

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 19 JANUARY 2022 FROM 7.00 PM TO 7.45 PM

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Alison Swaddle (Chairman), Jackie Rance (Vice-Chairman), Sam Akhtar, Jenny Cheng, Carl Doran, Michael Firmager, Adrian Mather, Tahir Maher and Barrie Patman

Others Present

Jim Stockley, Healthwatch Wokingham Borough
Madeleine Shopland, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist
Mark Redfearn, Head of Localities

45. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence received.

46. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 8 November 2021 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

47. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

48. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

49. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

50. PUBLIC TOILET PROVISION

Members received an update on public toilet provision within the Borough from Mark Redfearn, Head of Localities. Members also considered information provided by Crohn's and Colitis UK.

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

- The local authority did not have any statutory responsibilities in terms of providing public toilets.
- In 2009 the Council had moved away from the traditional model to the Local Loos Scheme. Under this scheme participating local businesses allowed the public access to their toilet facilities and displayed a small sticker or sign to advertise this fact. There were currently 10 Local Loos across the Borough.
- The primary reason for moving to the Local Loos Scheme was to improve the choice and quality of toilet facilities available. The public toilet facilities at the time had often been subject to vandalism and cost a lot to maintain to an acceptable standard.
- Members noted the desktop audit of what toilet facilities were available across the Borough. There were approximately 170 toilets in locations such as petrol stations, garden centres, council buildings and the retail sector.
- The Council had only received one specific enquiry in the past year about the availability of public toilets within the Borough.

- There were not currently that many Changing Places facilities available across the Borough. This would be taken into account in the development of new community facilities where possible, to increase the number available. The Head of Localities indicated that new community centre that would be provided as part of the Matthew's Green development would have a Changing Places facility.
- It was confirmed that the public toilet located in Peach Place was provided by Wokingham Town Council. Members felt that signage to this facility could be improved.
- Members questioned whether signage and publicity around facilities was sufficient and what a review of these would entail. The Head of Localities commented that there was a need to understand that when people entered the different urban areas, was there sufficient signage to direct them to facilities that they could make use of. He indicated that there were several existing Town Centre Management Initiatives which could consider this. Communication and signposting were important.
- Members referred to the information provided by Crohn's and Colitis UK, which recommended that local authorities take the lead role in collating and publishing information.
- Crohn's and Colitis UK recommended that 'Not Every Disability is Visible' accessible toilet signs should be a requirement in all venues. A Member suggested that these should be included in facilities that the Council made available, including Council buildings. This was echoed in the information provided by a local Crohn's sufferer. The Head of Localities indicated that this could be addressed with the Facilities team with regards to Council buildings.
- A Member commented that he had a number of petrol stations in his ward. He questioned whether the Council could work with these businesses to better advertise available toilet facilities. The Head of Localities suggested that this could be taken forward via links with the businesses through the Economic Development Team.
- In response to a Member question, the Head of Localities indicated that there was not a limit to the number of businesses that could sign up to the Local Loo Scheme, although an increase in budget would be required should there be a big increase in take up. Most businesses were paid £600 a year to make sure facilities were sufficient, and one was paid £1000. The Head of Localities agreed to inform Members outside of the meeting which business received £1000.
- A Member referred to confusing signage in Woodley which pointed away from the toilets provided by the Town Council. He suggested increased working with the Town Centre Management Initiative and the Town and Parish Councils.
- A Member highlighted the toilet facilities in the Elms Road car park in Wokingham, which she felt could be better advertised. She went on to question whether Wokingham station had been approached with regards to making their facilities part of the Local Loo scheme.
- Members noted that the report recommended that given the length of time since the decision to establish the Local Loo Scheme had been taken, that an Equality Impact Assessment be conducted for the scheme to ensure that it was supporting the Protected Characteristics detailed in the Equality Act 2010. Members asked who would be consulted and suggested groups including women, elderly, parents of small children, Support U and those with disabilities. The Head of Localities indicated that the Council had a new Equalities Strategy and part of this focused on engaging with residents from the perspective of their particular protected characteristics. A residents' Equalities Forum was being established, initially made up of 16 organisations. One of the things that the group may do was help the

Council in completing Equality Impact Assessments. He also referred to the Engage Wokingham communication platform.

- A Member questioned whether other new largescale developments would have a Changing Places facility. The Head of Localities indicated that it may not be possible in all.
- It was suggested that the location of toilet facilities be better advertised. An article in the Borough News, and use of the local media and Council website, was suggested.
- A Member questioned whether the quality of toilets made available under the Local Loos Scheme, was monitored, and was informed that the Localities Officers periodically undertook inspections to ensure that they were clean and able to be accessed.
- The Head of Localities indicated that he was not aware of people experiencing resistance to using Local Loo Scheme facilities if they were not paying customers. Any feedback was welcomed.
- It was noted that the Waterside Centre toilets had experienced issues with blocking for some time, and that it was largely the result of large numbers of people using it following the regular Park Run and the facilities being insufficient for such high scale usage.
- Members agreed to recommend that the Council lead the undertaking of a review of signage and publicity of the Local Loo Scheme and other toilets available within Wokingham Borough, facilitating information from businesses and the Town and Parish Councils. The Head of Localities indicated that this was likely to be undertaken in stages and would need to involve the Communication, Engagement and Marketing Team and the Facilities Team.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That it be recommended that the Council lead the undertaking of a review of signage and publicity of the Local Loo Scheme and other toilets available within Wokingham Borough, facilitating information from businesses and the Town and Parish Councils.
- 2) That Mark Redfearn be thanked for his presentation and Crohn's and Colitis UK be thanked for the information provided.

51. UPDATE ON HEALTHWATCH WOKINGHAM BOROUGH

Jim Stockley provided an update on the work of Healthwatch Wokingham Borough.

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

- A common theme of communication with Healthwatch was people asking where they could find information about a particular service.
- Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust had asked the Healthwatches in Berkshire West to undertake a survey on the Ageing Well service. The report would be provided to the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the future.
- GP access and access to NHS dentists continued to be an issue locally.
- Jim Stockley indicated that he was the Chair of More Arts. Work was being undertaken around developing the benefits of arts and culture to health and wellbeing in the local community.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the update on the work of Healthwatch Wokingham Borough be noted.
- 2) That Jim Stockley be thanked for his presentation.

52. FORWARD PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the forward programme for the remainder of the municipal year.

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

- Members were reminded of the extraordinary meeting scheduled for 21 February.
- It was suggested that the update on Health Integration be moved to the February meeting from the March meeting.
- It was proposed that the Health and Wellbeing Strategy Action Plan be moved to the June meeting.

RESOVLED: That the forward programme be noted.