor Helliars-Symons, stated that she had found the report to be extremely balanced and welcomed the

Officer input. She also voiced her support for all the recommendations within the report and hoped that the Executive would accept them.

RESOLVED: That the Officers' responses to the Task and Finish Group's review contained within the report be approved.

125. REVENUE MONITORING 2019/20 - OUTTURN

The Executive considered a report setting out the Revenue budget outturn for the 2019/20 financial year.

During his introduction the Executive Member for Finance and Housing advised the meeting that although the budget showed a variance of just under £500k this represented a significant improvement on the position forecast at the mid-year point which was closer to £1m. Councillor Kaiser highlighted that this movement had been as a result of the continued work that had been undertaken by the Improvement Boards in both Adult's and Children's Services and had been achieved even though an overspend was showing in Children's Services of £2m. Councillor Kaiser praised the Officers for all their hard work.

Councillor Kaiser also drew the Executive's attention to the recommendations within the report and the fact that from a budget of £124.3m, £124.7m had been spent, which was less than a third of a percent increase, which he felt was very impressive.

Councillor Kaiser also highlighted that the general fund balance at year end was £9.1m which had improved by £0.3m from last year. This represented a prudent level which was above the CIPFA recommendation for the minimum reserves.

Members were advised that with regard to the 2020/2021 Revenue budget it was currently difficult to plan due to the considerable impact of Covid-19 and further information would be provided at a future meeting.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the outturn position of the revenue budget and the level of balances in respect of the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account, Schools Block and the Authority's investment portfolio be noted;
- 2) the General Fund carry forward requests of £2,734,399, as set out in Appendix B to the report, be agreed;
- 3) the significant reduction in the overspend on the general fund revenue account achieved since the last report be noted; substantially this is a result of the continuous improvement work in the Adults Social Care and Customer and Localities directorates.

126. CAPITAL OUTTURN 2019/2020

The Executive considered a report setting out the outturn for the 2019/20 Capital budget.

The Executive Member for Finance and Housing informed Members that 74% of the Capital budget had been spent during the 2019/20 financial year which was a slight increase on last year's position. It was acknowledged that for a number of reasons, eg delays and reliance on third parties etc, it was difficult to spend 100% of the budget and deliver the Capital programme on time.

Councillor Kaiser reported that during 2019/20 the Council had delivered more capital investment than in any other year and had spent £171.3m; which was an increase of £39m on that spent during the previous financial year. This represented an increase of 30% year on year. Forecasts for the 2020/21 financial year had predicted a significant increase on that figure but that would, of course, be dependent on the emerging impact of Covid-19.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the Quarter 4 adjustments to the capital programme be noted being the release of budgets in 2020/21, into the 2019/20 capital programme, to cover projects expenditure acceleration ahead of the original profile for:-

£198k Winnersh Triangle Parkway
£180k Dinton Activity Centre
- 2) it be noted that the funding of the Foundry (Pupil Referral Unit) will be utilising S106 and CIL contributions up to the value of £892k originally allocated to general Special Education Needs (SEN) projects;
- 3) the 2019/2020 Capital Outturn, as set out in Appendix A to the report, be noted;
- 4) the re-profiling of budgets into future financial years, as set out in Appendix B to the report, be approved.

127. TRANSFER OF LAND TO THE COUNCIL FOR COPPID BEECH PARK AND RIDE

The Executive considered a report in relation to the transfer of land to the Council to facilitate the Coppid Beech Park and Ride.

The Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement advised the meeting that the report only related to the transfer of land for the Coppid Beech Park and Ride as the decision as to whether or not to have a park and ride had previously been agreed by the Executive. It was noted that part of the S106 agreement with the landowner related to the transfer of land to the Council to create the Park and Ride.

RESOLVED: That it be agreed to procure provision of the Coppid Beech Park and Ride site. This will enable the transfer of land from the land owner in accordance with the Outline Application s106 agreement in relation to development at land at Keephatch Beech, Wokingham.

128. SMALL BUSINESS DISCRETIONARY PAYMENT

(Councillors Munro and Murray declared prejudicial interests in this item)

The Executive considered a report setting out a proposed Policy for the provision of Small Business Discretionary Payments.

The Executive Member for Finance and Housing advised the meeting that in response to the Covid-19 pandemic the Government had announced the provision of additional business rate support to some small businesses. This related mainly to those businesses with fixed property related costs which had not been eligible for other grant schemes that

were in place. The Government had recognised that economic need varied across the country so although they had set some national criteria for the fund they were allowing local authorities to determine which cases to provide support to within those criteria. The Government had also made it clear that local authorities needed to distribute the funding at the earliest opportunity which was why this item was deemed as urgent and was therefore being considered at this meeting.

The original guidance issued by the Government had since been superseded by a more detailed second version which was received after the agenda was published. It was also likely that further changes to the guidance would be received. Because of this Councillor Kaiser informed the meeting that he was proposing two amendments to the Policy and an additional recommendation as set out below:

- As stated in the policy discretionary grants were not subject to any formal statutory appeals process and there were no rights of appeal. However at the bottom of page 6 of the Policy an appeal process was actually mentioned. It was therefore proposed to amend this paragraph to state that there was no appeals process;
- As the Government guidance had been updated on a number of occasions, and it was likely to be further amended in the future, it was also put forward that an additional recommendation delegating authority to the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance and Housing, to make minor amendments to the Policy as a result of any further Government guidance;
- The latest version of the guidance was received over the weekend and this stated that people who had claimed as part of the self-employed income support scheme could now also apply for a discretionary grant and therefore there was also a need to reflect this change in the Policy.

Councillor Kaiser highlighted that the Council's discretion mainly related to the amount it wished to award to businesses. As the Council had only been awarded £1.1m to cover these payments, and as a way of making the money go further, it had been decided to award a number of smaller grants i.e. £3k and £5k which would benefit smaller businesses eg dog groomers, people who work from home as well as grants of £10k and £25k.

Councillor Haitham Taylor commended the Council for getting the money out so promptly to businesses already as it was a real lifeline for many. She wanted to ensure that as much as possible would be done to publicise the fact that small businesses could apply for these grants.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) Wokingham Borough Council's Discretionary Grants Policy, relating to the Covid 19 pandemic as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, and as amended at the meeting be approved;
- 2) the Deputy Chief Executive be delegated authority, in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance and Housing, to make minor amendments to the Policy as the result of any further Government guidance.

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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
AUDIT COMMITTEE
HELD ON 3 JUNE 2020 FROM 7.00 PM TO 8.50 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Rachel Burgess, Angus Ross, Daniel Sargeant, Imogen Shepherd-DuBey and Bill Soane

Also Present

Madeleine Shopland, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist
Helen Thompson, Ernst and Young
Michael Bateman, Business Analyst
Graham Ebers, Deputy Chief Executive
Susan Parsonage, Chief Executive
Bob Watson, Head of Finance
Andrew Moulton, Assistant Director Governance
Liz McAuley, Service Manager Quality Assurance and Safeguarding Team
Daneet Penny, Customer Delivery Officer (L3)
Justine Thorpe, Ernst and Young
Jackie Whitney, Lead Manager, Customer Delivery

67. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors Maria Gee and Dianne King.

68. ELECTION OF A CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Councillor Bill Soane be elected Chairman for the meeting.

69. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 5 February 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

70. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Daniel Sargeant declared a Personal Interest in Item 73 Wokingham Borough Council – Audit Planning Report year ended 31 March 2019, on the grounds that he was a Non Executive Director of Wokingham Housing Limited and Berry Brook Homes.

71. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no Public questions.

72. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

73. COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS

The Committee received a report on complaints and compliments.

During the discussion of this item, the following points were made:

- Members were advised that there had been a slight increase in the number of complaints received at Stage 1 and Stage 2, and also the number of complaints investigated by the Ombudsman. The majority of cases referred to the Ombudsman had not been upheld.

- Planning and housing services continued to receive the highest number of complaints. Complaints predominantly related to high volume concerns such as repairs to tenanted properties and decisions made in relation to planning applications.
- Some of the key learning during the year that had been implemented specifically in School Admissions, Home to School Transport and Building Control, were highlighted.
- Members noted the summary of some of the compliments received.
- The Service Manager Quality Assurance and Safeguarding Team updated the Committee on the statutory complaints process for children's services. During 2019-20, there had been a decrease in both the contacts made (63 to 55) and the number of complaints progressed to Stage 1 (48 to 35). The number of complaints that had progressed to Stage 2 had also reduced from 4 to 2. No complaints had progressed beyond Stage 2.
- Members were advised that 91% of Stage 1 responses had been completed within the 20 day timescale.
- The number of complaints received that were considered out of scope had increased significantly from 6 to 18. It was believed that a number of these related to complaints made about cases that were in court proceedings.
- The number of compliments for Children's Services had increased.
- The Service Manager Quality Assurance and Safeguarding Team commented that increased training for social work managers had helped to resolve some matters at an earlier stage. Timeliness of responses and mediation had also helped to reduce an escalation in the complaints process.
- The Lead Manager, Customer Delivery indicated that the complaints management system had been updated and the reporting function, enhanced.
- Councillor Burgess questioned who designated a complaint out of scope. She was informed that the Complaints Manager would follow the appropriate guidance.
- Councillor Burgess noted that a number of the Children's Services complaints investigated by the Ombudsman had been upheld. She questioned how the Council would learn from this. The Customer Delivery Officer explained that the Ombudsman would issue a report with recommendations and that the services would have approximately 2 weeks to respond. If no comments were given, a deadline for specific actions to be implemented would be provided. Evidence of the action taken would need to be provided.
- Councillor Ross noted that the new way of reporting had begun in April. He asked whether the lockdown had had any effect on this and was informed, that it had not.
- Councillor Sargeant praised the presentation of the report which he felt had improved. He questioned some of the percentages relating to age demographic contained within the benchmarking report.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

74. WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2019

The Committee received the Wokingham Borough Council Annual Audit Letter year ended 31 March 2019.

During the discussion of this item, the following points were made:

- The Audit Results Report had been issued on 13 March 2020.

- Helen Thompson, Ernst & Young, referred to the impact of the delay in the certification of the Pension Fund.
- With regards to the audit fee for 2018/19, Helen Thompson indicated that the final fee was approximately £16,000 more due to extra work involved in gaining assurance over the value for money significant risk.
- Councillor Burgess sought an update on the comments made around capacity within the Finance team and the presentation of the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) being difficult to follow. The Head of Finance commented that with regards to capacity, huge steps had been made in numbers and the way the team worked. The Deputy Chief Executive stated that previous auditors had complimented the presentation of the Council's MTFP.

RESOLVED: That the Wokingham Borough Council Annual Audit letter year ended 31 March 2019 be noted.

75. WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL - AUDIT PLANNING REPORT YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

The Committee received the Wokingham Borough Council – Audit Planning report year ended 31 March 2020.

During the discussion of this item, the following points were made:

- The Committee was informed that it was unlikely that COVID 19 would have a significant impact on the 2019-20 statement but it would have a significant impact on the following year's statement.
- Justine Thorpe, Ernst & Young, highlighted the three areas where increased risk or focus had been identified; valuation of land and buildings; pension liability valuation; and going concern.
- Members sought assurance that the issues faced around the pension fund audit previously, would not happen again. The Committee was informed that discussions on risks and timetables had been had with the pension fund auditor. Councillor Ross questioned whether the Member representative on the Berkshire Pension Fund was kept informed of developments. The Deputy Chief Executive indicated that discussions were primarily at officer level but that he would take this forward for high-level assurance.
- The materiality had been set on the same basis as previously.
- Members were informed that the timescales for the audit would be different because of COVID 19. The draft account deadline had moved from the end of May to the end of August.
- Justine Thorpe indicated that there were two significant value for money risks identified; commercialisation and the purchase of investment properties; and effectiveness of the Council's Governance and Risk Management Framework.
- It was noted that the Council's Risk Management Strategy had not been significantly updated for some time.
- Councillor Shepherd-DuBey questioned what more could be done to evaluate the risks around investments. Justine Thorpe indicated that testing the valuation of investments would be part of the value for money work. The Deputy Chief Executive commented that this was something which scrutiny had also looked at previously.
- Helen Thompson provided further information around the audit fees.
- In response to a Member question on the impact of COVID 19 on the ability to undertake the external audit work, Helen Thompson stated that it took longer to

undertake an audit remotely as it was more difficult to gather information. In addition, it was more difficult to verify plant, property and equipment, remotely.

RESOLVED: That the Wokingham Borough Council –Audit Planning Report year ended 31 March 2020, be noted.

76. UPDATE ON CHANGES TO ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The Head of Finance presented a report on changes to the accounting policies.

During the discussion of this item, the following points were made:

- For 2019/20, there had been no significant changes to any policies except for general clarification around terminology, grammar and duplications.
- It was noted that the implementation of changes on the accounting standard IFRS 16 – Leases had been delayed.
- Members were informed that various deadlines had been amended because of the COVID 19 crisis.

RESOLVED: That the revised Statement of Accounting Policies as per Appendix A of the report be approved for inclusion in the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2020.

77. CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

The Committee received the Corporate Risk Register.

During the discussion of this item, the following points were made:

- The Chief Executive informed Members that COVID 19 had had a massive impact and had materially changed the risk environment. Broad comments had been made on each risk in light of the COVID 19 crisis and the Committee would receive a fuller update at its next meeting in July.
- The Deputy Chief Executive stated that there would be a fundamental rewrite of the Corporate Risk Register. The Council's emergency planning arrangements around risk and recovery would be looking at risk and recovery.
- Councillor Burgess commented that the risk of a pandemic had been included on the Government risk register and questioned why it had not been included on the Council's Corporate Risk Register previously. She went on to ask how the Council was addressing the risk of a second wave of infection. The Chief Executive commented that the Council was currently responding to the crisis and that a daily emergency response meeting was held to discuss risks. Within the next month, a local control outbreak plan would be in place. Other issues such as the strength of supply for PPE, were under consideration. It was noted that the Government was introducing a clipper system to ensure more certain supplies of PPE.
- The Deputy Chief Executive questioned whether a pandemic should previously have been included on the Council's Corporate Risk Register and emphasised that risk management used a matrix of likelihood and risk. The Chief Executive added that the Council was resilient and in a position to be able to respond should a second wave of infection occur.
- Councillor Burgess asked about financial scenario planning over the next 3 years and the potential scale of the financial risk because of COVID 19. The Deputy Chief Executive responded that there were a large amount of unknowns such as the local government finance settlement. Similarly, the easing of lockdown might

- release some leisure income. It was important that the Council was fully aware of what options it had available to it.
- Councillor Burgess asked whether the Council had prepared sufficiently for a worst-case financial scenario. The Deputy Chief Executive indicated that the Council was not moving towards a Section 114 notice.
 - With regards to the Climate Emergency risk, Councillor Ross was reassured that consideration was being given to preparation for possible droughts.
 - In response to a comment from Councillor Shepherd-DuBey, the Deputy Chief Executive stressed that the Climate Emergency work was not on hold, and that an officer group continued to meet. He also continued to liaise with the relevant Executive Member. The Climate Emergency Action Plan was under development and would be presented to Council in the near future.
 - Councillor Burgess emphasised the need for carbon reduction targets. The Deputy Executive stated that these were being worked on.
 - Councillor Ross commented that the Risk Register did not refer to the current Local Plan. The Chief Executive agreed that this should be included.
 - Councillor Sargeant welcomed the approach taken to the Corporate Risk Register.
 - Councillor Shepherd-DuBey emphasised that with large amounts of staff working from home it was vital that the Council have a robust IT infrastructure in place, and that this needed to be reflected within the Risk Register. It was agreed that this would be referenced.
 - Members were informed of the Council's emergency planning response which considered matters such as accommodation, staffing and IT. When the first case had been identified in the Borough, an immediate response had been identified and up-to-date service templates produced.
 - Councillor Shepherd-DuBey asked about lessons learnt from the Council's initial response to the COVID 19 pandemic. The Chief Executive indicated a paper would be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, which would decide how different aspects of the Council's response would be scrutinised.
 - With regards to the risk around workforce, Councillor Shepherd-DuBey commented that no mention was made of how many staff could be unavailable due to sickness before the Council could no longer function. The Deputy Chief Executive stated that planning assumptions of up to 25% of staff being unavailable had been considered.
 - With regards to Risk 2 'Corporate Governance' and managing the impact of COVID 19 on this, Councillor Burgess felt that the wording was misleading and that the briefings with the Group Leaders were not transparent. The Deputy Chief Executive emphasised that officers were briefing all parties as often as they could at present and the briefings still provided some challenge and steer.
 - Councillor Burgess felt that the actions identified to mitigate Risk 4 'Local Land Supply (including five year land supply)' did not sufficiently address the issue, nor was the extension of the danger zone around AWE referred to.
 - With regards to Risk 6 'Safeguarding children and young people', Councillor Burgess was of the opinion that there were insufficient further actions highlighted to address issues identified as a result of COVID 19 such as increased domestic abuse. The Chief Executive reiterated that the current iteration of the Risk Register was light touch whilst the Council continued to respond to the crisis and that the Committee would receive a fuller update at their next meeting.
 - Councillor Burgess noted that overview and scrutiny were to monitor the risk around Brexit. She commented that it was important that Brexit was included on the scrutiny work programmes.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

78. FORWARD PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the forward programme.

Helen Thompson requested that the Audit Results Report be added to the September meeting.

RESOLVED: That the forward programme be noted.

Decision made in the presence of:
 Nicky Thomas, Senior Specialist – Assessments
 Callum Wernham, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist

**INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER
 DECISION RECORD SHEET
 IMD 2020/04**

Title of the report	Discretionary Housing Payments Policy
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DECISION MADE BY Executive Member for Finance and Housing - John Kaiser
ACTION BY Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers
DECISION MADE ON 04 June 2020

Recommendation contained in the report

That the Executive Member for Finance and Housing:

- 1) Approve the Policy amendments to be implemented from 4th June 2020. Amendments are to financial year, job titles, COVID 19 and funding details;
- 2) Would note that there have been no fundamental changes to the criteria for award or the process itself. The updated scheme would apply from 4th June 2020 and is now proposed for approval

Decision

That the Executive Member for Finance and Housing:

- 1) Approved the Policy amendments to be implemented from 4th June 2020. Amendments were to financial year, job titles, COVID 19 and funding details;
- 2) Noted that there had been no fundamental changes to the criteria for award or the process itself. The updated scheme would apply from 4th June 2020.

Reasons for Decision if different to recommendation

N/A

Alternative options considered and rejected at time of the decision

N/A

Summary of consultations undertaken

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES	
Director – Corporate Services	No major changes to policy that required consultation. Changes include updating of financial years, finances/funding
Monitoring Officer	Nothing to add
Leader of the Council	Emailed policies to Leader on 7 th May 2020

Reasons why the report was deemed to have contained confidential or Exempt information (if applicable)

N/A

Any Conflict of interest declared by any Executive Member who is consulted by a Member which relates to the decision

None

Any dispensation granted by the Head of Paid Service in respect of any declared conflict of interest

None

Background papers

None

PUBLISHED ON: 4 June 2020

EFFECTIVE ON: 12 June 2020

CALL-IN PERIOD EXPIRES: 11 June 2020

Decision made in the presence of:
 Nicky Thomas, Senior Specialist – Assessments
 Callum Wernham, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist

**INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER
 DECISION RECORD SHEET
 IMD 2020/05**

Title of the report	Local Welfare Provision Policy
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DECISION MADE BY Executive Member for Finance and Housing - John Kaiser
ACTION BY Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers
DECISION MADE ON 04 June 2020

Recommendation contained in the report

That the Executive Member for Finance and Housing approve the Policy amendments to be implemented from 4th June 2020. Amendments are to financial year, Executive member title, climate change, COVID 19 and funding details.

Decision

That the Executive Member for Finance and Housing approved the Policy amendments to be implemented from 4th June 2020. Amendments were to financial year, Executive Member title, climate change, COVID 19 and funding details.

Reasons for Decision if different to recommendation

N/A

Alternative options considered and rejected at time of the decision

N/A

Summary of consultations undertaken

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES	
Director – Corporate Services	No major changes to policy that required consultation. Director and Assistant Director have reviewed policy changes and had the opportunity to comment on.
Monitoring Officer	Nothing to add
Leader of the Council	Email sent 7 th May 2020

Reasons why the report was deemed to have contained confidential or Exempt information (if applicable)

N/A

Any Conflict of interest declared by any Executive Member who is consulted by a Member which relates to the decision

None

Any dispensation granted by the Head of Paid Service in respect of any declared conflict of interest

None

Background papers

None

PUBLISHED ON: 4 June 2020

EFFECTIVE ON: 12 June 2020

CALL-IN PERIOD EXPIRES: 11 June 2020

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
WOKINGHAM BOROUGH WELLBEING BOARD
HELD ON 11 JUNE 2020 FROM 5.00 PM TO 6.30 PM**

Present

Charles Margetts	Wokingham Borough Council
Debbie Milligan	NHS Berkshire West CGC
Carol Cammiss	Director, Children's Services
Chris Traill	Director Place and Growth
UllaKarin Clark	Wokingham Borough Council
Philip Cook	Voluntry Sector
Graham Ebers	Deputy Chief Executive
John Halsall	Wokingham Borough Council
David Hare	Wokingham Borough Council
Matt Pope	Director, Adult Social Care & Health
Katie Summers	Director of Operations, Berkshire West CCG
Jim Stockley	Healthwatch
Meradin Peachey (substituting Tessa Lindfield)	Interim Consultant in Public Health

Also Present:

Madeleine Shopland	Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist
Narinder Brar	Community Safety Partnership Manager
Susan Parsonage	Chief Executive
Peter Slade	Wellbeing Board and Community Safety Partnership Project Support
Martin Sloan	Assistant Director ASC Transformation and Integration
Lewis Willing	Head of Health and Social Care Integration
Andy Fitton	NHS Berkshire West CCG

63. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence was submitted from Tessa Lindfield and Sam Burrows.

64. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 13 February 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

65. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

66. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

67. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

In accordance with the agreed procedure, the Chairman invited Members to submit questions to the appropriate Members.

67.1 Gary Cowan asked the Chairman of the Wokingham Borough Wellbeing Board the following question. Due to his inability to attend the following written answer was provided:

Question

Dr Cathy Winfield, CEO of West Berks CCG on May 21 stated at the West Berks Health and Wellbeing Board that the NHS were able to step up their critical care criteria at the Royal Berkshire Hospital by not testing patients discharged from hospital into care homes and as a result West Berks have had 118 deaths of which 60 have been in their care homes.

My reading of her comments suggested that she now appears to have admitted that this policy was a mistake.

My question is of all the fatalities in Wokingham's Care Homes how many were patients discharged from our hospitals and how many were not.

Answer

Thank you for your question. Can I first extend my deepest sympathy to all those that have been effected by the deaths in care homes as a result of this virus. What has happened in Wokingham, and across the country, has been very difficult for many people. I'm sure there will be a national debrief with questions asked what has happened and what we can learn for future policies. Locally we expect we will be looking into this as part of the summer's overview and scrutiny programme. Part of this will rightly look into the impact of the national guidance on hospital discharge and the absence of testing in the first part of the response.

Our care homes have worked tirelessly through this extremely difficult time to help support their residents and I would like to voice my thanks at their efforts.

It is important to note care homes in Wokingham Borough are usually run by private or voluntary sector service providers.

There are 52 CQC registered care home setting within Wokingham Borough; this includes both older people care homes (residential and nursing) and learning disability care homes.

95% of Wokingham Borough care homes inspected by the CQC were rated as 'good' or 'outstanding' prior to the outbreak (February 2020) of the virus.

It was possible that some care home clients caught the virus in hospital before being discharged, and as they were not tested before discharge, the appropriate isolation in care homes was not put into practice.

Wokingham Borough Council took ground-breaking action to help protect its care homes during the Covid-19 crisis.

Last month the Borough Council took the unprecedented decision to go against Government guidelines by refusing to take patients discharged from hospital into some care homes unless it was certain they did not have coronavirus. At the same time, the Council and partners across the health service have worked together to set up a 'task force' of specialists to work with care homes to make sure they were ready to cope with patients who had the virus.

The task force has now worked with all care homes and other care settings but worked intensively with 36 in order to make sure they can start to take hospital discharges again safely.

As with care homes across the country, those in Wokingham Borough have been coping with a very difficult situation during this crisis.

In the first period of the pandemic we became concerned that the situation in care homes was worsening, we lobbied our MPs and the Local Resilience Forum for increased testing of those being discharged and for those in homes and for improved supplies of PPE. We increased our support to local care homes, including providing emergency supplies of PPE and forming a task force focussed on going into homes to support with specific issues like detailed infection control advice

Despite this lobbying and support, Government guidelines continued to allow the potential discharge of patients with coronavirus into our care homes, so we took the decision to stop hospital discharge into our care homes unless the patient has tested negative and been without symptoms or our task force had made sure the care home could cope with positive cases.

This task force has now visited 36 care homes and we are now at the place where discharges from hospital can take place more safely into some of these homes. I would like to personally thank all care home staff for the immense effort they are putting in to keep people supported in the most difficult of situations.

The task force is just one way the Borough Council has supported care homes during the crisis. Other help has included:

- An improved funding deal for care homes we contract with plus ability to apply for additional temporary funding
- Help with supply of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – 386,000 pieces of PPE have been supplied to our care homes.
- Regular advice and guidance - over 400 calls to registered care homes
- Testing for staff with symptoms – more than 250 staff tested, plus others who have self-referred themselves for testing via the government website.
- Offer of access to staff in an emergency and Infection control hotline established

In addition to this, Wokingham Borough Council and the local NHS have worked well together to:

- Release hospital capacity to support infection control in care homes, and this has been successful – the NHS had not been overwhelmed in our area and there had been enough critical care capacity to treat all patients.
- By cohorting potential Covid patients and delaying discharges in some cases to allow the homes to be supported.
- The CCG Director of Nursing has coordinated a multiple agency response to support the homes with staff and patient testing, and infection control training. Homes were visited by the support team in priority order, as identified by Wokingham Council.
- All patients are now tested prior to discharge to care homes.

- Each care home now has a named clinical lead, usually a GP, and health care staff offer a weekly check in to each home and conduct multidisciplinary reviews of patients, including medication reviews.

The Council has worked with all partners to draw this into a care home support plan which is published on our website: <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/care-and-support-for-adults/care-and-nursing-homes/wokinghams-response-to-the-minster-for-care-regarding-covid-19/>

The Council also publishes weekly Covid 19 data on its website <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/health/public-health-campaigns/coronavirus/> and this will also be discussed at this meeting. Up to the 22nd May, Wokingham has had 137 reported Covid 19 deaths of which 71 were in care homes and registered by a GP as having Covid-19 contributing factors. It is important to note that the Council and its partners only get death data from the ONS at the same time as the general public on a Tuesday. We then put this into a digestible report that is published every Friday. There a time lag on this information so the process of analysing this against hospital discharge data will take time to understand, but as I stated earlier this will be part of the overview and scrutiny process.

68. UPDATE ON MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS REVIEW AND BUILDING A PRIMARY CARE MENTAL HEALTH OFFER

The Board received an update on Mental Health Crisis review and Building a Primary Care Mental Health offer.

During the discussion of this item, the following points were made:

- Andy Fitton, Berkshire West CCG, took the Board through the mental health crisis review, which had taken place from July 2019 to March 2020, and the subsequent 14 recommendations.
- A comprehensive engagement and consultation process had been carried out. In response to a question from Councillor Hare, Andy Fitton confirmed that service users and their families had been consulted in addition to practitioners. Work had been carried out with the Recovery College in Reading and also via Patient Groups at Prospect Park.
- Examples of good practice in areas such as Oxford, Cambridge and Peterborough had been looked at.
- Andy Fitton highlighted some of the recommendations that had come out of the review. This included the development of a pilot Crisis Café: Breathing Space delivered by the Voluntary Sector and a local provider (BHFT). It was hoped that within the next 5 years there would be a Crisis Café in Wokingham & West Berkshire.
- Other recommendations included the marketing of the new Berkshire West Mental Health Crisis offer.
- In response to a question from Graham Ebers about next steps and implementation, Andy Fitton indicated that he would be happy to present the implementation plan to the Board, in time.
- Councillor Hare emphasised the importance of good links between primary and secondary care. Andy Fitton commented that more mental health expertise in GP surgeries was needed. Dr Milligan agreed that mental health practitioners within GP surgeries were beneficial. She went on to state that it had been easier to access practitioners such as psychologists during the pandemic and she did not want to lose this.

- Meradin Peachey questioned whether the number of people who were identified as having mental health problems who also smoked, was measured. Andy Fitton indicated that the number of people identified as having mental health problems who had, had a health check was measured, but that he did not have the data to hand. Katie Summers commented that this information could be provided if it had been recorded by the GP surgeries.
- Matt Pope sought a conversation as to whether it would be possible to secure a commitment that Wokingham would have a Crisis Café earlier than 5 years.
- Chris Traill asked what success would look like. Andy Fitton responded that pre Covid 19 it would have been a reduction in those presenting in A&E with mental health issues, and an increase in recovery rates and self-care. GPs would be able to indicate if they saw a reduction in repeat service usage. Talking Therapies also provided data regarding recovery rates.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

69. DESIGN OUR NEIGHBOURHOODS UPDATE

The Board received the Design our Neighbourhoods Update.

During the discussion of this item, the following points were made:

- Martin Sloan provided a presentation on a locality and neighbourhood approach to the Covid 19 pandemic.
- The Wokingham Integrated Partnership had developed a platform for integration and joint working.
- There had been active Wokingham participation in Wave 1 of the Population Health Management Development Programme (Optum).
- The challenge had been to create an integrated and coordinated approach to provide tailored, proactive social and medical support to the ‘shielded’ and isolated/vulnerable population across the Borough during the Covid 19 pandemic.
- It had been important to ensure that Shielded and Non Shielded Vulnerable had access to medication and food, that social isolation was mitigated so far as possible and that advice and information could be accessed, if required.
- A Partnership Team had been established pre lockdown and this met on a weekly basis.
- Data had been taken from various sources including; General Practice lists of shielded patients, NHS Digital shielded lists, Adult Social Care clients and other databases that could indicate isolation and that support was required. A combined database had been established and Adult Social Care had undertaken welfare calls using an agreed 11-point script. When required, residents were referred to the “Wokingham Borough Community Response.” Over 2800 calls had been made. The outcomes had been recorded and feedback provided to the GP services. In addition, the work of the Social Prescribing link workers had been integrated into the process.
- Martin Sloan referred to the combined Wokingham Borough community response, a combined group of Council staff and the voluntary sector. This included a “One Front Door” via the Citizens Advice with embedded WBC staff, to field public calls.
- The approach would be extended to a test cohort of elderly and frail (not including those who were shielded, those in care homes, and others that had already had welfare calls).
- Work would be carried out to support shielded residents who had lost their mobility and the confidence to go outside their home.

- Martin Sloan outlined two recommendations to progress the Design our Neighbourhood work at neighbourhood level;
 - Implementing the WBC Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy 2020-2025 with a focus on integration of services at a neighbourhood level. This would deliver improved coordination of multi-agency service response and improved signposting and use of technology to meet the social needs of residents.
 - Deliver the Strategy into Action Plan with a focus on what could be delivered as locally as possible, and also maximising the use of the local neighbourhood resources.
- As part of delivering the above two actions a mapping exercise of all local neighbourhood resources which would support the three priorities of the Wellbeing Strategy, would be undertaken by 30 November. In addition, a Partnership Forum would be set up by 1 September, to enable communication and the sharing of ideas.
- A number of Board members commented that this work highlighted Wokingham's committed approach, and thanked the voluntary sector for their work and support. In response to a question from Philip Cook, Councillor Margetts agreed that a statement would be issued thanking the voluntary sector for their work.
- Graham Ebers commented that it would be useful to pick out some of the outputs from the neighbourhoods event held in January and establish what could be addressed through learning and connectivity.
- Carol Cammiss stated that she wanted to develop the community and voluntary sector approach around children too.

RESOLVED: That the next steps for the delivery and implementation of a neighbourhood approach to meeting the three priorities, be considered.

70. STRATEGY INTO ACTION

The Board considered the Strategy into Action update.

During the discussion of this item, the following points were made:

- Public Health had reviewed the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and what progress was being made against it.
- The Strategy contained three clear but ambitious priorities.
- The indicators in the Strategy into Action plan were mostly based on the Public Health Outcomes Framework and social care and health indicators that had been measured regularly.
- Some progress had been made against the levels of inactivity in the Borough but there needed to be some measures as to whether the at risk groups such as those with long term conditions were also reducing inactivity.
- Meradin Peachey indicated that there were good long-term social isolation indicators being measured. Although there did not appear to be much progress in this area, this was because they were longer-term measures.
- With regards to narrowing health inequalities, it was noted that there would be greater discussion around reducing health inequalities for children, at the Children and Young People's Partnership.
- Carol Cammiss emphasised that it was good to see children featuring more in the Strategy. She requested that care leavers be added to the social isolation target. This was agreed.

- In response to a question from Councillor Clark, Meradin Peachey commented that the Strategy was ambitious when looking at the whole Borough population, but achievable.
- Philip Cook commented that measuring some of the indicators would potentially be challenging.
- Graham Ebers reminded the Board that it had been agreed that the Wokingham Integrated Partnership and the Children and Young People's Partnership would be the two main organisations feeding into the Strategy into Action. He agreed that it would be good to see an increased focus on children and young people.
- Dr Milligan was of the opinion that the Board was making headway to achieve its goals.
- Chris Traill commented that the Covid 19 pandemic might present an opportunity to look more at community wellbeing. Activity levels in some groups may increase.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the proposed actions where indicators have not improved, be reviewed;
- 2) short term measures as a way of measuring interim progress including qualitative views from the residents, be added;
- 3) actions to reduce inequalities in health as a result of the Pandemic, be reviewed.

71. CORONAVIRUS IN WOKINGHAM

Meradin Peachey presented an update on coronavirus in Wokingham Borough.

During the discussion of this item, the following points were made:

- A weekly data report was published which could be accessed by the public. A wide range of data sources was used.
- Meradin Peachey referred to the number of cases identified across Berkshire. She indicated that the number of positive cases did not always give the total picture, as initially testing rates were low and also there were likely to be asymptomatic cases who had not been tested.
- With regards to the national picture, the North West had suffered the highest incident rates. Wokingham was below average. Reading had reported the highest number of cases within the Berkshire area.
- Information had been provided for the last five weeks on the death rate within care homes and by local authority area. The mortality rate for the year was nearly at the level of what it would have been expected to be.
- Royal Berkshire Hospital had a lower rate of Covid 19 related deaths compared to the worst effected hospital trusts in the country.
- It was noted that despite having the second highest number of care home beds in Berkshire, the Wokingham Covid 19 death rate within care homes was not the worst death rate in comparison to other neighbouring authorities.
- With regards to the national picture, Meradin Peachey indicated that those from ethnic minorities were more likely to catch the disease, at a younger age, and were more likely to die as a result. Those who were considered vulnerable e.g. they suffered from cancer or COPD, were also at higher risk.
- The Board noted the likely impacts of the Covid 19 pandemic across the life course. Katie Summers commented that this should be taken up across the Berkshire West partners in order to aid discussions about the recovery and restoration of services.

- Jim Stockley stated that it was valuable to see the information presented in such a communicable manner.
- Dr Milligan indicated that she was currently working in the Reading Health Hub. She emphasised the need to think about managing people coming out of shielding in future. Many people were afraid about coming out of lockdown.

RESOLVED: That the impact of Covid-19 on the population in Wokingham and whether to amend the current strategy and action plan, be considered.

72. INTEGRATION UPDATE

Lewis Willing presented an update on integration and the Quarter 4 Better Care Fund return.

During the discussion of this item, the following points were made:

- The Wokingham Health and Social care system met virtually every fortnight to discuss the Covid 19 situation and response. Participants included Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust, Royal Berkshire NHS Trust, Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Group, the Voluntary Sector and Adult Social Care.
- Approximately 5750 calls had been made to the community to undertake welfare checks. The focus was now on those who were considered non-shielded but still vulnerable.
- It was noted that there had been an increase in the number of safeguarding referrals for babies that had been shaken during the current restrictions. This had been noted by the Berkshire Health Foundation Trust. As a result, they had restarted delivering a Health Visiting service, to support new parents. The Primary Care Networks, as a response, had also run a virtual consultation for new mothers, which had been very well attended.
- The Board was informed that the Primary Care Network directors had fed back on matters such as plans to develop social distancing within GP surgeries.
- The Better Care Fund return for Q4 had a delayed submission date of July.
- Lewis Willing updated the Board on the four Better Care Fund targets.
- Non Elective Admissions were considered to be on track. Whilst the year to date performance was 13,359 compared to a target of 13,044 and the full year forecast was now 16,031 compared to a target of 15,643, the Wokingham Integration Partnership operated a tolerance of 5% tolerance for variance.
- Reablement and Residential Admissions were also considered to be on track.
- Delayed Transfers to Care (DToC) were not on track. The DToC action plan and Winter Pressures funding had been targeted to support reducing delays in hospital, with the main issue in 2019/20 being an increase in the duration of extended delays due to the complex needs of this group of patients and the lack of specialist provision in the community for those with complex needs. This needed to be addressed at national rather than local level.
- The Board was updated on the high impact change model which offered a practical approach to manage transfers of care. It was noted that whilst the west of Berkshire had been graded as Mature in Enhancing Health in Care Homes, work was still being undertaken in response to the Covid 19 outbreak. A plan was being developed to further support the care homes.
- The Board welcomed Lewis Willing to the Council.

RESOLVED: That the updates be noted.

73. WELLBEING BOARD OVERVIEW REPORT JUNE 2020

The Board considered the Wellbeing Board Overview Report June 2020.

During the discussion of this item, the following points were made:

- Matt Pope summarised where the Board currently was, its aims and good practice.
- He went on to indicate that the agenda setting process in future would be stricter and that the forward programmes for both the formal and informal Boards would be tightened. Board members were asked to send suggestions for improvements and agenda items to Narinder Brar.
- Councillor Margetts indicated that the Council via the Wellbeing Board would be responsible for monitoring the local track and trace process. A sub group, the composition of which, was to be decided, would be established and would be led by the Leader of the Council.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Wellbeing Overview Report be noted;
- 2) the Board note the requirement to establish a Member led engagement Board around track and trace.

74. WELLBEING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT

The Board considered the Wellbeing Board Annual Report.

During the discussion of this item, the following points were made:

- Matt Pope referred in particular to the Board's Work Programme for the forthcoming municipal year.
- It was suggested that the report be updated to include reference to the Council's response to Covid 19.

RESOLVED: That once amended, the report be recommended to Full Council for approval.

75. FORWARD PROGRAMME

The Board discussed the forward programme.

During the discussion of this item, the following points were made:

- Katie Summers indicated that the updated CCG Operating Plan would be presented at the October meeting.
- Meradin Peachey suggested that the Board receive an update on how track and trace was progressing within the Borough.
- Graham Ebers asked that the Designing our Neighbourhoods and Strategy into Action remained standing items.
- Carol Cammiss indicated that she would bring a paper on how the priorities of the Children and Young People's Partnership aligned with the priorities of the Wellbeing Strategy, to a future meeting.

RESOLVED: That the forward programme be noted.

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**MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
HELD ON 16 JUNE 2020 FROM 9.45 PM TO 9.55 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Pauline Helliard-Symons (Chairman), Alison Swaddle (Vice-Chairman), Jenny Cheng, Andy Croy, Paul Fishwick, Jim Frewin, Guy Grandison, Sarah Kerr, Abdul Loyes, Ken Miall, Andrew Mickleburgh, Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey and Oliver Whittle

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence received.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

3. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Councillor Pauline Helliard-Symons was elected Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee for the 2020/2021 Municipal Year.

4. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Councillor Alison Swaddle was appointed Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee for the 2020/2021 Municipal Year.

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**MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE
CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON 16 JUNE 2020 FROM 9.55 PM TO 10.02 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Alison Swaddle (Chairman), Jenny Cheng (Vice-Chairman), Prue Bray, Andy Croy, Pauline Helliar-Symons, Ken Miall, Andrew Mickleburgh and Malcolm Richards

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence received.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

3. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Alison Swaddle was elected Chairman of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the 2020/21 Municipal Year.

4. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Jenny Cheng was appointed Vice-Chairman of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the 2020/21 Municipal Year.

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**MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE
COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON 16 JUNE 2020 FROM 10.05 PM TO 10.10 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Guy Grandison (Chairman), Oliver Whittle (Vice-Chairman), Keith Baker, Shirley Boyt, Paul Fishwick, Graham Howe, Clive Jones and Abdul Loyes

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence received.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

3. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Councillor Guy Grandison was elected Chairman of the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the 2020/21 Municipal Year.

4. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Councillor Oliver Whittle was appointed Vice-Chairman of the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the 2020/21 Municipal Year.

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**MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE
HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON 16 JUNE 2020 FROM 10.15 PM TO 10.25 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Ken Miall (Chairman), Abdul Loyes (Vice-Chairman), Rachel Bishop-Firth, Jenny Cheng, Jim Frewin, Guy Grandison, Clive Jones, Adrian Mather, Barrie Patman and Alison Swaddle

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence received.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

3. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Councillor Ken Miall was elected Chairman of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the 2020/21 Municipal Year.

4. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

Councillor Abdul Loyes was appointed Vice-Chairman of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the 2020/21 Municipal Year.

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