



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS
FOR THE PERIOD**

1 September 2022 to 30 September 2022

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Susan Parsonage', written in a cursive style.

Susan Parsonage
Chief Executive
Published on 12 October 2022



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
WOKINGHAM BOROUGH WELLBEING BOARD
HELD ON 1 SEPTEMBER 2022 FROM 5.00 PM TO 5.50 PM**

Present

David Hare	Wokingham Borough Council
Debbie Milligan	NHS
Prue Bray	Wokingham Borough Council
Clive Jones	Wokingham Borough Council
Philip Bell	Voluntary Sector
Tracy Daszkiewicz	Director Public Health - Berkshire West
Susan Parsonage	Chief Executive
Helen Watson	Interim Director Children's Services
Belinda Seston	BOB ICB

Also Present:

Gabriel Agboado	Public Health
Neil Carr	Democratic Services
Alice Kunjappy-Clifton	Healthwatch Wokingham Borough
Ashlee Mulimba	Healthy Dialogues

12. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Sarah Deason, Graham Ebers, Nick Fellows, Charles Margetts, Steve Moore and Matt Pope.

13. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 9 June 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

14. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

15. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

16. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

17. ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH

The Board considered the Berkshire Public Health Annual Report for 2021/22. The report had been co-authored by Tracy Daszkiewicz (Director of Public Health, Berkshire West) and Stuart Lines (Director of Public Health, Berkshire East). The Annual Report was titled "Helping tackle climate change, one meal at a time". The report's broad focus was on the impact of diet on individual health, susceptibility to various diseases and the health of the planet.

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

- The Annual Report was an informative, well-produced document. It could be used as a building block for conversations about the importance of food and diet across a range of services and networks.

- The potential impact of producing food on mental health was highlighted. There were many examples across the country, e.g. the work of the Shaw Trust, use of allotments, people with large gardens allowing access for people with disabilities and farms developing programmes for primary school children.
- The report highlighted issues around obesity and the number of families who lacked guidance on how to prepare fresh food and healthy meals, which were frequently cheaper than processed meals. There were a number of ongoing initiatives on this issue including work with schools to deliver programmes during school holidays.
- Could a list of schools with mini-allotments be developed and used as a starting point to ensure that as many schools as possible were adopting this initiative, with support from partner agencies?

RESOLVED: That the Berkshire Public Health Annual Report for 2021/22 be noted and shared with networks.

18. SUICIDE PREVENTION STRATEGY

The Board considered an update on the development of a Suicide Prevention Strategy. A strategy had been drafted initially in October 2021, but had not been presented to the Board ahead of the review of DPH carried out in January 2022. Since the first version was drafted, new data profiles had become available and there was a new policy landscape resulting in the need for a review of the existing strategy. The review would include a Suicide Prevention Summit, proposed for late autumn of 2022, which would achieve wider partner engagement.

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

- The proposed review was welcomed – there was evidence of more young people presenting with suicidal thoughts.
- In relation to dignity in dying, the updated strategy needed to include a clear definition of suicide.
- It was important that mental health services were involved in the review – their experiences could provide important learning points for the review.
- At present, data on the number of suicides in the Borough was patchy – could the review seek to develop a clearer picture of the situation? It was confirmed that this would be part of the review.
- On a similar point – could the review provide greater clarity on the number of people who committed suicide due to old age/serious health conditions? It was confirmed that this data could be sought from the Coroners service. However, it would need to be treated sensitively and anonymised as necessary.
- Would the impact of the cost of living crisis be included in the review? It was confirmed that the review would look at the causes and triggers of suicide for different age groups. It would also look at ways in which partner organisations could develop/improve suicide prevention mechanisms.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) the Suicide Prevention Strategy by updated;
- 2) the Suicide Prevention Partnership arrange a summit for autumn 2022, to launch a full consultation process into Suicide Prevention to further inform the Strategy refresh.

19. PHARMACEUTICAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The Board considered the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA) for the Borough. The Board had responsibility for developing the PNA, involving a public consultation exercise prior to its publication. The draft PNA had been considered by the Board in June 2022 and approved for the statutory 60 day consultation, ending on 9 August 2022. The final draft was now submitted to the Board for approval.

The Board also received a presentation setting out a summary of the consultation responses and a summary of changes made to the previous PNA draft. The presentation also highlighted the proposed Public Health Actions linked to the PNA, viz:

- Map current service provision and run a communication campaign to raise awareness of pharmacy provision as part of winter preparedness;
- Strengthen existing partnership with LPC/Local Pharmacy to support targeted health promotion and service commissioning activities;
- Formalise democratic process regarding notification of changes to Pharmacy Opening Hours and other related changes.

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

- Whilst the proposed Public Health actions were welcomed, there were concerns about the uneven level of service provided by pharmacies across the Borough, i.e. the range of services provided and the timeliness of service delivery.
- Tracy Daszkiewicz confirmed that she had started to attend meetings of the Local Pharmaceutical Committee in order to discuss how Public Health services and advice could be delivered through local pharmacies. These discussions were ongoing and it was hoped to develop a more constructive working relationship going forwards.
- Debbie Milligan commented that, as pharmacies were independent, it was difficult to achieve a consistent approach across the Borough. There were also issues around pharmacies having to close at short notice due to staff sickness.
- Prue Bray suggested that a further update be submitted to the Board in six months' time.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) the final version and conclusions of the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment for Wokingham, be noted;
- 2) publication of the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment on 1 October 2022, in line with the statutory requirement, be approved;

- 3) the Board receive an update on the Public Health actions arising out of the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment in six months' time.

20. FORWARD PROGRAMME

The Board discussed the forward programme for the remainder of the Municipal Year, as follows:

- It was suggested that the Suicide Prevention Strategy be deleted from the October meeting, to be discussed at the December meeting.
- The responsible officer for the Designing Our Neighbourhoods item (October) was Lewis Williams.
- Sarah Webster to be invited to attend the October meeting.
- It was suggested that the Covid Autumn Plan be submitted to the October meeting with an update on Covid to the December meeting.
- Item on Children in Care CAMHs Update to the December meeting.
- Item on GP Performance to the February 2023 meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Forward Programme be updated to reflect the points set out above.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 5 SEPTEMBER 2022 FROM 7.00 PM TO 8.56 PM

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Peter Dennis (Chairman), David Cornish (Vice-Chairman), Shirley Boyt, Norman Jorgensen, Laura Blumenthal, Pauline Jorgensen and Alistair Neal, Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey (Substitute) and Michael Firmager (Substitute)

Officers Present

Callum Wernham (Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist), Neil Carr (Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist) and Ed Shaylor (Head of Enforcement and Safety)

21. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors Chris Johnson and Gregor Murray.

Councillors Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey and Michael Firmager attended the meeting as substitutes.

22. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 4 July 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to the following comments and minor amendment.

- Page 11 to be corrected as follows – “Why were enforcement penalty notices more expensive in Reading compared to ~~Reading~~ **Wokingham**?”
- It be ascertained what levels enforcement penalty notices were set at in some of our neighbouring Boroughs, and the reason for any differences.

23. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

24. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

25. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

26. ENFORCEMENT AND SAFETY SERVICE UPDATE

The Committee considered a report, set out in agenda pages 15 to 22, which gave an update on the new Enforcement and Safety Service.

The report provided progress updates in a number of areas, including number of licences issues, environmental health works (inspections and service requests), private sector housing complaints, environmental protection and antisocial behaviour. A total of 611 antisocial behaviour cases had been dealt with by the new service, whilst a number of general enquiries (including advice) had also been dealt with.

Ed Shaylor, Head of Enforcement and Safety, attended the meeting to answer member queries.

During the ensuing discussion, members raised the following points and queries:

- Were figures available with regards to the number of antisocial behaviour cases dealt with prior to the service being taken in-house, and had overall satisfaction levels and response times seen an increase? Officer response – This was a difficult area to provide comparisons, however the types of behaviours being reported and dealt with could be compared. There was a desire to request the figures for previous service requests from the Public Protection Partnership, however due to time constraints this had not been undertaken yet. In general, the more a service such as this was publicised the more service requests would be generated.
- Were there plans to capture satisfaction data? Officer response – This was a definite aspiration of the service, however the specific method had not been decided. There was an option to send feedback via emails, however it was worth noting that residents who sent in antisocial behaviour service requests tended to base their feedback on the original antisocial behaviour issue rather than the service received.
- Were staff fully engaged and at capacity? Officer response – The service was very busy during the summer, whilst private sector housing issues were common during the winter. The service was experiencing additional work as they were dealing with issues within the 'grey area' between the police and the antisocial behaviour officers. It was crucial that officers had a consistent workload throughout the year, and intervened on appropriate issues.
- It was noted that where officers were engaging with issues which were not necessarily fully within their remit, they should help see the issue through to the finish rather than disengaging midway through the process. Officers were encouraged to never say that there was nothing that they could do, but instead say that there 'might' be something that could be done, even if that was just advice or signposting.
- What percentage of antisocial behaviour requests were deemed as valid? Officer response – Officers often spoke of some cases which they felt were not necessarily an issue, however it would be difficult to put a figure on this.
- Had there been improvement in the areas of car meets and residential drugs? Officer response – Officers have been in close liaison with the Police, and the number of car meets within the Borough had seen a reduction since April, although it was accepted that these may have spilt over into neighbouring Boroughs as a result. Fixed penalty notices were issued based on number plate registration details, which helped keep officers safe. With regards to drugs in residential properties, this depended on the tenure, and it was expected that Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) owned properties would have a standard line in their contract against this. It was too dangerous for officers to intervene with drug cases on the street, and these issues were reported to and dealt with by the police.
- Was the process of setting the new service up a success, and had recruitment gone to plan? Officer response – The planning stage had gone very well, with 6 project work streams each with a lead officer. In general, the planning and transition phase was very well resourced and superbly organised. In terms of recruitment, 8 staff had moved over from West Berkshire, whilst new officers had been recruited from outside the original Public Protection Partnership. Recruitment was challenging as there were not enough candidates to fill roles across the country. There had been some turnover

within the antisocial behaviour team as some staff had not found the shift rota (including shifts up to 2am on Friday and Saturday) to work for their lifestyles. Eight out of ten staff for the antisocial behaviour team were in post, subject to appointment of two new staff in the coming week where interviews had been organised.

- What was the protocol if officers found themselves in danger? Officer response – Antisocial behaviour officers tended to work in pairs during the evenings and at weekends, whilst they usually worked alone at other times. Whilst many visits involved environmental nuisance reports, some situations could prove to be very hostile. Officers were instructed to always inform others of their scheduled visit locations, whilst an app-based solution was available on their phones that sent out an SoS message and recorded sounds when the power button was pressed a number of times. Officer safety was a top priority for the service.
- What challenges could the service meet if they had additional resources? Officer response – Issues such as pest and vermin reports occurred at a high volume and were difficult to deal with, whilst fly tipping was a regular occurrence and officers did not have time to fully investigate reports where evidence of the perpetrator was unlikely to be found, and instead payment for clearance was made. With additional resources, these two areas could be more thoroughly dealt with. In addition, the Borough only had one (hard working) animal warden.
- Was there a regular cycle for food hygiene inspections? Officer response – Premises graded between 0 and 2 were inspected every 6 months, whilst those graded at 3 were inspected every 12 months. Those premises graded 4 or 5 were inspected every 18 months, or where so low risk (pre-packaged food for example) on a questionnaire basis.
- Air quality was an issue that arose regularly at Planning Committee, was data available to give a sense of the scale of this issue? Officer response - The Public Protection Partnership were commissioned to carry out monitoring, whilst regular zones including Peach Street were monitored regularly. There were air quality management areas including Wokingham Town Centre, Twyford Town Centre and the M4 corridor, whilst the M4 corridor was mostly managed by the Highways Agency. It was noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee was receiving an item on air quality management in the coming months, whilst 14 schools were to receive air quality monitoring.
- How were the 14 schools identified for air quality management? Officer response – This information would come forward within the upcoming air quality item at the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.
- Could residents receive feedback on cases that they reported, for example fly tipping reports? Officer response – Whilst this was partly a capacity issue, this was also a training and development matter whereby officers needed to remember to check if the person reporting the issue would like a progress update.
- There were still instances of car meets in the Borough which were occurring away from residential development, but were affecting businesses. What was being done to address these car meets? Officer response – Areas where there were more reports tended to attract more resourcing as it appeared to affect more people, however recurring issues which caused distress did still require intervention from WBC.

- What steps could be taken if landlords were not dealing with important issues, for example asbestos removal, in a timely manner? Officer response – During an ongoing situation, officers would inform the landlord to carry out the repairs and agree suitable timescales. If repairs were not carried out, officers could use powers under the Housing Act 2004, whereby failure to comply could involve a trail in the magistrate's court. Each case would be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, and if the landlord provided reasonable excuses, then allowances could be made, however the tenant paying rent was entitled to use of the property free from health hazards.
- Were any other services coming back in-house, and were improvements due to be made to the service's webpages? Officer response – No additional services were planned to be taken back in house, as services such as trading standards made sense to operate on a larger scale. The corporate WBC website was due for an upgrade in the next 12 to 18 months which would benefit the service.
- Were noise levels measured when officers visited sites where noise nuisance was reported? Officer response – Officers relied on objective assessments tests, for example could neighbours reasonably watch a television programme without having to turn the sound up excessively loud. Noise was measured at commercial premises, however for residential premises, asking residents to measure noise levels tended to raise expectations.
- What happened to dogs collected by the animal warden? Officer response – Dogs were sent to kennels where they were checked for a microchip. Where dogs did not have a microchip, they were kept for a period of time in case of a claim. Dogs that were not claimed were then transferred to rescue centres. For more exotic animals, there was an arrangement in place with the city of London who provided a very good service.
- Were the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service informed of large bonfires? Officer response – Yes, this was a joint concern and officers were in regular liaison when required.
- Were the workplace injuries and accidents mainly occurring at building sites? Officer response – These instances were more likely to occur at construction sites and on agriculture facilities within the Borough.
- With current staffing levels, what difficulties had been faced in terms of casework? Officer response – Local Authorities had many powers, and in the vast majority of cases officers could assist residents in some way when they reported an issue, it was just a matter of capacity. The antisocial behaviour team had struck a very good balance in terms of staff workload to output. Environmental health officers had proved tricky to recruit to, and in future more junior staff could be recruited and subsequently trained up. With more capacity, it was likely that more work could be undertaken within the housing sector.
- Was there a customer relationship management system in place? Officer response – The 'netcall' system for phones was very sophisticated, whilst email users had the option to leave feedback as well. More could be done to send surveys out via email, which could help identify why people may be feeling aggrieved.

- Was additional staffing in place for special events and holidays, such as Halloween? Officer response - Four officers worked over the busy bank holiday weekends, and this would likely be replicated for Halloween. Enforcement of fireworks was a police matter, where fireworks were required to cease at 11pm except for special days including New Year's Eve and Diwali.
- What could be done to tackle unoccupied homes? Officer response – Empty dwellings were a constant blight, and this was an area of work where more could be done with additional resourcing. Properties could be cleared and remedied with costs recharged back to the owner, however it could take years for costs to be recovered. The property could also be enforced if it was in arrears for Council Tax. It was requested that officers ascertain if WBC had punitive Council Tax rates for empty dwellings. Whilst compulsory purchase orders could be an option, WBC would need to demonstrate a specific need for the property and the process could take over a year.
- Did dog wardens have the power to require aggressive dogs to be muzzled? Officer response – Police had powers under the dangerous dogs' act to act if a dog had attacked a person or an assistance dog, or if a dangerous dog was out of control the owner could be charged.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Ed Shaylor be thanked for attending the meeting;
- 2) A further update be considered during the next municipal year;
- 3) Officers continue to explore options to capture customer feedback and service performance;
- 4) Officers explore any training and development opportunities to further keep residents informed of any action taken as a result of an issue they reported;
- 5) Officers ascertain if WBC had punitive Council Tax rates for empty dwellings.

27. PREFERRED REGISTERED PROVIDERS TASK AND FINISH GROUP UPDATE

The Committee considered a report, set out in agenda pages 23 to 28, which gave an update on the initial work of the Preferred Registered Providers Task and Finish Group.

Shirley Boyt (Chair of the Task and Finish Group) gave a further verbal update. The core aim of the Task and Finish Group was to strive for a parity of quality regardless of whether residents were housed with Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) or a housing association. The contract for our preferred registered providers was up for renewal next year, which would give the group an opportunity to strengthen the requirements therein. Housemark had been invited to a meeting of the group, and it had been alluded to that some of WBC's preferred partners were not providing a fantastic level of service. A further meeting was due to be held with Steve Bowers, Chair of the Tenant Landlord Improvement Panel, whilst further outreach to residents and housing associations was also to be undertaken by the group. It was important that the task and finish group could have real input and impact into this issue.

During the ensuing discussion, members raised the following points and queries:

- It was noted that the group was hoping to report in 5 months' time.
- It was noted that the membership of the group was Shirley Boyt (Chair), Chris Johnson (Vice Chair), Laura Blumenthal, Rebecca Margetts and Andy Croy.
- It was requested that the Committee be sent copies of the notes of the task and finish group meetings;
- It was noted that WBC currently had 8 preferred partners, with some being very large companies. In addition, there were a multitude of other registered providers who were not on the preferred list. It was requested that members inform the group of housing association properties and any associated complaints within their wards;
- Would housing associations be invited to talk to the group? Response – Yes, however anecdotal evidence was first being gathered to be able to challenge the housing associations.
- It was requested that the current contract be circulated to the Committee. In addition, it was noted that the existing contract was not particularly robust.
- What outputs did the group hope to achieve? Response – A series of recommendations would be presented alongside a report to the Executive. The core aim was to improve the service received by residents regardless of who operated their social housing.
- It was requested that officers ascertain whether it was possible for Loddon Homes (WBC's housing company) to deliver the majority of new social housing with loans from the public works loan board, to be paid off by rental income.
- It was noted that the Chair of the Task and Finish Group would be writing to all members to seek feedback from social housing issues within their wards.
- The issue of property guardians was raised. This issue may be required to be looked at separately, as it was outside of the scope of this group.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) The members of the task and finish group be thanked for their ongoing work on this matter;
- 2) Notes of meetings of the group be circulated to the Committee alongside the existing contract;
- 3) Officers ascertain whether it was possible for Loddon Homes (WBC's housing company) to deliver the majority of new social housing with loans from the public works loan board, to be paid off by rental income;
- 4) Members contact the group with any known social housing issues within their wards.

28. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered their work programme, set out in agenda pages 29 to 34.

It was noted that where the relevant Executive member was unable to attend a meeting of the Committee to present their item, the Chair liaise with them with a view to defer that item (if timescales allowed).

Members requested that officers include information within the upcoming item on the Local Plan Update including our current position, challenged faced, how over delivery in the past might be accounted for, interim measures to help combat legal appeals in relation to 5-year housing land supply, and the progress on lobbying for a reduction in housing numbers.

It was agreed that the Arts and Culture item be moved to the December meeting of the Committee.

It was requested that an item be considered on the issue of the pressure on the voluntary sector in relation to the cost-of-living crisis, with a particular focus on Citizen's Advice Wokingham. Officers were tasked to liaise with the Hardship Alliance on this matter.

RESOLVED That the above actions be noted.

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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON 7 SEPTEMBER 2022 FROM 7.00 PM TO 9.43 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Andrew Mickleburgh (Chairman), Shirley Boyt (Vice-Chairman), Morag Malvern, Anne Chadwick and Pauline Helliar-Symons

Other Councillors Present

Councillor Prue Bray, Alison Swaddle (substitute) and Jackie Rance (via Teams)

Officers Present

Matthew Booth, SEN Consultant
Neil Carr, Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist
Gillian Cole, Service Manager Schools
Adam Davis, Assistant Director for Children's Social Care and Early Help
Sal Thirlway, Assistant Director for Learning, Achievement and Partnerships
Helen Watson, Director of Children's Services

Also Present

Sarah Clarke, SEND Voices Wokingham

13. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Graham Howe.

Alison Swaddle attended the meeting as a substitute.

14. CO-OPTED MEMBER

The Chair announced that Sarah Clarke would be joining the Committee as a co-opted member. Sarah is the Chair of the SEND Voices Wokingham. SEND Voices Wokingham is the Borough's parent carer forum representing the voices of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. SEND Voices is one of the key stakeholders in the SEND Innovation and Improvement Programme (discussed later in the Agenda).

15. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 15 June 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The following updates were provided:

The Chair stated that, for future meetings, officers would produce a short report summarising the actions taken against the decisions reached by the Committee. This report would be included in the Agenda.

The Chair confirmed that a briefing note on Home to School Transport had been circulated to Members. A further copy would be circulated to any Members who had not received the first communication.

The Chair confirmed that officers had made further efforts to attract diocese and parent governors to sit on the Committee. To date, no progress had been made, but officers would continue to seek to fill the vacancies.

Officers confirmed that the Youth Council was happy to engage with Members. Consideration was being given to facilitating this engagement which could include attendance at one of the Committee's meetings.

Officers also confirmed that residents at the new Care Leavers accommodation in London Road were happy to engage with Members (including the Corporate Parenting Board). Consideration was being given to the most appropriate mechanism to facilitate this engagement.

The Chair asked about engagement of the Committee re the outcomes of the process for improving return home interviews. It was confirmed that an action plan had been developed which could include reference to the Committee.

Helen Watson provided an update on the potential bid to the Government for capital funding to meet the needs of children with very complex needs. Work was ongoing and officers were hopeful that a bid could be submitted, though there was no guarantee of success.

16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

17. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

18. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

19. SEND INNOVATION AND IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME (SEND IIP) UPDATE

The Committee consider a report, set out at Agenda pages 29 to 35, which provided an overview of progress relating to the delivery of the SEND Innovation and Improvement Programme (SEND IIP).

Sarah Clarke – Chair of SEND Voices Wokingham, introduced the report alongside WBC officers. Sarah confirmed that SEND Voices Wokingham was the parent carer forum representing the voices of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

The report reminded Members that the SEND IIP had been established to deliver the SEND Strategy 0-25 (2021-24). The aspiration of the SEND Strategy was to ensure that the Borough was a great place for children and young people with SEND to grow up. There were already a number of good services in place alongside a range of private and publicly funded resources and an active and engaged parent carer forum. This was supported by a number of outstanding independent, voluntary, community and charity sector organisations. The SEND IIP was co-produced by WBC and this range of key stakeholders.

The SEND IIP meets every three months to review progress made by its four working groups which met monthly to drive improvements to services and support for children with SEND.

In the ensuing discussions, Members raised the following points:

What were the key messages being presented to the Committee? It was confirmed that the four working groups were working hard to deliver improvements on the ground. The four working groups focussed on:

- Strengthening local provision and quality of practice – better outcomes from appropriate, sustainable local provision;
- Efficient and effective processes, e.g. timeliness and quality of Educational, Health and Care Plans;
- Effective transitions at all ages, key stages and between different types of provision;
- Impact, intelligence and sufficiency – predicting need, strategic commissioning, performance management and effective use of resources.

Matthew Booth, SEN Consultant, stated that SEND impacted on every part of the Council. Members and officers needed to maintain a focus on continuous improvement. Positive change had been delivered but there was still room for improvement in order to achieve effective transitions for children and young people of all ages.

In 2021 there were a number of issues relating to transport – how had services improved in 2022? It was confirmed that there had been a significant focus on transport during the year, e.g. through improved letters to parents, improved processes and greater consistency of drivers and escorts. Although there had been overall improvement, work was ongoing to focus on outstanding issues in order to deliver a consistent high quality service for families.

What was the composition of the SEND IIP Board and how were the members selected? It was confirmed that the Board contained representatives from the education sector, health partners, SEND Voices, the voluntary and community sector, Children's Services officers and the Executive Member for Children's Services. A list of Board members would be circulated to the Committee.

One of the working groups was focussing on improving Education, Health and Care Plans. Were there any issues relating to academies? It was confirmed that the approach was the same for pupils at maintained schools and academies.

Was the Special Educational Needs and Disability Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) involved in developing the SEND IIP? It was confirmed that SENDIASS was more involved in providing impartial guidance and support to parents and children up to the age of 25 with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The experience and feedback from SENDIASS had been embedded into the improvement programme. It was suggested that SENDIASS be invited to a future meeting of the Committee.

One of the key challenges facing WBC related to matching SEND provision to growing levels of demand within the Borough. How was this challenge being addressed? It was confirmed that the majority of out-of-Borough expenditure related to special schools and residential places for children. Officers were continuing to explore options for the delivery of two new special schools within the Borough.

How was data being used to demonstrate progress relating to transitions? It was confirmed that various data sets were being used to build a picture of the experiences of children and young people as they transitioned at every stage. Data was also being collected on the experiences of young people and families through a range of activities. These included the outcomes of annual reviews, employment and training data. SEND Voices supported this work and had carried out a local survey which generated 440 responses from a cross section of the community. The new Ofsted inspection regime required that the views of children and young people be an integral part of the process, so this work would be of great benefit moving forwards.

Helen Watson confirmed that an update report on SEND and the Safety Valve Programme would be submitted to the Executive at its September meeting.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) progress relating to the delivery of the SEND Innovation and Improvement Programme (SEND IIP) be noted and welcomed;
- 2) the positive role played by SEND Voices Wokingham in driving progress be recognised;
- 3) the Chair and Vice-Chair be authorised to work with officers to develop recommendations from the Committee on the SEND IIP, for submission to the Council's Executive;
- 4) the recommendations to the Executive include a focus on accountability for all SEND services, including shared services;
- 5) the Committee's comments emphasise the view that SEND improvement and innovation is the shared responsibility of all Members and officers at WBC – part of everyone's business;
- 6) a list of SEND IIP Board members be circulated to the Committee;
- 7) a representative from SENDIASS be invited to attend a future meeting of the Committee.

20. UPDATE FROM THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

The Committee received an update from Prue Bray, the Council's Executive Member for Children's Services. The update focussed on three key issues, as follows:

Review of the Budget process – the Council's financial situation would not be totally clear until January 2023, following the Government's funding announcement at the end of December. However, there were a number of ongoing pressures including the impact of the war in Ukraine on energy prices, the rising level of inflation and the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic which included increased demand for SEND services. The Borough also had to deal with increasing numbers of unaccompanied and asylum seeking children.

Home to School Transport – arrangements and communication had improved compared to 2021. However, the budget was under severe pressure and would overspend in 2022. The

Council received 400 applications for transport in June 2022 which was twice the usual number. The increasing number of arrivals from places such as Hong Kong was also placing pressure on the provision of school places. This increased the pressure on the Home to School Transport budget.

Lack of local capacity for SEND provision (as discussed earlier). It was hoped that a new specialist school would be able to open in September 2023, but at this stage there was no guarantee of funding from the DfE. The DfE had offered to assist local authorities in addressing spending pressures relating to SEND.

Councillor Bray thanked officers and partners for the progress made on improvement areas.

In the ensuing discussion, Members raised the following points:

The ongoing pressure on the SEND budget was noted. What plans were being developed to increase the level of provision within the Borough? As discussed earlier, plans were being developed for two new specialist schools in the Borough. Although Addington was full, discussions were ongoing in relation to additional capacity. Officers were also exploring the potential for additional resource units within mainstream schools. Although there were positive developments it was recognised that there would always be a requirement for some acute provision outside the Borough.

In relation to funding, the High Needs Block was regularly overspent and the position was deteriorating year on year. What steps were being taken to address this issue? It was confirmed that a lot of work was going on locally and nationally relating to the High Needs Block. The Government had stated an expectation that the High Needs Block should balance over a three year period.

What was the latest position relating to the proposed extension of Bohunt? It was confirmed that Bohunt was due to submit a bid shortly – supported by WBC. The bid would be considered initially by the Regional Schools Commissioner.

Matthewsgreen Primary was due to open shortly. Was it being filled by catchment area children? It was confirmed that the school would be filled from the youngest year group up. There needed to be a balanced approach to ensure that other school budgets were not unbalanced by the opening of the new school.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Prue Bray be thanked for attending the meeting to answer Member questions;
- 2) In relation to future meetings, Member questions to the Executive Member be submitted in advance, if possible.

21. UPDATE ON CHILDREN'S STRATEGY DELIVERY

The Committee considered a report, set out at Agenda pages 17 to 28, which gave details of progress relating to the update/refresh of the Children's Services Strategy (2021/24).

The report stated that the focus of the Children's Services Strategy was to improve outcomes for all children and young people in the Borough. The strategic priorities and key actions in the Strategy were aligned with the Borough's Community Vision and were

designed to ensure that the Council and its partners worked together to ensure that children and young people were at the heart of all activity.

The report reminded Members of the Strategic Priorities in the Strategy and the business areas driving delivery. The report also highlighted key delivery successes to date, including:

- Establishment of a Serious Violence and Exploitation Board;
- A new approach to Corporate Parenting, including improved opportunities for Member engagement;
- A more effective performance cycle, driving improvement through learning;
- Stabilisation of the Social Care workforce – including growing our own through the ASYE programme;
- Launch of the new Emotional Wellbeing Hub in Wokingham, providing a single “front door” for access to support;
- Establishment of an Education Partnership for Wokingham, bringing together education providers to drive improved educational outcomes.

In the ensuing discussion, Members raised the following points:

The successes achieved to date were welcomed. However, it was also recognised that there were significant ongoing challenges including the rise in demand and increased complexity of cases. There were also ongoing issues relating to staff retention. It was becoming more difficult to fill specific posts such as occupational therapists.

In relation to the list of outcomes for children and young people, it was suggested that point 10 be amended to read “Have parents **or siblings** with mental health needs **and/or physical disabilities**”.

In relation to the Emotional Wellbeing Hub, were there plans for more schools to participate in the programme? It was confirmed that WBC had received Government funding for a Mental Health in Schools Team which was one of the few in the country to be managed within the local authority rather than by a health partner. At present, there was no additional funding to expand this scheme.

In relation to the focus point on children and young people living in low income families, was Children’s Services inputting into the Borough’s Anti-Poverty Strategy? It was confirmed that Children’s Services officers were involved in the Strategy, e.g. through school holiday activities – food programmes and local community events. Officers were also supporting schools in “poverty proofing” the school day – removing barriers to learning which existed because of the impacts of living in poverty.

RESOLVED: That progress on delivering the Children’s Services Strategy 2021/24 be noted and welcomed.

22. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Committee considered the dashboard of Key Performance Indicators for Children’s Services, set out at Agenda pages 55 to 68. The report gave details of Children’s Services performance during April to June 2022 (Q1). The report included eight dashboards with performance data, background, national context and any actions being taken to address indicators which were not moving in the right direction.

During the discussion of the report, Members raised the following points:

Dashboard 2 – Early Help – Improved performance was welcomed. The number of Early Help referrals increased by 40% from the previous quarter and 9% from the same period in 2021. The number of assessments increased from the previous quarter by 25% and 15% compared to the same period last year.

Dashboard 4 – Child Protection – WBC set a best practice standard of carrying out each Child Protection visit within 10 working days of the previous visit. Performance of 74% in Q1 against a target of 80% constituted high performance against a stretching target.

Dashboard 7 – Children missing from Home/Care. It was confirmed that 8 children missing from care in Q1 constituted a positive direction of travel compared to the previous two quarters.

RESOLVED: That the Q1 2022/23 Key Performance Indicator report be noted.

23. FORWARD PROGRAMME

The Committee considered its forward work programme, set out at Agenda pages 69 to 72. During the ensuing discussion, Members raised the following points:

The Chair suggested a brief Part II report to the November 2022 meeting on accommodation issues linked to unaccompanied/asylum seeker children and young people coming into the Borough. A more detailed report could then be submitted to the meeting in January 2023. This could include an assessment of emotional/mental health issues. Prue Bray confirmed that a report on children in care, linked to this issue, had been considered recently by the Corporate Parenting Board. That report could provide a useful introduction for Members at the O&S meeting on 2 November.

Pauline Helliar-Symons reminded Members that the Committee used to receive a summary of Ofsted reports for all schools in the Borough and suggested that these reports be reintroduced. Members did not support this proposal but agreed that officers explore the potential for including hyperlinks to recent Ofsted reports within the regular reports.

The Chair suggested a report to the March 2023 meeting providing an update on the first six months of care leaver CAMHS provision.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) the Committee receive an introductory Part II report on unaccompanied children/asylum seekers at the meeting on 2 November 2022;
- 2) the recent Corporate Parenting Board report on unaccompanied children be appended to the report as an introduction for Members;
- 3) officers consider including hyperlinks to recent Ofsted reports in the Agenda papers for future meetings;
- 4) a report be submitted to the March 2023 meeting providing a six month update on care leavers CAMHS provision.

24. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That, under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

25. SCHOOLS CAUSING CONCERN

This item was considered in a Part II session.

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON 26 SEPTEMBER 2022 FROM 7.00 PM TO 9.00 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Andy Croy, Phil Cunnington, Adrian Mather (Chairman), Alistair Neal, Jackie Rance, Beth Rowland (Vice-Chairman), Rachele Shepherd-DuBey and Alison Swaddle

Others Present

David Hare, Executive Member Health, Wellbeing and Adult Services
Pauline Jorgensen (substituting Rebecca Margetts) (virtual)
Madeleine Shopland, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist
Matt Pope, Director Adult Social Care
Ingrid Slade, Assistant Director of Population Health, Integration and Partnerships
Lewis Willing, Head of Health and Social Care Integration
Sarah Deason, Healthwatch Wokingham Borough
Jo Reeves, Newbury Locality Manager, BOB ICB
Alex Hills, Wellbeing Service Manager (Primary Care), Oxfordshire Mind

13. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted from Rebecca Margetts.

14. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 19 July 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair subject to the inclusion of Alison Swaddle having attended the meeting virtually.

15. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Andy Croy declared a general personal interest on the grounds that he worked for an Adult Social Care company.

16. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

17. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

18. MIND IN BERKSHIRE - WOKINGHAM WELLBEING SERVICE

Alex Hills, Wellbeing Service Manager (Primary Care), Oxfordshire Mind, provided an update on the Wokingham Wellbeing Service.

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

- The service provided 1-1 person-centred support for mental health and wellbeing to service users. This helped to reduce pressure on other services, particularly Primary Care. The service also introduced tools and techniques to maintain or improve wellbeing, pro-actively linked people with services and community resources, and supported them to identify and utilise existing support. It helped to support the Wokingham voluntary and community sector to identify, and respond collaboratively, to local mental health and wellbeing needs.

- The service was for those who were 18 and over, and who were experiencing a number of different issues such as social isolation and loneliness, mild-moderate mental health concerns, drug and alcohol issues. A service was also provided for carers.
- Alex Hills outlined the service access criteria in more detail.
- Service users must be aged 18+ and registered with a Wokingham GP practice or a resident of Wokingham Borough. They could be:
 - People with mild to moderate mental health issues (e.g. mild/moderate depression or anxiety)
 - People who may need non-clinical support for stress, poor sleep, difficulties concentrating or relaxing, feeling overwhelmed etc.
 - Those with social issues or practical issues (including drug and alcohol use, abuse, bereavement, loneliness, and isolation).
 - Those who would benefit from having a broad chat about wellbeing (and need more than a 10 min GP appt).
 - Families and carers who were experiencing an impact on their wellbeing or mental health.
- Work was undertaken in all of the GP practices in the Wokingham Primary Care Networks.
- Alex Hills outlined how the service was delivered. There were 4 Wellbeing Workers who delivered the sessions across the Borough, and a Project Manager. When someone was referred to the service, they could receive up to 6 non clinical 1-2-1 support sessions. Alex Hills emphasised that it was not a counselling or befriending service, but person centred, goal focused practical support. The service was offered in different ways; in person, virtually or via telephone.
- Alex Hills highlighted some of the key projects since the service had begun in February 2021. Members were pleased to note that by August 2022 the service was receiving over 100 referrals a month.
- It was noted that in the case of 99.8% of those referred, contact had been attempted within 3 working days.
- As of September 2022, the service had, had over 1,000 referrals.
- A short Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (SWEMWBS) was completed at each initial session, and a comparative measure at the end of service, to measure the impact on the service user. The target was for a satisfaction rate of 90%, but 99.5% had been achieved in the last quarter.
- The service wanted to survey other professionals such as GP Practice staff, the Voluntary and Community Sector and statutory partners which regards to their views on the service. Service user events would be held to gauge how improvements could be made.
- Members noted the experiences of an individual service user and feedback from service users.
- Alex Hills outlined how the service supported the Voluntary and Community Sector:
 - Mental Health First Aider Forum – quarterly meeting for MHFA-trained professionals and residents in Wokingham to connect/refresh skills/share knowledge and experiences. Five meetings had been held so far.
 - Mental Health & Wellbeing Community Alliance – bi-monthly meeting space for VCS group representatives to discuss community mental health and wellbeing needs, challenges, and successes. Six sessions had been held so far and topics had included returning to face to face working and supporting those experiencing a mental health crisis.

- A Member asked about workload and capacity. Alex Hills commented that one of the administration demands of the service was contacting new referrals as soon as possible. The service was getting to the upper level of its capacity.
- Members questioned whether face to face appointments were preferred, and were informed that around 50% of appointments were held in person at practices. A hybrid approach was offered to meet differing needs.
- A Member questioned if the service worked with the Shinfield GP practices and was informed that they were part of the Central Reading Primary Care Network.
- A Member noted that there was a gap between the number of referrals and the number of people who had attended a first appointment and questioned the reason for this. Alex Hills commented that around an 80% attendance was expected. The reason for this could be a need to send further reminders.
- Members asked what the average time was between initial referral and the first appointment and was informed that it varied between the Primary Care Networks. In Earley+ there was a higher demand, and the wait time was around two to three weeks. In other Primary Care Networks where demand was lower, the wait time was lower.
- In response to a question regarding risk assessments, Alex Hills commented that the initial session was 45 minutes, and this helped to assess the level of need. Individuals were made aware of a confidentiality statement which highlighted that if anything was mentioned that led to concern for the safety of the individual or others, then this would need to be shared further. If suicidal thoughts were mentioned a specific process would be followed. The Wellbeing Worker could also look back on session notes.
- The Committee questioned what training and experience the Wellbeing Workers had. Alex Hills explained that the role was not clinical. In house training was provided around topics such as Mental Health First Aid, domestic abuse, and active listening.
- A Member queried whether those referred to the service were completing all six sessions or whether some dropped out earlier because they felt that no longer required the service. Alex Hills stated that there was a good completion rate but that there were some who did not complete the course.
- Members expressed surprise that the percentage of younger people referred to the service was not higher. Alex Hills stated that it was higher in other areas that the service was run. A recent conference run by MIND Berkshire suggested that there was a level of demand.
- It was clarified that the service was offered to those who either lived in the Borough or who were registered with a GP in the Borough but lived outside the Borough.
- The Committee queried whether the service was offered to the other Berkshire authorities and if so, if there was more that the Borough Council needed to be offering to support in a similar way. Members were informed that the service was not currently offered to the other Berkshire authorities.
- A Member queried whether the service had been funded by a donation which had stipulated that it only be for Wokingham Borough. He went on to question what due diligence had been carried out regarding the source of the donation. The initial press release had stated that funding would be for 18 months. Members questioned funding going forwards. Alex Hills stated that the service had recently been successful in applying for funding with the Council for the next 3 years with a possible further 2 years.
- It was expected that referrals would continue at 100 per month.

- Ingrid Slade clarified that pilot work had initially been funded by donation, but the work was now fully funded by the Better Care Fund. She presumed that the first £250,000 had been spent on the service but would seek clarification.
- Members questioned whether MIND Berkshire was working with volunteer counselling services such as ARC, and were informed that they worked with others at the Voluntary and Community Sector Alliance Forum meetings. Alex Hills agreed to discuss the matter further with Councillor Shepherd-DuBey who was the Council's representative on ARC.
- In response to a Member question Alex Hills confirmed that the delivery of appointments via video would continue.
- Members asked whether the level of engagement varied between the surgeries and were informed that it did. Some practices had a high referral level, and in others more engagement work was required.
- A Member questioned how the service could grow its capacity. Alex Hills stated that with further funding, additional staff could be considered.

RESOLVED: That the update on MIND in Berkshire be noted and that Alex Hills be thanked for his presentation.

19. BERKSHIRE WEST AUTUMN COVID-19 VACCINATION PLAN SEPT - DEC 2022

Jo Reeves, Newbury Locality Manager, BOB ICB, provided an update on the Berkshire West Autumn Covid 19 Vaccination Plan September-December 2023.

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

- The Plan had been adopted by the Berkshire West Vaccination Action Group which was chaired by Susan Parsonage.
- Invites for the autumn booster vaccinations were now being sent out from the NHS via text and letter, to those who were eligible. The national booking system was open to over 65's, front line health and social care workers, patients who were pregnant or at high risk of poor outcomes from Covid.
- Primary Care Networks were prioritising patients who were in care homes and those who were housebound. The vaccinations were being co-administered with the flu vaccines where practicable.
- A draft Vaccines and Equalities Plan was recently presented to the Vaccination Action Group. The Plan identified priority groups for community engagement, targeted communications, and the Health on the Move service.
- With regards to overall coverage in Wokingham, all of the Primary Care Networks were on board with a small number of pharmacies operating at low intensity.
- As mitigation and to reinforce the Covid vaccination supply in Wokingham, Oxford Health would be continuing the outreach service, which would be moving to the Civic Centre shortly. They would be operating 2 days a week.
- The overall national target was a take up of 75% of those who were eligible. This would be monitored, and data reports would be shared fortnightly and interrogated by the Vaccination Action Group. Information would also be emailed to the local authorities.
- A Member commented that the national booking website had indicated that a lot of venues were providing vaccines on a first come, first served basis, but that on arrival at the venue, people were finding that this was not the case. Jo Reeves appreciated that this was frustrating. Feedback suggested that providers would

- often try, if able, to vaccinate on a walk in basis, but then may have to keep back their vaccination stock for booked appointments. She would feed back the issue to NHS Digital who were responsible for maintaining the national website.
- Members raised concerns regarding the location of vaccination centres for residents. Reading town centre and Wokingham town centre were not particularly convenient for residents throughout the Borough. Jo Reeves emphasised that there were a number of vaccination providers within the Borough, including PCNs and some pharmacies. There was also the Outreach team. The NHS target was that there should be access within a 30 minute drive. Within Berkshire West most residents had access within a 15 minute drive, although it was appreciated that not everyone could drive.
 - Members requested a list of venues where the vaccination was being offered within the Borough.
 - A Member commented that in the last round of vaccinations, there had been a gap in provision for those aged 17-19 who had not been covered by the school service. Ingrid Slade clarified that the autumn booster was not available for this age group and was for the older age groups and vulnerable population, only. The reference to 5-11 year olds in the Plan referred to a different programme with this age group receiving its first and second dose of the vaccine.
 - A Member questioned why the take up target was not higher than 75%. Jo Reeves indicated that this was a national target and in line with the national flu jab take up target. Take up in West Berkshire and Wokingham in the older age and vulnerable condition cohorts had far exceeded this.
 - In response to a Member question regarding the target completion date of the Plan, Jo Reeves indicated that there was a target that everybody who lived in a care home for older adults or was housebound, received their vaccination by the end of October, and the remainder of the programme be completed by 24 December. Advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) was awaited as to whether the programme should be extended throughout the rest of winter.
 - Members questioned whether greater use could be made of the mobile units to make the vaccinations more accessible for those in the Borough who were more remote. Jo Reeves explained that the two vans were being prioritised as part of the equalities part of the programme, to target vulnerable groups who had not yet received a vaccination.
 - Members were informed that Reading had funding for a Community Vaccination Champion. Members emphasised that there were also areas of health inequality within the Borough.
 - The Committee requested that they be updated on the success or otherwise of the programme once it had been fully implemented.
 - In response to a Member question regarding ensuring that social care staff received their booster, Jo Reeves emphasised the need for communication. There would be a BOB wide Communication Plan for the broader population wide messaging and templates which could be used on a more local level. Support would be provided by the local authority communications teams. Front line health and social care workers were able to self-declare when using the national booking website which expediated the booking process.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Berkshire West Autumn Covid 19 Vaccination Plan September-December 2023, be noted;
- 2) Jo Reeves be thanked for her presentation and be invited to a later meeting to provide an update on the vaccination programme.

20. HEALTHWATCH WOKINGHAM BOROUGH

Sarah Deason, Business Development Director of The Advocacy People, provided a presentation to Members.

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

- The Advocacy People were the new host provider for the Healthwatch Wokingham Borough service. The service had started on 1 April.
- Sarah Deason outlined the role and remit of Healthwatch Wokingham Borough including making sure that the voice of the public was heard and signposting. Issues could also be escalated to Healthwatch England.
- The current focus was on recruiting staff and volunteers. No staff and only a couple of volunteers had TUPE'D across from the previous providers.
- Healthwatch had an office in the Wokingham Charity and Community Hub which made it more visible. An online poll had shown that awareness of Healthwatch Wokingham Borough was quite low, so a focus was to improve awareness. Even though the email address and phone number remained the same, very few comments from the public had been received, although this was now increasing.
- Healthwatch Wokingham Borough was networking with the voluntary sector and statutory services and sharing information with the public, to raise awareness.
- Advocacy People ran separate contracts for the three Healthwatch services across Berkshire West, which meant economies of scale could be provided e.g. for staffing meetings.
- Priorities and projects were starting to be identified.
- Members requested that the slides be provided prior to the meeting in future to assist with questioning.
- A Member referred to a tweet that Healthwatch Wokingham Borough had issued in August which had asked people for their good news stories with the hashtags #positivity matters and #thankful Thursday. He questioned whether this approach was in line with Healthwatch's remit. Sarah Deason explained that Healthwatch England had been clear about what it required from local Healthwatch and that was to hear people's experiences, both positive and negative. This provided a balanced picture. Healthwatch was acutely aware of the difficulties in the NHS but there were many staff who appreciated good feedback on their hard work. When things went wrong Healthwatch also wanted to hold the relevant organisations to account.
- A Member commented that access to GPs was an issue of concern in the Borough, and questioned whether the lack of a GP at the Burma Hills surgery had been raised with Healthwatch Wokingham Borough. Sarah Deason confirmed that it had not.
- A Member referred to Healthwatch Wokingham Borough's website and questioned how who formed the Board as this section was empty. Sarah Deason explained that the previous providers of Healthwatch Wokingham Borough had been a company interest company and had a Board which ran this and were the advisory Group for the service. Advocacy People had a different model, in that the advisory group at a local level, were not involved in the governance of a charity. All the information was on the Advocacy People website. In Wokingham Borough there

would be an advisory group of volunteers who would scrutinise the work plan and work being undertaken. Members suggested that the Healthwatch website be updated to explain this.

- In response to a Member comment regarding Healthwatch assisting residents in making complaints, Sarah Deason clarified that an individual NHS complaint would be supported by the Advocacy People with the Independent Health Complaints Advocacy. Sarah Deason offered to provide the Committee with information on this if required.
- The Committee questioned how many members of staff and volunteers were currently in place, and was informed that there 2 employees in Wokingham in addition to Sarah, and 2 volunteers, although discussions were being held with more potential volunteers.
- In response to a Member question as to areas of priority identified that needed attention, Sarah Deason indicated that no priorities had been handed over by the previous Healthwatch providers. Healthwatch Wokingham Borough had been looking at different aspects such as maternity, self-care, information on vaccinations, and access to GP and dental services.
- A Member questioned the level of funding provided by the Council to Healthwatch Wokingham Borough and the length of the contract. Matt Pope indicated that the value of the contract was the same as previously with an inflationary uplift, and was for 3 years with an option to an extend.
- Members questioned whether access to dentistry was high on Healthwatch Wokingham Borough's agenda. Sarah Deason indicated that it was. As well as being a local issue, it was also a national issue, and information was also being fed upwards into the national picture.

RESOLVED: That the update from Healthwatch Wokingham Borough be noted and Sarah Deason be thanked for her presentation.

21. ADULT SERVICES KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Matt Pope, Director Adult Social Care, presented the Adult Services Key Performance Indicators for Q1.

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

- Members were advised that the key performance indicators needed to be seen in the context of the current unprecedented demand post Covid. Safeguarding concerns were up 76% for example, and front door contacts for Adult Social Care were up 35%.
- There was a pressure on Adult Social Care nationally. Matt Pope emphasised that there was a need to keep the pressure up on the future Funding Bill for Adult Social Care, and to create a workforce to meet that demand.
- A Member commented that it would be useful to have comparative data in all the tables such as the direction of change.
- In response to a Member question Matt Pope confirmed that he was still committed to setting ambitious stretch targets, although against a backdrop of the current climate.
- In response to a Member question as to why safeguarding referrals had increased by 76%, Matt Pope commented that this was often the result of inappropriate referrals from the Ambulance Service. The Ambulance Service was under considerable pressure. Members questioned what an inappropriate referral looked

- like and were informed that the referral may have information missing which had to be followed up. Work was being undertaken across Berkshire West to address this.
- A Member asked what the level of referrals would look like without the inappropriate referrals. Matt Pope agreed to feed back to the Committee.
 - Councillor Hare indicated that a safeguarding training session would be held for all Members.
 - With regards to *AS2: Social work assessments allocated to commence within 28 days of the requests (counted at point of allocation)*, Members were pleased to note that the waiting list had been reduced to zero. A Member asked whether the redeployment of staff to deal with the waitlist had had an impact elsewhere in the service. Mat Pope indicated that the Council had temporary flexible resource which was moved around to help with pressures. Previously this staff had been paid for by the NHS to help with discharge from hospital. However, this funding had since ceased. These staff had been moved across to help with health assessment levels.
 - With regards to *AS5: New permanent admissions to residential or nursing care homes (65+) (ASCOF 2A2)*. A Member questioned whether the aim of reducing these levels conflicted the aim of reducing bed blocking. Matt Pope explained that there were different pathways on leaving hospital – those that required no support up to those who had to go into nursing homes. Wokingham was good at providing people with sufficient levels of support to enable them to go home, and only those that really needed to, went into residential care. It was noted that there was a national issue of insufficient nursing home care places. Matt Pope referred to a recent Government announcement of an additional £500million nationally to create additional capacity. It was suggested that the commentary relating to the Key Performance Indicator be amended.

RESOLVED: That the Adult Services Key Performance Indicators Q1 be noted.

22. FORWARD PROGRAMME 2022-23

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

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

- The Chairman indicated that he had held meetings with the Director Adult Social Care, the Assistant Director of Population Health, Integration and Partnerships and the Clerk to discuss how the Committee's work programme could align with priorities and best add value.
- Members had found the briefing note produced by Officers to be useful.
- Members requested a broader update on mental health post Covid for its November.
- Members had previously expressed an interest in receiving an update on the Primary Care Networks. This was scheduled for November. A Member suggested that each surgery be asked about the particular challenges that they were facing. The Executive Member suggested that the Committee receive information on what a GP surgery was about.
- An update on NHS Continuing Healthcare was scheduled for November.
- The clerk questioned whether the Committee still wished to receive an update on the continence service and confirmed that new Healthwatch had not received queries about this service. The Committee requested that an update be scheduled for the January meeting.

- The Autism Strategy had previously been scheduled for June 2023. Members requested that this be brought forwards to the January 2023 meeting.
- Members were encouraged to put forwards topics which they wanted the Committee to consider. A Member suggested that South Central Ambulance Service and Westcall be added. The Clerk indicated that the West Berkshire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee had these items on their work programme, and it would be useful to hear the outcome of their discussions.
- A Member asked that the managers of Burma Hill surgery and Wokingham Medical Centre Surgery be invited to a future meeting.

RESOLVED: That the forward programme be updated and noted.

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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
AUDIT COMMITTEE
HELD ON 28 SEPTEMBER 2022 FROM 7.00 PM TO 9.15 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Rachel Burgess (Chair), Maria Gee (Vice-Chair), David Davies, Peter Harper, John Kaiser and Mike Smith and Mike Drake (Independent Audit Committee member)

Also Present

Madeleine Shopland, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist
Helen Thompson, Ernst and Young (online)
Stephan Van Der Merwe, Ernst & Young (online)
Graham Cadle, Assistant Director Finance (online)
Andrew Moulton, Assistant Director Governance
Susan Parsonage, Chief Executive

24. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

Councillor Maher attended the meeting virtually.

25. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 27 July 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The Chair welcome Mike Drake, Independent Audit Committee member, to his first meeting of the Committee.

Councillor Gee commented that she had requested that the Committee receive a more detailed explanation as to how the assets were accounted for, and an estimate of the amount taken out of the cost when accumulated depreciation. She commented that the estimate had still not been provided.

Councillor Harper indicated that with regards to the historic data relating to complaints that he had requested at the meeting, the further information provided had covered that previous two years and largely focused on early resolution against Stage 1 complaints. He wished to see data regarding overall complaints from a longer period.

26. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest submitted.

27. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no Public questions.

28. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

29. UPDATE ON 2020/21 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

Graham Cadle, Assistant Director Finance and Helen Thompson, Ernst & Young, updated the Committee on the 2020/21 Statement of Accounts.

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

- The audit had substantially finished and a draft report of the 2020/21 accounts had been produced earlier in the year. At that points issues relating to infrastructure assets and pensions had been outstanding.
- The issue relating to pensions had an impact on all the Berkshire local authorities. It had been hoped that it would have been signed off by September, which had not happened. The infrastructure assets issue was a national issue and also remained outstanding.
- The latest anticipated timescale for the resolution of the pensions issue was now November.
- Helen Thompson indicated that Officers had been told that the 2021 accounts for the Pension Fund would be considered at the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Council Audit Committee the previous week. However, it appeared that only the 2019/20 accounts had been considered. An update had been sought from Deloitte but had not yet been received.
- Helen Thompson referred to the estimate that Councillor Gee had requested at the previous meeting, and clarified that to get to even an estimate would require a significant amount of officer time, which was felt not to be a good use of resources when the decision relating to how infrastructure assets would be made, was still outstanding.
- Councillor Kaiser questioned if it was likely that the Pension Fund would ask for additional money from the Council. The Assistant Director Finance commented that this was unlikely. Helen Thompson added that the issue was not with the Pension Fund itself. The delays had been caused with RBWM's accounts. There had been a number of objections relating to the 2019/20 accounts which had required resolution, which had significantly held up the auditors. The caveat on the letter that Ernst & Young required to sign off Wokingham's accounts was, that until Deloitte had completed the audit on the 2021/22 RBWM accounts, they did not have sufficient assurance that there were not any potential issues that might impact the Pension Fund.
- Councillor Harper questioned how likely it was that the November target date would be reached. The Assistant Director Finance commented that this was the best estimate to date. Officers and Ernst & Young were doing all they could to progress the issue. Councillor Harper questioned whether the Chief Executive could write to RBWM Council to encourage a quicker resolution. Susan Parsonage, Chief Executive, indicated that she would work with Graham Ebers, Section 151 Officer, on this.
- Councillor Gee commented that the Council was in a period between year end and when the accounts were signed, and there were post balance sheet events to consider. With the recent extreme reactions to the financial markets, particularly the gilt market, Councillor Gee stated that the Bank of England was seeking to reassure the market so that defined benefit pension schemes did not become insolvent. She questioned the likelihood of the Pension Fund matter being even further delayed due to issues with the gilt market. Helen Thompson commented that this impact would need to be considered at all Councils in their going concern disclosures so this would be kept under review. Councillor Gee went on to ask if there was likely to be a problem in signing off the Pension Scheme accounts due to the current state of the market. Helen Thompson responded that it was too early to tell if it would cause a further delay.
- In response to a question from Mike Drake, Helen Thompson clarified that the auditors were required to audit the accounts of the Pension Fund Scheme. There was an actuarial fund that the pension fund auditors relied on and on which Ernst &

Young relied on as part of its procedures for the Council. All the processes that Ernst & Young and the pension fund auditors had been required to undertake, had been largely completed. However, the pension fund auditor was still currently unable to provide the letter of assurance which was required to sign off Wokingham's 2020-21 accounts.

- Councillor Maher questioned how many organisations were impacted by the pension fund issue, and was informed that it was those Berkshire local authorities who were part of the Berkshire Pension Fund scheme, and Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service.
- Councillor Kaiser asked what would happen if RBWM received qualified accounts. He went on to state that Wokingham Council was a large contributor to the pension fund and yet did not have a voting representative on the Trustee's Board. Helen Thompson indicated that if RBWM received qualified accounts, unless the issue directly related to the Pension Fund, Wokingham would not be impacted. The Assistant Director Finance agreed to look into the issue regarding the Council's representative on the Trustee Board.

RESOLVED: That the update on the 2020/21 Statement of Accounts be noted.

30. WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL AUDIT COMMITTEE - AUDIT PROGRESS UPDATE - INFRASTRUCTURE ASSETS

The Committee considered an update on the infrastructure assets issue.

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

- Helen Thompson indicated that the report detailed the accounting requirements under the CIPA code, an overview of the position at Wokingham, options to move forward and possible implications of doing so, and an example of how the audit report might look if the limitation of scope route was undertaken.
- Councillor Gee stated that when an asset was not fully depreciated and had a positive net book value at the year end, but had been replaced or decommissioned, the error would also impact the balance sheet where asset values would be overstated. However, this would not affect the reported overall financial position of the Council. She questioned how the Council's overall financial position was not affected. Helen Thompson stated that it was not because all the entries were reversed out via the Movement in Reserve Statement. It did impact the gross book value and gross accumulated depreciation and worked its way through and reversed back out. Only in very limited circumstances would it make a difference to reported income and expenditure.
- In response to a question from Councillor Gee, the Assistant Director Finance clarified that information sent showed different accounting entries. It was difficult to calculate the value of an asset such as a road. Working to a 'real' value would require a significant amount of resources.
- Councillor Smith noted that two Councils audited by Ernst & Young had taken Option 2 (The Council accepts a modification of the audit opinion and includes appropriate disclosure at Note 24 of the 2020/21 Statement of Accounts (and elsewhere as required). He questioned how many Councils had taken Option 1 (The Council waits until CIPFA has updated its proposed adaption to the Code of Practice; or for DLUHC to prepare a statutory instrument) or had not yet made a decision. Helen Thompson indicated that those who had accepted the second option had done so in relation to a 2019 audit and the other for a 2021 audit. The others were in discussion. Whilst many had at first lent towards the limitation of

scope route in order to close their accounts, the November deadline for the accounts and the indication from CIPFA as to when information may be available, meant that many were now preferring to wait.

- Since the report had been written, the timescale for a potential statutory instrument, had slipped.
- There was no guarantee that a solution from CIPFA would fully resolve the issue.
- Councillor Davies requested a summary of where the assets were stated in the accounts.
- In response to a question from Councillor Maher, the Assistant Director Finance confirmed that the Council was being constantly updated and CIPFA had listened to local authorities' concerns.
- Mike Drake questioned whether the profit loss on the disposable of fixed assets went below the surplus or deficit for the year through reserves. Helen Thompson confirmed this was the case except for assets held for sale and investment properties.
- With regards to the audit qualification for the year, Mike Drake expressed surprise that the ongoing points raised by CIPFA had not been referenced. This suggested inadequate accounting records. Helen Thompson stated that it was technically accurate and that the audit report was written on behalf of EY. However, should management wish to disclose any additional context to these points raised by CIPFA and any additional information regarding the Council's state of infrastructure records, this should be done in an additional narrative to the financial statements.
- In response to a question from Councillor Gee, Helen Thompson emphasised that it was important not to conflate the infrastructure and property portfolio.
- The Assistant Director Finance indicated that it was likely that a decision would need to be taken in November.

RESOLVED: That the Infrastructure Assets update be noted.

31. CORPORATE RISK REGISTER REVIEW

Andrew Moulton, Assistant Director Governance, and the Chief Executive presented the Corporate Risk Register.

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

- An additional risk had been added – Risk 18: Elections Act 2022 implementation, due to the forthcoming voter identification requirement. Guidance was awaited on its implementation. It was hoped that this would be a short-term risk.
- The risk regarding financial resilience had been escalated further due to the Council's current financial position.
- The implementation of the Public Protection Partnership project had been successfully implemented so the relating risk had been removed from the Corporate Risk Register and de-escalated to the departmental risk register.
- The assessment around risk relating to the corporate governance risk had been reduced due to work carried out following the LGA Peer Challenge. This included the appointment of the independent Audit Committee member.
- The Chief Executive referred to increased risks around financial sustainability. She referred to the inflationary challenge which had a big impact on utilities, construction costs, and contract costs. Following the pandemic there had been an increase in the number and complexity of Adult Social Care and Children's Services cases. Cost and demand had increased. Drivers around increasing costs included an

increase in population at an above average rate, with differing needs. The Chief Executive referred to the large incoming community from Hong Kong, refugees from Ukraine and unaccompanied child asylum seekers.

- It was noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee would be receiving a report on the Council's financial position. At present a shortfall of £4million was anticipated for 2023/24. However, the Local Government Settlement was due in December 2022, which could have a further impact.
- Members were informed that the forthcoming Adult Social Care reforms would have a big financial impact. Additional staff would be required in order for the Council to meet the requirements under these reforms.
- With regards to SEND provision, discussions were being had with the Department for Education regarding types of provision within the Borough, and earlier support. Changes to the community and movement within the Borough had increased budget pressure.
- Councillor Kaiser commented that there was starting to be a need for the Council to look at its assets such as Dinton Country Park and California Country Park, and assess how much income they generated against the investment put in to it. The Chief Executive agreed that it was important for the Council to understand its return on investments.
- The Chief Executive indicated that the Council had introduced a Change Programme which covered factors such as assets and contracts. It would be good to hear Members views and ideas as part of the Overview and Scrutiny process.
- Councillor Harper queried the way the impact of each risk was measured. The Assistant Director Governance indicated that the criteria used to assess likelihood and impact was detailed in the Risk Management Policy and Guidance.
- Councillor Smith questioned the rating of the risk around cyber security. The Assistant Director Governance explained that risk appetite was also part of the assessment. The Committee would be having a training course on risk management in November.
- Mike Drake praised the presentation of the Corporate Risk Register. He went on to question whether there was a reputational risk for the financial situation of potentially having unqualified accounts. Mike Drake also expressed surprise that cyber security was not rated higher.
- Councillor Harper queried whether an arrow could help highlight the direction of travel for the different risks. Councillor Gee questioned whether longer term trends should be depicted.
- With regards to the cost-of-living crisis, Councillor Gee queried whether civil unrest had been considered as part of the major emergency response. She also asked about mitigation against issues with recruitment and retention of workforce. The Chief Executive commented that the workforce issue was a nationwide problem and particularly in the local area where cost of living and housing was high. This was being monitored. Councillor Gee suggested that reference be made to this on the Corporate Risk Register.
- The Assistant Director Governance commented that the Council was not actively planning re civil unrest but were planning to ensure that its emergency response, whatever the emergency, was robust. Councillor Smith asked whether Members should know more about the Gold, Silver and Bronze approach, and what role Members should play in an emergency. The Chief Executive indicated that this was an accepted business practice. During the pandemic Officers had met regularly with the Group Leaders about the Council's response to the pandemic. The Group Leaders had then disseminated information to their Members.

- Councillors Smith and Davies expressed surprise that the risk relating to uncontrolled development had not increased and suggested that its rating be reviewed.
- Councillor Smith also asked who challenged the assessment of the risks, and was informed that there was an officer Risk Champion Group which met monthly, and the Corporate Risk Register was considered by the Corporate Leadership Team. The Audit Committee would seek assurance.
- Councillor Burgess questioned whether the risk around the cost of borrowing was likely to increase and what mitigations were in place. The Assistant Director Finance responded that the cost of borrowing position was reviewed daily, and external experts assisted with that. At the moment, the position had been positive due to the Council's balance levels and treasury management was showing a positive position against the budget. Following the recent situation with the financial market, the Council would need to reprofile, looking at individual investments and what increased borrowing on these would entail.
- In response to a comment from Councillor Kaiser regarding fixed loans, the Assistant Director Finance indicated that a number of these loans finished that year. Impacts such as revising the Capital Programme, and the level of CIL investment, would affect what needed to be reborrowed.
- Councillor Gee expressed concern regarding the gilt market and questioned how much the Council had invested in gilts. The Assistant Director agreed to feed back to the Committee.
- Councillor Burgess felt that the mitigating action of 'increasing local SEN provision' was quite vague. The Chief Executive assured Members that a detailed plan would be provided the next day to the Department for Education. Briefings were being held with the Leader and the relevant Executive Member.
- Members were pleased to see the inclusion of a risk around the forthcoming elections legislation.
- Mike Drake commented that the pandemic and emergency response risk was at the lowest level, and questioned whether this should be increased. He suggested building action plans with the voluntary sector as a mitigating action.
- In response to a question from Councillor Maher around communication, the Chief Executive explained that behind the Corporate Risk Register there were also detailed departmental and project risk registers.
- It was felt that the wording of Risk 11 High Needs Block overspend, explanation, could be further clarified.

RESOLVED: That the Corporate Risk Register be reviewed, and it be determined that the risks were being actively managed.

32. 2022/23 INTERNAL AUDIT AND INVESTIGATION PLAN - QUARTER 1 PROGRESS UPDATE (TO 30 JUNE 2022) AND IN-YEAR REVIEW OF 2022/23 INTERNAL AUDIT AND INVESTIGATION PLAN (SEPTEMBER 2022)

The Committee considered the 2022/23 Internal Audit and Investigation Plan – Quarter 1 Progress Update (to 30 June 2022) and In Year Review of 2022/23 Internal Audit and Investigation Plan (September 2022).

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

- The Debtors audit had received a Category 3 level of assurance.
- The report detailed the follow up action being under taken by the Internal Audit team

- The format of the report would be improved for future meetings, to provide more detail, particularly around any High recommendations.
- The Committee was asked to approve an in year change to the Internal Audit Plan. It was proposed that some audits move to the next financial year, and that for others assurance was provided via another mechanism. The Assistant Director Governance took the Committee through the proposed changes.
 - Treasury management – proposed deferral. Internal Audit had recently looked at Treasury Management.
 - Corporate governance.
 - Climate emergency – an audit had been conducted. It was suggested that the more detailed audit be deferred.
 - High Needs Block – assurance via Safety Valve work and inspections.
 - Public Health – proposed that audit be deferred.
 - Asylum seeking children – assurance provided via other means.
 - Risk management – audit proposed to be deferred as assurance provided via other means following the Local Government Association Peer Challenge.
- The proposed changes to the Plan would generate a modest saving.
- Councillor Davies was of the view that the reasons for the proposed amendments to the Plan were comprehensive.
- It was confirmed that the full-time post vacancy would not be filled at that time.
- In response to a Member question, the Assistant Director Governance explained the following up of actions following an audit.
- Councillor Maher queried when the consultancy/management requests for internal audit work that had been requested in Quarter 2, had been agreed. The Assistant Director Governance explained that within the Internal Audit Plan there had been provision for management to request ad hoc pieces of Internal Audit work.
- Councillor Maher queried whether the Internal Audit team carried out value for money audits. He was informed that value for money was considered as part of the scope of every audit. The Assistant Director Governance confirmed that this was not quantified but he would discuss with the Head of Internal Audit and Investigations, how this could be done in the future.
- Councillor Smith questioned whether a higher work load was necessary if some items could be deferred. The Assistant Director Governance commented that the Internal Audit Plan needed to be considered over a longer period than a year. Given the short period of time and one off nature of the request, he was satisfied with the proposal to amend the Plan.
- Councillor Smith questioned whether deferring the external assessment of the Internal Audit team to quarter 4 would be too late. The Assistant Director Governance commented that a high rating had been received following the previous assessment, and that each year the team also undertook a self-assessment. He was not aware of any areas of slippage against the standard.
- Councillor Gee expressed concern regarding the proposed deferral of the treasury management audit, given the volatile financial situation and the awaited outcome of the consultation around the Minimum Revenue Provision. Councillor Burgess commented that an audit in this area had been recently carried out and the Committee received the Treasury Management Outturn reports. Discussions could be had with the Head of Internal Audit and Investigations regarding the timing of the audit.
- Councillor Kaiser requested the debtors audit report. The Committee was reminded that Officers could be invited to provide Members with more detail if required. Councillor Burgess agreed that the Committee needed more visibility of the reports of those audits which received a 3 of 4 rating.

- The Assistant Director Finance provided more detail on the debtors report and some of the actions being taken. The high risk areas included how the debtors team worked with other services, information raised was cleared, and queries dealt with quickly. Another area of concern highlighted had related to alternative collection methods in cases where debtors were not paying. Members were informed that a review of the structure of the team and the processes had begun, and relationships had improved. A trial using different collection agencies had begun. It was noted that the collection overall had actually increased.
- In response to a question from Councillor Kaiser, the Assistant Director Finance clarified that the debtors were sundry debtors.
- Mike Drake stated that typically Internal Audit would have some audits which were carried out every three years, and more high risk audits were carried out on an annual basis. He queried the deferral of the Treasury Management audit.
- Further detail was provided regarding the Investigations investigation mechanism.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the 2022/23 Internal Audit and Investigation Quarter 1 Progress Report (activity to 30 June 2022) be noted.
- 2) the proposals for an in-year review of the 2022/23 Internal Audit and Investigation Plan be considered and approved, but the Committee agreed that an additional discussion would take place with the Internal Auditors with regards to Treasury Management, and a reassessment of exposure in the light of economic volatility and the implications for treasury strategy, including the Minimum Revenue Provision.

33. FORWARD PROGRAMME 2022-23

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

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

- The Committee's November meeting had a heavy agenda. The Chair suggested that Members send detailed questions in advance to expedite the meeting. Councillor Gee questioned whether the agenda could be provided earlier. The Assistant Director Governance indicated that this was unlikely due to the long clearance process that reports had but agreed to look into the matter.
- Councillor Gee questioned whether an extraordinary meeting was required.
- The Committee briefly discussed dates for training.

RESOLVED: That the forward programme be noted.

Decision made in the presence of:
 Ian Jordan, Planning Business Support Manager
 Callum Wernham, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist

INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION RECORD SHEET IMD 2022/11
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Title of the report	District Licence update to Local Validation List
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DECISION MADE BY Executive Member for Planning and Local Plan - Lindsay Ferris
ACTION BY Director, Place and Growth - Steve Moore
DECISION MADE ON 30 September 2022

Recommendation contained in the report

That the Executive Member for Planning and Local Plan approve the minor modifications to existing Local Validation List as outlined above.

Decision

That the Executive Member for Planning and Local Plan approve the minor modifications to existing Local Validation List as outlined above (within the agenda report).

Reasons for Decision if different to recommendation

The words “within the agenda report” were added to the end of the decision, to make clear that the minor modifications were contained above the original recommendation within the agenda report.

Alternative options considered and rejected at time of the decision

None

Summary of consultations undertaken

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES	
Director – Resources and Assets	No comment
Monitoring Officer	No comment
Leader of the Council	No comment

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

PUBLISHED ON: 30 September 2022

EFFECTIVE ON: 10 October 2022

CALL-IN PERIOD EXPIRES: 7 October 2022