



SWINDON BOROUGH COUNCIL

Municipal Year 2020/21

Meeting of Council on Thursday, 21 January 2021

ITEM - MINUTES OF OTHER COUNCIL BODIES

SECTION 1 - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

1. Minutes of meeting Monday, 26 October 2020 of Scrutiny Committee (Pages 5 - 10)
2. Minutes of meeting Monday, 9 November 2020 of Scrutiny Committee (Pages 11 - 14)
3. Minutes of meeting Monday, 7 December 2020 of Scrutiny Committee (Pages 15 - 22)
4. Minutes of meeting Thursday, 5 November 2020 of Adults' Health, Adults' Care and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Pages 23 - 30)
5. Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 25 November 2020 of Children's Health, Social Care and Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Pages 31 - 40)
6. Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 18 November 2020 of Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Pages 41 - 44)
7. Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 4 November 2020 of Growing the Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Pages 45 - 50)
8. Minutes of meeting Monday, 23 November 2020 of Resources and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Pages 51 - 54)

SECTION 2 - REGULATORY COMMITTEES

9. Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 10 November 2020 of Planning Committee (Pages 57 - 62)
10. Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 8 December 2020 of Planning Committee (Pages 63 - 86)
11. Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 1 December 2020 of Education Transport Appeals Sub-Committee (Pages 87 - 88)
12. Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 16 December 2020 of Education Transport Appeals Sub-Committee (Pages 89 - 90)

SECTION 3 - CHILDREN SERVICES BODIES

13. Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 24 November 2020 of Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (Pages 93 - 96)
14. Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 8 December 2020 of Schools Forum (Pages 97 - 100)

SECTION 4 - POLICE AND FIRE AUTHORITIES

15. Minutes of the meeting Wednesday, 30 September 2020 of the Wiltshire & Swindon Fire Authority (Pages 103 - 112)
16. Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 23 September 2020 of Town Twinning Network (Pages 113 - 116)

Section 2

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Minutes

This page is intentionally left blank

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 26 OCTOBER 2020

PRESENT: Councillors James Robbins (Chair), Steve Weisinger (Vice-Chair), Junab Ali, Emma Bushell, Matthew Courtliff, Paul Dixon, Jane Milner-Barry, Barbara Parry, Kevin Parry, Roger Smith, Andy Spry and Timothy Swinyard.

Also in attendance were: Councillors David Renard (Leader of the Council), Russell Holland (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Commercialisation, Education and Skills), Brian Ford (Cabinet Member for Adults and Health), Dale Heenan (Cabinet Member for Town Centre, Culture and Heritage), Rob Jandy (Cabinet Member for Organisational Excellence), Mary Martin (Cabinet Member for Children's Services), Cathy Martyn (Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Safety), Maureen Penny (Cabinet Member for Highways, Maintenance and Waste Services), Gary Sumner (Cabinet Member for Strategic Infrastructure, Transport and Planning) and Keith Williams (Cabinet Member for Climate Change).

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Jim Grant.

21. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded Members of the need to declare any known interests in any matters to be considered at the meeting. Councillor Barbara Parry made a personal, non-prejudicial declaration of interest in respect of agenda item 6 (Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session – Cabinet Member for Children's Services) as she is employed at The Ridgeway School (part of the White Horse Federation).

22. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 14th September 2020 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

23. Public Question Time

Mr Barrie Jennings asked a number of questions relating to the support and funding provided to community leisure centres in Swindon, in particular:

- The process the Council went through in determining to allocate £30K to help support the continued opening of Highworth Leisure Centre.
- The support offered to other community leisure centres across Swindon that also require extra funding to remain open due to Covid restrictions.

Councillor Dale Heenan (Cabinet Member for Town Centre, Culture and Heritage), responded to the questions at the meeting.

24. Consideration of Cabinet Decisions

The Committee considered a report introducing decisions arising from the Cabinet meeting held on 21st October 2020.

Minute 25. Budget Management Update (October)

Councillor Russell Holland (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Commercialisation, Education and Skills) advised the Committee that the Council has received an additional £3.6m from central government under the lost income scheme since the meeting of Cabinet, which is on top of the grants already received.

Councillor Holland and Councillor Brian Ford (Cabinet Member for Adults and Health) responded to questions put by Councillors Emma Bushell, Paul Dixon and the Chair on the following matters:

- James Robbins (Chair), Steve Weisinger (Vice-Chair), Junab Ali, Emma Bushell, Matthew Courtliff, Paul Dixon, Jane Milner-Barry, Barbara Parry, Kevin Parry, Roger Smith, Andy Spry and Timothy SwinyardThe amount of consideration given so far as to what would happen should Swindon be moved to a higher Covid tier, such as calculating the required extra funding and support that would be needed.
- The budget implications for Swindon as a result of the Comprehensive Spending Review being for one year.
- The opportunities to extend the provision of free school meals over the forthcoming half term and Christmas breaks using the funding received over the summer from Government, and other plans for supporting vulnerable children during those times.
- The communication planned to advise eligible families of the help and support available to them.
- The funding of the provision of food to those ‘shielding’ and to those unable to afford to pay for food, the details of which are contained within a Cabinet Member Briefing Note which will be circulated to members subsequent to the meeting.

Resolved – (1) That Minute 25 of the Cabinet be noted.

(2) That information requested by members during the course of the Committee’s consideration of this item be forwarded to them via the Committee Clerk.

Minute 26. Housing Revenue Account Medium Term Financial Plan

Councillor Cathy Martyn (Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Safety) responded to questions put by Councillors Emma Bushell and Paul Dixon on the following matters:

- The re-categorisation of the sheltered housing stock where finances allow and any subsequent impact this may have on vulnerable members of the community.
- The guarantees in place to ensure that any contracts being entered in to by the capital repairs team with external companies are obtaining best value when compared to what might be directly delivered by the Council.
- The balance between the use of in-house teams (used to fill gaps where there is not much demand in the market) and the use of external companies (awarded contracts via the usual procurement processes) which gives an element of flexibility in responding to issues.
- The adherence to the Decent Homes Standard as a minimum, with additional repair work undertaken on a yearly basis prioritised by need, and how this helps address the cost implications from consequential repairs given the current £81m budget shortfall.

Resolved – That Minute 26 of the Cabinet be noted.

Minute 27. Annual Review of Local Ombudsman Complaints

Councillor David Renard (Leader of the Council) referred to the continued improvement year on year in the Council's performance as identified in the report. Councillor Renard drew attention to the measures being adopted whereby the Corporate Management Team will have key complaints escalated to them for oversight and review.

Councillor Renard responded to a question put by Councillor Emma Bushell regarding the plans to address the points raised by the Ombudsman concerning remedies not completed within the timescales and where the Council did not follow the complaints procedures.

Resolved – That Minute 27 of the Cabinet be noted.

Minute 28. The Future of Swindon's Cultural Offer

Councillors Dale Heenan (Cabinet Member for Town Centre, Culture and Heritage) and Gary Sumner (Cabinet Member for Strategic Infrastructure, Transport and Planning) responded to questions put by Councillors Junab Ali, Paul Dixon, Jane Milner-Barry and the Chair on the following matters:

- The plans in place to achieve the intention of Swindon being world renowned for innovation, entrepreneurialism and a great quality of life by 2026, the details of which will be circulated to members subsequent to the meeting.
- The differences between this business case and previous unsuccessful business cases, including: programme milestones showing what will be achieved each year; the different approach to working in partnership with external organisations, and; the greater level of detail showing the positive way forward for the town over the next eight to ten years.
- The expected Government announcement on the future high street and towns fund, due in the next two to three weeks, and the positive result expected for Swindon regarding the Bus Boulevard scheme. The Committee noted that the investment prospectus will take in to account any positives or negatives that arise as a result of any grants decisions by Government.
- The creation of an Advisory Board who are regularly consulted with regarding the proposals.
- That Council funding is not being proposed for investment to this project as it would involve a certain level of commitment with no expectation of that funding being returned and with no business case having been developed.
- The plans for the areas of the town centre not included in these proposals, which are being discussed at workshops being held with developers and stakeholders and which will feed in to the local plan review.
- How any scrutiny work undertaken to look at the future of the town centre will report to the April meeting of this Committee to tie in with the Cabinet Member's Question and Answer session.
- How the extension of permitted development rights should not apply to these proposals as the plan focusses on the theatre moving to the Kimmersfield site with no expected impact on anything else currently situated there.

- How the next phase in the project will take in to account the wider benefits and advantages for Swindon in improving its cultural offer, some of which have already been identified in a previous bid for heritage lottery funding.
- The provision for community artists, community arts facilities and affordable arts spaces in the proposals for Swindon's cultural offer which will be considered at a future phase in the project.

Resolved – (1) That Minute 28 of the Cabinet be noted.

(2) That information requested by members during the course of the Committee's consideration of this item be forwarded to them via the Committee Clerk.

Minute 29. Carbon Neutral Strategy

Councillor Keith Williams (Cabinet Member for Climate Change) responded to a question put by Councillor Jane Milner-Barry regarding the adoption of 2050 as the target date for the reduction of carbon emissions across the whole borough as compared to the target date of 2030 as adopted for the Council (agreed via a motion put to Full Council in January 2020).

Resolved – That Minute 29 of the Cabinet be noted.

25. Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session - Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Councillor Mary Martin (Cabinet Member for Children's Services) was in attendance and presented to the Committee a report summarising progress and performance in respect of the key objectives of her role, which are to:

- Provide strategic leadership and be the statutory lead Member for Children's Services.
- Provide the political leadership for the improvement plan.
- Through the senior officers, ensure Children are Safeguarded.
- Provide political leadership for contract/compliance/procurement.
- Provide the political leadership for the strategic provision of:
 - a) Corporate Parenting
 - b) Early Help
 - c) Youth Justice
- Promote Children's Health and Wellbeing.
- To work with other Cabinet Members to Manage Demand within the portfolio.
- Ensure that the Council's agreed priorities within the portfolio are delivered.

The Cabinet Member is responsible for securing the following Vision Pledges:

- Pledge 20: Increase the number of foster carers in Swindon so that every 'child looked after' who should be, is placed in their home borough.
- Pledge 21: Ensure that there is a partnership approach to early prevention and intervention across Swindon so that more children and families are supported early, including through the Troubled Families Programme, to prevent escalation to statutory social care.
- Pledge 22: Ensure that Swindon's vulnerable children and young people are safeguarded and protected.
- Pledge 25: Work collaboratively with stakeholders to ensure the level of children in Swindon with excess weight is no higher than the England average.

The Cabinet Member also has delegated responsibility for:

- Children and Family Services including Early Help, Youth Offending Team, Young Person Substance Misuse team, Targeted Mental Health, Education Welfare, Educational Psychology, Youth Engagement, Services for Disabled Children.
- Children's Social Work services.
- Community Health Services including Health Visitors, School Nurses and Family Nurse Partnership, Paediatric Therapy Services, Speech and Language and Portage.
- Swindon Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).
- Children Voluntary Sector Contracts.
- Fostering and adoption services.
- Troubled Families.
- SEN.
- Music Services.
- Plas Pencelli Outdoor Education Centre.

Councillor Martin introduced her report and highlighted the following cross cutting themes:

- Multi-agency working (with health services, the Clinical Commissioning Group, the Police and with schools) to apply consistent processes to keep children safe.
- The concept of whole family working, which particularly applies where supporting mental health issues.
- Youth offending and corporate parenting, which can involve children with a complex set of needs.

Councillor Martin responded to questions put by Councillors Paul Dixon, Jane Milner-Barry and the Chair on the following matters:

- The significant reduction in the number of agency social workers over the last 18 months (from around two thirds to a third) and the subsequent impact this has had on the stability of social worker placements with children.
- The expectation that parish councils will utilise existing resources in becoming involved with the new multi-agency place based working model.
- The long waiting times for the diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder, ADHD and mental health services in Swindon, and the steps being taken to help with this such as the additional support professional appointed to assist families. The presentation on how this service will work will be circulated to members subsequent to the meeting, along with the data on the waiting lists provided by the Clinical Commissioning Group.
- The background information relating to the increase in the number of referrals into MASH for children and young people who may be being criminally exploited in the last 12 months, the details of which will be circulated to members subsequent to the meeting.
- The reduction in the number of children that need to be helped through statutory services, and how more support is being provided by early intervention and prevention services within communities and within a range of commissioned services being provided.
- The background information relating to the DIVERT project (a programme aimed at those young people involved in peer related criminal activity and at risk of criminal

exploitation), the details of which will be circulated to members subsequent to the meeting.

- The actual distances involved for the 27% of children looked after which have been placed more than 20 miles from home, mainly due to the placement needs of those individual children.
- How social workers have adopted alternative solutions to the Covid-19 lockdown and social distancing rules to continue to provide the same levels of help and support.
- The plans to create small family homes to be used by one or two vulnerable children who require round the clock care from social workers, and the mechanisms that will be put in place for neighbours of these properties to raise any concerns they may have. The Committee noted that the purchase of these properties will not be linked to a previous Council motion to reduce the number of empty properties across Swindon, and that the purchase and service provision will be undertaken by an external provider commissioned by the Council.
- The progress against the SEND Written Statement of Action that will shortly be considered by the Health and Wellbeing Board and can be found on the local offers page of the Council's website (the link for which will be circulated to members subsequent to the meeting).

Resolved – (1) That Councillor Martin be thanked for attending the meeting to present her performance report and for her full and open responses to members' questions and observations on the issues raised.

(2) That information requested by members during the course of the Committee's consideration of this item be forwarded to them via the Committee Clerk.

26. Work Programme 2020/2021

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Legal Officer setting out the topics for inclusion in the 2020/2021 Scrutiny Work Programme, as agreed by the Committee at its meeting on 7th July 2020, and updated during the course of the Municipal Year.

With the agreement of the Committee, the Chair added an item to the Work Programme for the meeting on 7th December regarding air quality in Swindon. The item will include the existing Kings Hill air quality management plan, an indication of how air quality is looking across the whole town, and the specific issues currently being experienced in Rodbourne.

27. Status of Requests for Action and / or Information

The Committee received an updated report advising on the status of outstanding issues and member requests for information.

Resolved – That the report on the status of outstanding issues and member requests for information be noted.

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 9 NOVEMBER 2020

PRESENT: Councillors James Robbins (Chair), Steve Weisinger (Vice-Chair), Junab Ali, Matthew Courtliff, Jane Milner-Barry, Barbara Parry, Kevin Parry, Roger Smith, Andy Spry, Timothy Swinyard, Rahul Tarar and Robert Wright.

Also in attendance were: Councillors Dale Heenan (Cabinet Member for Town Centre, Culture and Heritage), Rob Jandy (Cabinet Member for Organisational Excellence) and Maureen Penny (Cabinet Member for Highways, Maintenance and Waste Services).

Apologies for absence were received from: Councillors Emma Bushell and Jim Grant.

28. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded Members of the need to declare any known interests in any matters to be considered at the meeting. No declarations of interest were made.

29. Public Question Time

There were no questions submitted under this item.

30. Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session - Cabinet Member for Organisational Excellence

Councillor Rob Jandy (Cabinet Member for Organisational Excellence) was in attendance and presented to the Committee a report summarising progress and performance in respect of the key objectives of his role, which are to:

- Provide the political leadership for Organisational Excellence.
- Provide the strategic direction for the Council's customer access strategy.
- Ensure that the Council's agreed priorities within the portfolio are delivered.

The Cabinet Member has delegated responsibility for Corporate Services including:

- Legal.
- HR.
- IT.
- Customer Services.
- Facilities Management.
- Performance.
- Corporate.
- Improvement.
- Democratic services.
- Operational Income Generation including Car Parks: Policy, Fees and Charges.

Councillor Jandy introduced his report and highlighted the following points:

- How the report covers the whole infrastructure which supports all other services provided by the Council.

- The new analyst in post who is helping to ensure that effective processes are put in place, meaning that the correct information is sent to the correct person at the correct time.
- The support provided to all staff in going in to lockdown, and how it was ensured that core services were provided that were not to the detriment of residents and staff wellbeing.
- How officers were brought back to work safely, and the learning points which should help improve work patterns going forward.
- The plans for entering lockdown again, with expectations being better managed and there being more of a 'business as usual' feeling.

Councillor Jandy responded to questions put by Councillors Matthew Courtliff, Jane Milner-Barry, Roger Smith, Bob Wright and the Chair on the following matters:

- The lag in complaint response times as a result of Covid-19 which was around 10 – 17 days a few months ago, and is now down to around 2 – 4 days. The Committee noted that the number of complaints overall has reduced over the last 6 – 8 weeks due to the work undertaken in the operations service (missed waste collections being improved for example).
- How there have been no delays for the Legal Team in taking matters through to the Courts recently as they have been successfully operating remotely, but that there may have been some delays at the start of the lockdown process when court procedures were being changed to virtual and hybrid meetings.
- What measures the Council has taken through DSE assessments to ensure that its staff has the correct working environment at home, and is not at an economic disadvantage from doing so.
- A review of the Council's building needs going forward should 'home' be incorporated as the primary place of work for digital workers, and what the offer will be to those staff.
- The recruitment issues within the Legal Team which mainly relates to there being a relatively small pool of professional staff working for local authorities which is smaller than the numbers needed.
- Increasing concern from residents regarding the possibility of trees falling on houses, and the level of insurance in place for such accidents should the proper regime of tree maintenance not be kept up, the details of which will be circulated subsequent to the meeting.
- The current caseloads for Planning Officers, the details of which will be circulated subsequent to the meeting.
- That a training session will be offered to members on 25th February 2021 regarding climate change awareness, sustainability and air quality.
- The behaviours, skills and experience expected from officers appointed to positions at the Council, and how it is ensured that people applying for jobs understand what will be expected from them.
- The numbers of people paying to park all day in the Bristol Street car park, the details of which will be circulated to members subsequent to the meeting. The Committee noted that parking prices are being re-evaluated at the moment, with different options for permits being considered.
- The plans to increase the numbers of apprenticeships within the Council (ensuring the best use of the apprenticeship levy) and those within a graduate trainee scheme.

- The reasons behind why a third of council staff were unable to work for approximately five months of the year due to shielding and other associated matters connected with Covid-19, mainly due to the lack of technology and their inability to be redeployed in to a frontline role.
- The percentage of young disadvantaged people who are being helped in to the workplace as a result of the strategies developed for collaborative resourcing approaches, the details of which will be circulated subsequent to the meeting.
- The importance of ensuring that those residents with no online access still have the ability to telephone the Council to do things such as book a visit to the Household Waste and Recycling Centre.
- How building ventilation should also be an important part of getting the campus buildings Covid-safe as well as the other measures that have already been taken.
- How the asset valuation of the Council's housing stock (completed annually for accounting purposes) is carried out in line with government requirements whereby a significant discount is put on the market value of those properties to reflect that it is social housing.
- How the Performance, Intelligence and Insight Team will assist those officers dealing with the Carbon Reduction Strategy by monitoring progress via dashboards.
- That the Council does not currently include climate change risk on its Corporate Risk Register but that this matter will be reviewed to ensure there is sufficient emphasis in the future.

Resolved – (1) That Councillor Jandy be thanked for attending the meeting to present his performance report and for his full and open responses to members' questions and observations on the issues raised.

(2) That information requested by members during the course of the Committee's consideration of this item be forwarded to them via the Committee Clerk.

31. Review of the 2019/2020 Municipal Year - Scrutiny Committee Annual Report

The Committee considered its Annual Report for 2019/2020 prepared by the Chief Legal Officer.

The Annual Report highlighted the work of the Scrutiny Committee and its five Overview and Scrutiny Committees during the Municipal Year 2019/2020, in their role of supporting the Council's decision-making and policy development processes and the work of the Cabinet and the Council as a whole.

The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee highlighted in his foreword to the report that he had taken over as Chair during the Covid-19 global pandemic, which had changed how everyone works and interacts, but noted that Scrutiny had continued almost uninterrupted during that time. The Chair thanked the Committee Services Team for its help in his handover and the transition to virtual meetings, and paid tribute to his predecessors in the role, Councillors Bob Wright and Kevin Small. The Chair also thanked the officers and members that had responded to his request for ideas and opinions on Scrutiny in Swindon.

The Chair had also highlighted his determination to increase and improve the public's role in Scrutiny, so that the people of Swindon can have confidence in the Council's actions and the decision-making function. He also referred to the current challenging times for local

government, with the need to continue core services whilst playing a key role in fighting the pandemic and keeping people safe and healthy as well as planning for post-Covid, all carried out in a very challenging financial situation. He stated his hope that the Overview and Scrutiny function will be a force for good in meeting these multiple challenges and effectively plotting a course through them.

The Committee discussed the opportunity presented by the Equality Advisory Group as a potential forum which could look at improving accessibility to the Council's democratic process for the most disadvantaged in our society, and the latest position with regards to the Task Group set up to look at reviewing the Scrutiny process in Swindon.

Resolved – (1) That the Scrutiny Committee Annual Report for 2019/2020 be noted.

32. Work Programme 2020/2021

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Legal Officer, which set out the topics for inclusion in the 2020/2021 Scrutiny Work Programme, as agreed by the Committee at its meeting on 7th July 2020, and updated during the course of the Municipal Year.

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 7 DECEMBER 2020

PRESENT: Councillors James Robbins (Chair), Steve Weisinger (Vice-Chair), Junab Ali, Emma Bushell, Jim Grant, Jenny Jefferies, Jane Milner-Barry, Barbara Parry, Kevin Parry, Roger Smith, Timothy Swinyard and Rahul Tarar.

Also in attendance were: Councillors David Renard (Leader of the Council and Chair of Cabinet), Russell Holland (Deputy Leader of the Council, Vice-Chair of Cabinet, and Cabinet Member for Commercialisation, Education and Skills), Brian Ford (Cabinet Member for Adults and Health), Dale Heenan (Cabinet Member for the Town Centre, Culture and Heritage), Mary Martin (Cabinet Member for Children's Services), Cathy Martyn (Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Safety), Maureen Penny (Cabinet Member for Highways, Maintenance and Waste Services), Gary Sumner (Cabinet Member for Strategic Infrastructure, Transport & Planning), Keith Williams (Cabinet Member for Climate Change) and Ray Ballman.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Matthew Courtliff and Andy Spry.

33. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded Members of the need to declare any known interests in any matters to be considered at the meeting. No declarations of interest were made.

34. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meetings held on 26th October 2020 and 9th November 2020 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

35. Public Question Time

The Chair read out a submission received from 73 members of the public which contained the following wording:

"In 1976, the Oasis was opened, built with public money, for public ownership as a cultural and social centre for the people of Swindon. It has since become a central element of our heritage. Many of us learnt to swim there; others saw their first gig, exercise at the gym, socialise and enjoy valuable time with friends and family. Its importance to our community is hard to overstate.

I was hugely alarmed to read that GLL will not be reopening the Oasis once lockdown lifts. I think it is vital that the centre reopens, so am writing to ask;

- That the council secures the long term future of the Oasis as an invaluable community resource by bringing it back into council ownership
- That the council acts to safeguard the jobs threatened by the closure
- That the council takes necessary steps to reopen the centre as soon as possible to avoid compounding issues with lost income.

I would like to ask what steps the Council plans to take in regards to securing these outcomes. I look forward to hearing this question addressed, and to ensuring that the Oasis remains open and a treasured local resource for generations to come.”

Councillor David Renard, Leader of the Council, responded at the meeting. A written copy of the response was agreed and will be attached as an annex to these Minutes.

The Chair read out a submission from Mr Neil Robinson relating to the Oasis Leisure Centre: “People aren't interested in the Snow Dome, they want their iconic Oasis Leisure Centre saved. The people of Swindon deserve and demand FULL clarity over what Swindon Borough Council (SBC) actually agreed with Seven Capital when it handed over the keys, and how far it is prepared to go to save it. The Oasis MUST be saved as a number one priority for the Council. Questions:

1. SBC own the Oasis land, but do they own the building and simply lease it to Seven Capital? Can you please clarify in detail the agreement in place?
2. What are the terms of the lease? Is there a break out clause for the Council to seize it back off Seven Capital if they don't find a new operator? What are the obligations of the arrangement?
3. Has SBC formulated a plan to save the Oasis yet? Does it have contingencies and back up options/ideas to save it? If not, why not? We need an immediate timeline in place to get it re-opened as quickly as possible.
4. Can SBC confirm that they will seize it back into public ownership and block the Snowdome development, should Seven Capital fail to secure a new operator?”

Councillor Renard responded at the meeting. A written copy of the response was agreed and will be attached as an annex to these Minutes.

Mr Roy Worman submitted a number of questions relating to the update being given by the Leader of the Council, in particular:

1. Would the Borough support the England’s Economic Heartland Proposals in making a case for powers to be given to Councils to issue penalty notices for “Moving Traffic” violations. Would you interpret this to include traffic cameras?
2. It is noted that England’s Economic Heartland has submitted to Government 11 Road improvement schemes which unfortunately did not involve the A420 east of the A419. How did the borough submit its proposals for the A420 given the eastern villages expansion and associated employment areas? Do you agree that the council was not progressive enough in the promotion of the statistics of Eastern Villages?

Councillor Renard responded at the meeting.

Mr Worman asked supplementary questions regarding:

- England’s Economic Heartland passed a motion to be “harder and faster on decarbonisation”. It has indicated that it will produce a ‘road map’ by 2021 which will be based on a regional budget and show where future investments can be prioritised. Was the Council part of the 200 responses it received?
- The Mid-year Treasury Performance report indicates the Council took a short term loan of £5m – when is this repayable?

Councillor Renard, Councillor Russell Holland (Deputy Leader of the Council, Vice-Chair of Cabinet, and Cabinet Member for Commercialisation, Education and Skills) and the Corporate Director of Finance and Assets (Section 151 Officer) responded at the meeting. A written copy of the response was agreed and will be attached as an annex to these Minutes.

36. Consideration of Cabinet Decisions

The Committee considered a report introducing decisions arising from the Cabinet meeting held on 2nd December 2020.

Minute 33. Swindon Borough Council Covid-19 Response Update

The Director of Public Health provided a data update as follows:

- The case rate for Swindon is 114.3 per 100,000 which is showing a positive downward trend. The South West average is currently 80.5 per 100,000 and the England average is 147.8 per 100,000.
- There have not been any major concerns from a case perspective since going in to Tier 2. Around 20 – 30 cases per day are being logged, with around 254 cases in the last seven days.

Councillor Renard responded to a question put by Councillor Jane Milner-Barry on the provisions under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 for a designated emergency evacuation centre, given that the current location (the Oasis Leisure Centre) is closed. The Committee noted that if an emergency centre is required due to Covid-19 the best place to locate people would be identified, using the Council's powers to commandeer venues if necessary, with the re-opening of the Oasis also being an option. Plans will be updated accordingly, the details of which will be circulated to Members following the meeting.

Resolved – (1) That Minute 33 of the Cabinet be noted.

(2) That information requested by members during the course of the Committee's consideration of this item be forwarded to them via the Committee Clerk.

Minute 34. Swindon's Country Parks Strategic Improvement Plan

Councillors Dale Heenan (Cabinet Member for the Town Centre, Culture and Heritage) and Maureen Penny (Cabinet Member for Highways, Maintenance and Waste Services) responded to questions put by Councillors Jim Grant, Jenny Jefferies, Jane Milner-Barry, Timothy Swinyard and the Chair on the following matters:

- The request from Councillor Jim Grant for this decision to be referred back to Cabinet (with the suggestion that it then be put on hold until summer 2021) given:
 - The amounts of S106 monies involved (committed but not yet spent);
 - The situation surrounding Oasis, in particular the uncertainty as to whether the Council will become involved and provide funding for it; and
 - The opportunity to include leisure provision as well as country parks in this four year strategic plan.
- Reassurance that Lydiard House will be re-opening once the pandemic is over.
- Proposals for the re-opening of the Splash Park at Coate Water (which are also dependent on when the pandemic ends and what measures may need to be put in place).

Resolved – By a majority that Minute 34 of the Cabinet be noted.

Minute 35. Budget Management Update (December) and Draft Budget 2021/22

Councillor Holland responded to questions put by Councillor Jim Grant and the Chair on the following matters:

- How the spending of S106 monies is governed by a legal framework and planning laws, whereas funds allocated for a particular purpose in the Council's capital programme can be reallocated for another purpose subject to decision.
- The planned use of the Winter Grant Fund, which will be announced by the Cabinet Member shortly. The Committee noted the intention to make food vouchers available over the Christmas break and February half term to those families eligible for free school meals, with some additional discretionary spend for families in need.

Resolved – That Minute 35 of the Cabinet be noted.

Minute 36. Capital Monitoring Quarter 2 Update

Resolved – That Minute 36 of the Cabinet be noted.

Minute 37. Treasury Management - mid-year update report

Resolved – That Minute 37 of the Cabinet be noted.

Minute 38. Sheltered Housing Staffing Review

Councillor Cathy Martyn (Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Safety) responded to questions put by Councillor Ray Ballman, Jim Grant, Jenny Jefferies and Kevin Parry on the following matters:

- The request from Councillor Ray Ballman, supported by Councillor Jim Grant, for this decision to be referred back to Cabinet for reconsideration given:
 - That it may cause anxiety and stress amongst the elderly and vulnerable.
 - That the support currently offered by residential wardens is more than just a telephone call once a day, as they provide social activities which can help reduce isolation and loneliness.
 - The savings made across other areas as a result of residents not requiring services due to what residential wardens do for them.

and for Cabinet to consider undertaking an audit of the support provided by residential wardens outside of their contracted hours to accurately reflect the reduction in service to residents.

- Whether wardens who are covering several sheltered accommodations will have time to provide the differing levels of support that residential wardens do.
- The contracted hours of residential and non-residential wardens (both of whom are not available 24 hours a day) and the support provided by the Control Room and Homeline outside of those hours which will not change.
- How those residents who request it will still receive face-to-face contact during week days with non-residential wardens following the pandemic.

- The potential loss of a positive relationship between warden and residents with a move to non-residential wardens.

Resolved – By a majority that Minute 38 of the Cabinet be noted.

Minute 39. Accelerated Tree Planting in the Great Western Community Forest

Councillors Gary Sumner (Cabinet Member for Strategic Infrastructure, Transport and Planning) and Keith Williams (Cabinet Member for Climate Change) responded to questions put by Councillors Jim Grant, Jane Milner-Barry, Roger Smith and Timothy Swinyard on the following matters:

- The estimated 10% level of tree coverage across the Borough (based on an average of 2,000 trees per hectare) and when a tree audit was last undertaken.
- The work being done to maintain the condition of current trees, which can be a cause for concern if they are not regularly inspected or pruned, including the involvement of Parish and Town Councils which have the ability to raise money locally to spend on tree maintenance.
- Whether government funding is expected to help maintain the trees until they are properly established.
- The removal of a small number of trees due to Ash Dieback disease, which has been taken in to account for the targeted tree cover.
- The leisure opportunities, such as footpaths and mountain bike tracks, which could be made available in less densely planted areas.
- The correct placing of the most appropriate trees in a given area and how this can help to make them more low maintenance.
- The types of land / areas that are being sought as potential sites for planting (which can be supplied if required).
- How the new planning regulations being proposed by Government could potentially affect this.
- The recent Government announcement of over £12m being made available to help fund community forest projects, and it currently being unclear as to whether the Great Western Community Forest will benefit from this additional funding.
- That the umbrella organisation of the Great Western Community Forest will form part of the mechanism used to deliver the tree planting and that agreements will be entered in to for future maintenance and husbandry of the sites. The Committee noted that future management arrangements could range from local communities to a woodland trust.

Resolved – That Minute 39 of the Cabinet be noted.

37. Leader of the Council: Six Month update

Councillor David Renard, Leader of the Council, gave a verbal update to the Committee outlining how the Authority had performed in the first half of the 2020/2021 Municipal Year towards the Council's priorities and targets. Councillor Renard highlighted the following points:

- His thanks to the Public Health Team, as well as all officers in the Council who responded to the pandemic and kept residents safe.

- The financial support provided to social care and health providers, as well as Personal Protective Equipment.
- The funding and support provided to rough sleepers.
- That social care has continued its services uninterrupted, with referrals having increased by 10% in the last few months (which has placed additional pressure on the social care team).
- Discharges from hospital work continuing seven days a week, supporting those coming out from hospital and getting them in to a more appropriate setting for recovery.
- The winter plan that has been put in place and looks different from normal.
- The service provided to businesses by administering financial support schemes, with over £30m having been given to Swindon businesses to make sure they continued to operate.
- The support provided in the town centre to help businesses get Covid-19 ready, with up to 80% of footfall having returned prior to the second lockdown.
- The support from the Local Enterprise Partnership relating to:
 - Infrastructure funding for roads.
 - Funding for the Carriage Works, which is helping to regenerate part of Swindon's heritage and turning it in to a place for businesses to grow and develop.
- Bids have been submitted to Government for towns fund and future high streets fund to continue the town centre redevelopment.
- Work on the Aspen House site (the new Premier Inn) is expected to start in the new year (2021).
- The £400m warehouse and distribution centre that will be coming to Symmetry Park soon.
- The Swindon / Didcot / Oxford transport study completed by England's Economic Heartland which should help improve connectivity towards the North East.
- The large number of houses sold at the Wichelstowe development and the new primary school which will be opening there.
- The roll out of the LED lights programme (for street lighting and traffic lights) which is both positive for the environment and for tax payers in terms of reducing energy bills.
- City Fibre is currently improving the broadband offer in Swindon, which will help with digital connectivity.
- The work being done on the Heritage Action Zone, including the Mechanics' Institute and investment in the Health Hydro.

Councillor Renard responded to questions put by Councillor Jim Grant and the Chair on the following matters:

- The public sector pay freeze announced by the Chancellor last week that should not affect local government pay (which is negotiated each year between the unions and local government employers).
- A potential addition to the Work Programme of this Committee to include a review of the Pledges early in 2021, which will be discussed and agreed by the Chair and the Leader of the Council subsequent to the meeting. This review would also consider the potential introduction of an additional Pledge that would commit the Council to supporting residents when in contention with developers.

- Potential revisions to the Government proposals for the planning system as a result of responses made to the White Paper consultation, and the hope that collectively local government can work with central government to create a workable system more in line with local decision making.
- What the Council can do to encourage independent businesses to set up in the town centre following the closure of the national retailers. The Committee noted that 26 new smaller businesses have set up in town since June 2020 and that officers are in talks with the bigger landholdings in retail centres which recognise the changes taking place in town centre retail.
- The lessons learnt from the first tranche of Active Travel Fund projects in the town and the plans for the consultation on the second.

Resolved – That Councillor Renard be thanked for attending the meeting to present his update and for his full and open responses to members’ questions and observations on the issues raised.

38. Air Quality in Swindon and Odour Complaints in Rodbourne Area

The Committee considered a report describing the current state of knowledge of the quality of the air across Swindon (and in particular within the Kingshill Air Quality Management Area) and around reported periodic malodour in the Rodbourne area, which had been requested by the Committee as part of its agreed Work Programme for the current Municipal Year.

Councillor Keith Williams (Cabinet Member for Climate Change) introduced the report and highlighted that the periodic malodour in the Rodbourne area had been a challenging issue for officers to investigate, but that one of the findings is its relation to the old Hills landfill site located close to Junction 16 of the M4.

Councillor Williams responded to questions put by Councillors Jim Grant, Jane Milner-Barry and the Chair on the following matters:

- How resident problems were not being addressed effectively on the odour problems in Rodbourne, and the lessons that could be learnt from it, with the situation now hopefully being resolved by the Environment Agency taking responsibility.
- The lack of need to monitor for particulate matter 10 and 2.5 in Swindon following initial assessment and results indicating that this is not an issue within the Borough and that further measures were not required.
- Whether the effect on air quality elsewhere is taken in to account when new developments are proposed.
- The general improvement of air quality across the town as a whole, and not just in those areas registering as problematic such as Kingshill.

Resolved – To note the contents of the report.

39. Work Programme 2020/2021

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Legal Officer which set out the topics for inclusion in the 2020/2021 Scrutiny Work Programme, as agreed by the Committee at its meeting on 7th July 2020, and updated during the course of the Municipal Year.

The Chair confirmed that the Work Programme will be amended subject to his discussion with the Leader of Council regarding a progress report against the Council's Pledges (as discussed under Minute 37. Leader of the Council: Six Month update).

40. Status of Requests for Action and / or Information

The Committee received an updated report advising on the status of outstanding issues and member requests for information.

Resolved – That the report on the status of outstanding issues and member requests for information be noted.

ADULTS' HEALTH, ADULTS' CARE AND HOUSING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 5 NOVEMBER 2020

PRESENT:- Councillors Roger Smith (Chair), Alan Bishop, Malcolm Davies, Paul Dixon, Steph Exell, Steve Hayes, Jenny Jefferies, Caryl Sydney-Smith and Robert Wright, and Rosemary Curtis (Homeless Organisations Standing Together in Swindon), Phil Matthews (Tenant Scrutiny Panel), Olawumi Ibitoye (BAME) and Vanessa Scott (Healthwatch).

Councillor Brian Ford, Cabinet Member for Adults and Health attended the meeting regarding Minutes 12 and 15.

Councillor Cathy Martyn, Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Safety attended the meeting regarding Minutes 12 and 15.

8. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded Members of the need to declare any known interests in any matters to be considered at the meeting. No declarations were made.

9. Public Question Time

In accordance with Standing Order 28, Mr Roy Warman, Swindon resident, submitted written questions regarding Medvivo's performance and ambulance handover delays.

The Chair thanked Mr Worman for his questions and advised the Committee that a written response had been provided. Mr Worman was at the meeting and asked supplementary questions regarding a) lack of information about Vocare on Medvivos' website; b) the publication of a CCG report regarding Medvivos' performance; c) Great Western Hospital (GWH) capacity following the increase on Swindons' population; d) any grants to be received from Central government. Mr Kevin McNamara, Chief Executive, Great Western Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, Mr David Freeman, Chief Operating Officer, NHS Bath & North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group and Ms Emma Smith, Head of Urgent Care, NHS Bath & North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group, responded at the meeting.

In response to a question from the Chair, Mr McNamara confirmed that GWH was reviewing the possibility of becoming a university hospital in the future.

Resolved - That the Head of Urgent Care, NHS Bath & North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group be requested to circulate information regarding the patient engagement groups set-up.

10. Minutes

Resolved - That the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd September 2020 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

11. Avon and Wiltshire NHS Partnership Trust – Performance Update

The Committee received a report by the Operations Manager, Avon and Wiltshire NHS Partnership Trust (AWP) that highlighted the achievements of the organisation and provided a summary of the challenges it was facing. Mr Alex Chesterton, Operations Manager, Avon and Wiltshire NHS Partnership Trust (AWP) presented the report and drew the following key issues to member's attention:

- The arrival of Covid 19 has resulted in a change of working practices where the majority of appointments with patients were being conducted virtually.
- The recommencement of quality governance following a hiatus in the beginning of the year due to Covid-19.
- The launch of the staff wellbeing initiative where the staff was provided with a wellbeing booklet.
- Details of the work being undertaken by the Interim Director of Transformation.
- How AWP signed-off increased spending to cover the growth in mental health services.
- Its recent successful recruitment drive.
- The increase in demand for services, particularly for patients with Autistic Spectrum Disorders.
- The impending decision by Trust Ligature Reduction Group regarding funding for work to be undertaken at Applewood Ward.
- The trust-wide staff survey currently being undertaken that will shape the development of future plans.
- The effective management of caseloads by community teams.
- The recommencement of virtual group and 1:2:1 meetings by LIFT Psychology Services.
- How the use of various technology packages was allowing the Trust to continue close engagement with service users.
- The partnership working with Medvivo.
- How the local acute pathway continued to minimise out of borough placements.
- The number of people detained under Section 136 of the Mental Health Act over the past quarter.

Following the introduction of the report, Mr Alex Chesterton, Operations Manager for Swindon responded to members' questions and comments in respect of the following matters:

- How patients with medical needs other than mental health issues are being supported, particularly during the current pandemic, to ensure their needs were met.
- How staff health and well-being was part of the Human Resources function and that staff were being supported by external agencies best able to supply specialist advice.
- That funds that were earmarked for new services.
- How services for mental health patients with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) were supported by a range of specialist agencies and was driven by patient need.
- That whilst there was no dedicated rough sleepers point of contact at the Trust, targeted support for the homeless in Swindon was provided with the assistance of other partners.

- The Trusts' focus on obtaining additional digital resources, particularly as a number of staff were working remotely.
- The distinction between registered and unregistered staff, their range of skills and qualifications.
- The Apprenticeship programme and how the Trust supported agency staff if they wanted to become permanent members of staff.
- Waiting times for ASD assessments.
- How demand currently outstrips capacity and that additional funding will provide an extension of existing services.

Resolved - (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Operations Manager, Avon and Wiltshire NHS Partnership Trust (AWP) be requested to circulate information before the next meeting of the Committee on the following:

- a) Section 136 process, particularly addressing the number of Section 136 patients and how they were being supported by various agencies.
- b) The prospect of having a dedicated contact for the homeless of Swindon.

12. Covid-19 Recovery and Winter Planning

The Corporate Director of Adult Social Services, Health & Housing, the Chief Operating Officer, Chief Operating Officer, NHS Bath & North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire (BaNES) Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), and the Chief Executive at Great Western Hospital (GWH) Trust presented a report updating the Committee with pertinent information relating to the Council's, CCG's and GWH and Community Services response and recovery from the coronavirus pandemic.

The Corporate Director of Adult Social Care, Health & Housing set the background to the report in a global, national and local context, in particular elaborating on the number of cases and deaths in Swindon. From an Adults Services, Health and Housing perspective, she referred to the following:

- Daily hospital discharge services being provided that will continue as part of the recovery work.
- The Learning Disability Services has focused on short term breaks for some families at Firehorn.
- Opening of OK4U whilst still ensuring social distancing.
- Financial support to care providers.
- Continual monitoring of Personal Protection Equipment for social care providers.
- Working with partners to implement government regulations that are part of the Winter Plan.
- The management of Covid-19 cases and outbreaks.
- The location of Covid-19 testing sites in Swindon.
- The work of Covid- 19 Marshalls in the town centre.
- The Council's lead in supporting rough sleepers during the pandemic as the volunteer sector was currently restricted in what services they were able to offer.
- Dedicated support provided by the Housing Department to support tenants in difficulties and rent arrears due to Covid-19.
- The recent recommencement of non-urgent repairs for Council tenants.

The Chief Executive (GWH) drew the Committee's attention to the following points:

- The number to date of Covid-19 patients cared for and how the rate of discharge was less than cases in March and April 2020.
- The push for greater laboratory capacity to ensure quick turnaround testing of potential Covid-19 patients.
- Increase in the number of control room meetings continue to oversee care capacity.
- Reiteration of government guidance regarding the use of personal protection equipment and social distancing.
- The adverse effect on undertaking routine medical procedures due to Covid-19.
- How the community could help by contacting the hospital when appointments cannot be kept.
- The dedication and hard work of staff during this difficult time.

The Chief Operating Officer, Chief Operating Officer, NHS Bath & North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group drew the Committees' attention to the following points:

- Partnership working to tackle the demands of Covid-19 on Swindon residents and how recently published guidance indicate the measures to be undertaken by partners.
- The make-up and remit of the BaNES, Swindon & Wiltshire (BSW) Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP) Urgent Care & Flow Board.
- The planning and roll out of the flu vaccine.
- How out-of-hospital demand and capacity modelling was being undertaken.
- Primary Care networks established hubs to manage demand from patients presenting with Covid-19 symptoms.
- The hard work of primary care to support those in the community by targeting health needs that may have gone unmet, increased, or developed during the pandemic and with a key focus on health inequalities and mental health issues.
- The vision of the newly launched Swindon & North Wiltshire Professional Leadership Network (PLN) and how it pledges support by building a collaborative approach to health and wellbeing improvements for the Swindon and North Wiltshire community.

The Director of Health referred to the challenges being faced by all partners due to the increase of Covid-19 cases in Swindon.

Following the presentation of the report Councillor Cathy Martyn, Cabinet Member for Safer Communities, the Corporate Director of Adult Social Care, Health & Housing, the Chief Operating Officer (BSW), the Chief Executive (GWH) and the Director of Public Health responded to members' questions and comments on the following issues:

- How the number Covid-19 cases not only related to specific locations but was community-wide within Swindon.
- The need to ensure continued support for the homeless across the range of stakeholders operating in Swindon.
- The significant progress made in meeting patient needs during the pandemic whilst still managing to deal with routine appointments.
- The use of IT media technology to undertake conference calls with patients for diagnostic purposes.

- The need to promote the benefits of mask wearing within the community.
- Actions being undertaken to enforce Covid-19 regulations.
- The rate of infection at university and the risk of students spreading Covid-19 within the local community.
- Provision of covid-19 testing for care home staff.
- Understanding that whilst the demand for primary care has increased exponentially particularly due to Covid-19, there was a number of vacant positions within primary care and these were being covered by locums and other general practitioners ensuring continued patient access to doctors.
- How NHS England financial support provided additional positions in primary care and was enabling patients to access a range of primary care expertise that included social subscribers, nurse auxiliaries, mental health workers and pharmaceutical expertise.
- How care home workers often change out of workplace PPE but then travel between workplace, retail outlets and home in clothing worn during the working day.
- How flu vaccinations were being deployed at care homes and primary care to agreed timescales across Swindon.
- Accommodation for rough sleepers was available as required.
- The partnership between Great Western Hospital and Kings College Hospital in London was enabling trainee doctors to study in Swindon.

Resolved - (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Chief Operating Officer (Swindon Locality of BSW CCG) be requested to circulate the number of current vacancies in primary care before the next meeting of the Committee.

(3) That the Corporate Director of Adult Social Care, Health & Housing be requested to liaise with care home managers regarding their staff end of duty PPE / clothing procedures.

13. Update on Closure of the Walk-in Centre

The Chief Operating Officer, NHS BSW Clinical Commissioning Group, presented a report that provided the Committee with a report on the earlier closure of Swindon's Walk-in Centre as the local health services responded to the unprecedented challenges posed by the first wave of the coronavirus pandemic. He explained how this enabled staff to be re-deployed to the Urgent Care Centre at Great Western Hospital (GWH). Members noted that to comply with social distancing rules, a permanent needle exchange point was set up at an alternate location within the Swindon NHS Health Centre, while a dedicated phlebotomy clinic, which had previously been running from the centre, became a mobile operation as part of the Covid-19 response. He concluded that the Walk-in Centre's withdrawal did not impact on any of the other services based in the Swindon NHS Health Centre, such as the pharmacy, sexual health clinic and emergency dentist, all of which have continued to run as normal.

Following the presentation of the report the Chief Operating Officer (BSW), responded to members' questions and comments on the following issues:

- How patients would benefit by enhancing the current transport available to Moredon Centre by utilising a one bus system.
- The support available via the Carfax Street Centre and Wellbridge Centre to the homeless.

Councillor Cathy Martyn, Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Safety reminded the Committee that the report regarding the needle exchange programme will include information on rough sleepers and will be submitted to the Committee meeting on 28th January 2021. Additionally, the report regarding homelessness and meeting housing needs of the vulnerable will be submitted to the Committee meeting on 22nd April 2021.

Resolved - That the report be noted.

14. Ambulance Handover Delays and System Actions

The Committee considered a report by the Chief Operating Officer, NHS Bath & North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire (BSW) Clinical Commissioning Group, providing an update on ambulance handover delays at Great Western Hospitals (GWH) NHS Foundation Trust and the actions being taken to reduce any implications this has for Swindon residents awaiting an ambulance response.

The Chief Operating Officer, (BSW) CCG, together with the County Commander, Wiltshire and Swindon, South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust and the Head of Urgent Care, (BSW) CCG, drew the Committee's attention to the following points:

- South Central Ambulance Service Foundation Trust also transfers patients to Great Western Hospital (GWH) from Oxfordshire and Berkshire routes.
- The handover delay risks were associated with increased demand and reduced capacity and how these were mitigated by BSW CCG.
- How each Trust were assessed against the ECIST (Emergency Care Intensive Support Team) Ambulance Key Lines of Enquiry.
- The partnership working between South Western Ambulance Services Trust (SWAST), together with Commissioners, the hospital trust, and health and social care partners to reduce Emergency Department and ambulance demand and improve patient flow through the system.
- An explanation of the triage process undertaken following a 999 call.
- Employment of an additional nurse at Salisbury, GWH and, Bath United Hospitals to manage queues and support staff and patients on arrival at the acute centres.

Following the presentation of the report, the Chief Operating Officer (BSW), the County Commander, Wiltshire and Swindon, South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust, the Head of Urgent Care, (BSW), and the Chief Executive at GWH responded to members' questions and comments on the following issues:

- How ambulances are staffed by fully qualified paramedic teams and deployment to a patient does not rely on the medical issue the patient is experiencing.
- How community first responders support and compliment the work being done by ambulance paramedics.
- Performance details of the South Western Ambulance Service Foundation Trust regarding the "call stack" in September 2020 (patients waiting for an ambulance but for whom there is no available ambulance to be dispatched).
- The methods used to undertake Covid-19 testing for patients arriving by ambulance at emergency department and how resources are shared nationally.

Resolved - That the report be noted.

The Committee considered a report by the Chief Legal Officer on the results of the work programme consultation and the suggested priorities of the work for the Municipal Year, 2020/21.

At the Chair's invitation, Councillor Cathy Martyn, Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Safety referred to an aspect of her portfolio. She drew the Committee's attention to the Prevent duty: Safeguarding from radicalisation. The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 placed a duty on specific groups, including local authorities, police, education and health. She confirmed that the Prevent Duty's objective is to respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism, prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and to work with sectors and institutions where people are risks of radicalisation. Members noted that the Community Safety Partnership team was working together with partners on this duty.

Resolved - (1) That the details and activities included in the work programme for 2020/21, be updated to reflect actions contained in this report and recommended by the Committee.

(2) That the Development Manager Risk Enablement officer be requested to present a report on the "Prevent Duty" at the Committee meeting on 22nd April 2021.

(3) That further to (2) above, members of the Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee be invited to the meeting in April.

(4) That the Cabinet Office be requested to circulate meeting dates for the Cabinet Member Advisory Group set up to monitor such things as:- community engagement; relevant powers that officers can use; the threat that is posed to the wider community if lockdown continues for an extended time; any potential reduction in services; transfer of responsibility for someone in care; ensuring there is sufficient quality PPE for all those requiring it, etc.

(5) That the multi-agency report on Obesity be postponed from the January 2021 to 22nd April 2021 meeting.

This page is intentionally left blank

**CHILDREN'S HEALTH, SOCIAL CARE AND EDUCATION OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

WEDNESDAY, 25 NOVEMBER 2020

PRESENT:- Councillors Barbara Parry (Chair), Fay Howard, Nick Martin, Carol Shelley, Bazil Solomon, Nadine Watts, Alison Paul, Timothy Swinyard and Caryl Sydney-Smith

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Matthew Courtliff and Oladapo Ibitoye .

11. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded Members of the need to declare any known interests in any matters to be considered at the meeting.

Councillor Barbara Parry made a personal and non-prejudicial declaration of interest as she worked for Ridgeway School.

Councillor Carol Shelley made a personal and non-prejudicial declaration of interest, as she was a governor of Swindon Academy.

Councillor Caryl Sydney-Smith made a personal and non-prejudicial declaration of interest, as she was a school governor of Oliver Tomkins Primary School.

Councillor Basil Solomon made a personal and non-prejudicial declaration of interest in his capacity as a part time teacher.

12. Public Question Time

No public questions were received during the meeting.

13. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 16th September 2020, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

14. Children Services Covid-19 Response and Recovery

The Corporate Director, Children Services submitted a report setting out an overview of the priorities identified in response to Covid-19, the actions taken and impact of the work to minimise the overall impact on children, young people and families in Swindon and summarising the key challenges and resulting actions. This report linked directly to the Council's vision to 2030

Priority Two: - "To offer educational opportunities that lead to the right skills and the right jobs in the right places" and Priority Four: - Help people to help themselves while always protecting our most vulnerable children and adults".

The Corporate Director, Children Services introduced the report and responded to Members scrutiny in respect of:

- The move towards a “One Children’s Service”.
- The reported schools with attendance of pupils overall across all schools has been good and is currently at 96% and how this figure was validated. It was noted that schools had not be penalised for pupils unable to attend due to Covid-19 and that these figures included the X-Code which was used for Covid-19. There were currently around 5.8% (up from 2.2% in October 2020) of schools pupils in Swindon who were self-isolating.
- Accumulatively since the start of term two, there have been over 2,000 young people who have been self-isolating. Most of these were at secondary level and was broadly in line with national figures.
- The provision of free school meals during the holiday period. In respect of the October half-term period the scheme was put in place very quickly and over 1,100 families had been able to access support. This provision had been extended to cover families not supported by other schemes.
- The winter grant would cover free school meals for the Christmas 2020 period and February 2021 school break and would be a more robust system. A number of options were being investigated, including the provision of a voucher and how communities were supporting young people, as it was a wider group than those pupils entitled to a free schools meal.
- A requirement of the winter grant funding was for the Council to be able to demonstrate that funding was being targeted at the right families. It was anticipated the options appraisal would be completed by the end of the week with information being circulated the following week.
- Guidance received in respect of the Holiday Activity Fund, which would cover the Easter, the summer holidays and Christmas in 2021, and co-ordination being undertaken with partners regarding its operation and sustainability ensuring all families entitled to help would be included.
- Information and advice sent to parents by schools when a pupils needs to self-isolate.
- How examinations would be undertaken and assessed; currently these details were not yet available and the Committee and officers were mindful of the concerns regarding completing the curriculum and whether pupils would be able to sit exams.
- That 789 laptops and 100 wireless routers were distributed to disadvantaged children in Swindon in July 2020 to ensure they were able to access learning. The school summer holidays had delayed the delivery of around 40 laptops to disadvantaged children and it was anticipated that all laptops would be delivered by the end of the week. An additional offer of laptops from the Government was currently being directly co-ordinated through schools.
- That 206 young people who are classified as NEET were being supported by the Council’s Youth Engagement Service. All young people who were classified as NEET had been allocated a youth worker to support them.
- An update on kick-start which was part of the Government’s suite of measures to support young people through salary and other employer support for six month work placements for young people on universal credit. The first tranche of applications had been made to Government, and this included those from the Council.
- The production of the ‘Learn Live’ event which was planned and delivered in collaboration with the Local Enterprise Partnership to provide information, advice and support on career progression, employment and training

opportunities for 16-24-year olds. The live broadcast had 588 views with 4,189 'On Demand' views and 2,344 page visits. These event provided positive feedback and was well attended and future events were currently being considered.

- The wide take-up of the Swindon Achieving Permanency Framework training.
- The implementation of the 'Social Workers in Schools' pilot scheme, involving eight social workers, which would be the subject of an update to the Committee in February 2021.
- Work to reduce average time until the final court hearing which was currently 31 weeks which was the result of a variety of combinations including Covid-19 related issues, the need for specialist assessments or late changes to either family or Council representation at court. It was noted that although 31 weeks was too long this was better than many other authorities.

Resolved – (1) That the priorities, activity and challenges outlined in the report and the learning and impact to date be noted.

(2) That an update on the implementation of the 'Social Workers in Schools' pilot scheme be submitted to this Committee in February 2021.

(3) That officers forward additional information to Members of the Committee in respect of (i) figures on self-isolation figures in Swindon schools, including at Key Stage 4, (ii) information on information sent to parents by schools in relation of pupils self-isolating, (iii) the completion of the roll-out of the provision of lap-tops to vulnerable children in the Borough, and (iv) an update on the Kick-start programme (including traineeships).

15. Education and Learning Strategies Update

The Director – Inclusion and Achievement submitted a report updating the Committee on progress on the Council's Education Strategy, the work of the sub-group including schools and colleges, business and voluntary sectors to look at challenges, opportunities, desired outcomes and priorities and future plans to progress this work. These strategies supported Priority two: Offer education opportunities that lead to the right skills and right jobs in the right places and Priority four: Help people to help themselves while always protecting our most vulnerable children and adults.

The Director – Inclusion and Achievement introduced the report and responded to Members questions and comments in respect of:

- Engagement with stakeholders on this work and the school effectiveness process working with schools to ensure accurate self-assessments of their current position and to allow effective oversight.
- Ongoing work with schools and colleges and Multi Academy Trust CEOs to explore the options and best approach to build on partnership working to date, and to establish a sector led approach to working in partnership to improve achievement moving forward. The initial priorities for this work and the immediate challenges in education have been agreed and will form the basis of joint working to establish an individual approach to effectively work with individual schools.
- An update on work related to the dedicated schools grant to address the overspend and recovery of monies.
- The priorities and outcomes of the Education and Learning Strategies with a

view to having the overall strategy and draft plan in place by the end of January 2021. Strategy work had been slowed down due to the need to prioritise Covid-19 recovery work.

- An update on the workshop held in February 2020 to engage a wide range of stakeholders in the development of the strategy and to develop the vision and priorities which had been positive with good engagement.
- Work to analysis the key themes arising from the workshop, including inclusion, meeting the needs of SEND young people and linking outcomes to work, colleges and universities.
- A brief summary of the priorities and outcomes proposed following work and meeting with individual sectors.
- The outcomes of the peer review on intervention which showed the need to better link work on the 0-5 age group through health visitor's teams and parenting programmes which had seen some services being joined together to achieve an improved 0-5 approach and outcomes at an earlier stage.
- On-going work to turn data into intelligence in order to map need in Swindon's communities and support effective service delivery, this included joining up different data storage systems.
- The establishment of a Strategic Inclusion Forum to oversee inclusive practice in schools and support ongoing improvements in the graduated approach to meeting the needs of children without a statutory assessment and the allocation of financial resources to 'Team around the school'. This would work with the Schools Forum bring decisions involving children closer to schools and would provide inclusion training.
- The Council's support for the continued development of the Learning Town Strategy.

Resolved (1) - That the updates of the Inclusion and Achievement strategies currently in development be noted.

(2) That an update on the strategy and implementation plan and consultation with stakeholders be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

16. Children's Social Care and Early Help Summary of Performance Position at the end of Quarter 2 2020/21

The Interim Director of Children's Social Work submitted a report setting out key performance information and provides additional service context and interpretation of data for Quarter 2 of the current Municipal Year.

The Interim Director of Children's Social Work and responded to Members' questions and comments in respect of:

- Areas requiring improvement challenges currently being experienced and the plan to address these.
- The continued and increasing demand for help from the Children's and Families team including help through early support services with the early help hub being very busy.
- The recent increase in work requiring a social worker assessment or intervention including social worker interventions much of which was the result of family pressures arising from the pandemic restrictions. The number of children on child protections plans was rising and approaching pre-pandemic levels.

- The recruitment and retention of social workers, that despite improvement being made in recruiting permanent staff, still remained a challenge, especially in posts undertaking child protection work. This was also an issue at a national level.
- The number of children in care which had remained fairly stable throughout the pandemic, but which was not always the case nationally.
- Care placement availability remained a challenge especially when placing children in emergency situations. The recruitment of foster carers had been positive during the pandemic period.
- There had been an improvement in securing permanency of placements for young people where this was the right plan.
- Swindon was performing well against statistical neighbours and nationally in respect of care orders.
- Despite pressures arising from the pandemic, there continued to be progress in placing young people in employment, education or training.
- There had been an increase to 318 children who were reported to be taught at home and these children were being monitored and there had been a reduction in the number of children who were potentially missing education and requiring support to restart fulltime education.
- The percentage of Elective Home Educated children who had special educational needs (six children educated at home had an Education Health Plan) and the reasons for these parents choosing to home educate their children.
- Progress in establishing a home environment for older looked after children requiring assistance and to place as many back within the Borough as was appropriate.
- The process for establishing children's homes and for determining where this was suitable for the young people.
- The level of vacancies for Health Visitors and the current recruitment of three additional Early Years Family Practitioners in place of two health visitors to improve the skill set within the team. The recruitment of health visitors and student health visitors continued, including nurses and health visitors, and school nurses would be trained and dual registered.
- The continued recruitment of social workers at the varying managerial levels and the recruitment of experienced social workers which was more problematic during the current pandemic although recruitment plans were in place.
- The placement of asylum seeking looked after children some of whom are placed out of borough due to local connections or to meet their ethnic and cultural needs better.
- The challenges in monitoring asylum seeking looked after children some of whom are placed out of borough during Covid-19 which had been met.
- That there were no current Serious Case Reviews outstanding. Officers updated Members" on a Serious Case Review highlighted in the Evening Advertiser which referred to an old case.
- The monitoring of Electively Home Educated children and the return to school following Covid-19.

Resolved – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That progress made on meeting the Council Pillars be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

17. Update on Special Educational Needs and Disability Written Statement of Action

The Director – Inclusion and Achievement submitted a report an update of the progress of the delivery of the SEND a joint Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) a joint inspection of the local area of Swindon to judge the effectiveness of the area in implementing the special educational needs and disability (SEND) reforms as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014. The inspection raised a number of strengths but also significant concerns about the effectiveness of the local area. The local authority and CCG was required to produce and submit a Written Statement of Action to Ofsted that explained how the local area will tackle the areas of significant weakness over 18 months.

The Director – Inclusion and Achievement introduced the report and responded to Members' scrutiny and questions in respect of:

- The 7,000 children in Swindon with a SEND report and 2,300 in receipt of a statutory Education Health and Care Plan.
- Since 2015, there had been a 71% increase in the number of Education Health and Care Plans which was higher than the national average.
- The current Government Review looking at solutions and challenges of implementing the reforms centring on social working health and education of young people.
- Current plans for the introduction of a rolling programme of inspections across the country.
- Swindon was inspected in line with the Government SEND framework in November 2018 which raised a number of strengths but also concerns that required the Council to produce a written statement of action. This set out actions to improve against eight priority areas over an eighteen month period.
- The national context of 60% of local authorities being required to produce a written statement of action with nine of twenty-one authorities being visited having satisfied the inspectorate that they had met the required improvements.
- The risks associated with not satisfying the inspectorate sufficient progress against actions had been met and the impact of delivery against the eight priorities to date and timeline for planned activity.
- Regularly regional visits to the Council from the Department for Education and NHS England advisors and in November from the national SEND advisor to the Department for Education.
- Feedback from the regional advisors was the information provided was comprehensive, joined up and evidence based on areas of improvement with notable progress against five of the priorities with qualitative and quantitative data suggesting service improvement and increased levels of satisfaction.
- Progress had been affected by Covid-19 although work and delivery had continued through the pandemic period with some work incorporate within a Covid-19 catch-up plan based around accelerated progress the Council intended to make in three priority areas, which would be reported to the Governance Board.
- It was anticipated that the inspection re-visit would occur around Easter 2021 and once concluded the work undertaken would be aligned to the inclusion strategy.

- Concerns expressed by Special Schools in using the portal and liaison by officers with those schools.
- Waiting times for autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) mental health services which had improved with waiting time dropping; in April 2019 there were 1261 children on the waiting list which had reduced to 869 by the end of September 2020 a drop of 31% in eighteen months. These waiting times were continuing to drop. The Committee welcomed the sustained drop in waiting times but noted additional work was required to clear the 250 families who had been on the waiting list since 2018.
- The CCG had advised that additional clinics and capacity was being planned and that a new diagnostic for ADHD had been introduced to reduce times and improve the quality of service. In addition the Council education psychology service had been commissioned to help ensure those accepted onto the ADHD were appropriate with better information sharing on those children accepted onto the pathway and to support families with earlier intervention.

Resolved – (1) That the report and progress against the Written Statement of Action be noted.

(2) That this Committee receive an update on progress against the outcomes of the Written Statement of Action actions.

(3) That officers liaise with the CCG regarding communication with families in respect of ADHD waiting times and report to this Committee in the event that further action is required.

18. Youth Offending – A Multi-agency Response

The Service Manager – Practice and Development-Interim Service Manager – Youth Offending Team submitted a report setting out an update in relation to the Youth Offending Team, a multi-agency response to Youth Offending. This work related to the Committee's specific responsibility for the review of Local Authority services delivered to children and young people in Swindon and linked to the Council Vision's Priorities and Pledges, Swindon Programme, Corporate Strategy, One Swindon, Strategic Objectives, Plans and Policies.

Interim Director of Children's Social Work introduced the report and responded to Members' scrutiny and comments in respect of:

- An overview of the Youth Offending Team which was a Multi-Organisation Partnership and had role and services funded by Swindon Borough Council, NHS and the Youth Justice Board as well as contributions in kind.
- The Team responded to criminal behaviour by children and young people and worked to reduce the risk of them entering the criminal justice system.
- The service was governed by a management board, currently chaired the Corporate Director, Children's Services with a police representative as Vice-Chair and met regularly to hold partners to account on the delivery of their statutory functions in relation young people involved in offending.
- The team involves a range of people with casework responsibility, Youth Offending Team officers, social workers, a probation officer and staff who supported the criminal processing service such as bail and remand, those involved in monitoring those who have offended and reparation workers.

- An overview of the team and management structure, which also supported young offenders' health and education requirements.
- In the past Swindon had a higher rate of young people entering the youth justice system when matched as comparator authorities and the national average; and work, for example through the Youth Restorative Intervention Panel (providing alternative options to prevent court appearances), had been undertaken to reduce this so it was in line with comparators.
- Work to ensure that only a small percentage of Swindon's young people serve a custodial sentence. It was noted that a small cohort had been held in custody, for violence related charges, during the pandemic period for longer than they might otherwise have done. This added a financial pressure for the Council who had to pay for their care whilst in custody.
- The reasons for Swindon's youth re-offending rate being higher than the national average due to a small cohort of re-offenders. Although the rate of offending and re-offending had fallen significantly during the pandemic.
- The results of internal and external reviews of the Youth Offending Team in Swindon over the previous eighteen months, which evaluated its performance and to identify areas for improvement with a monthly performance and quality assurance board being held. A self-assessment against national standards had also been undertaken and the findings had been incorporated into the service improvement plan.
- These reviews identified that some casework within the Youth Offending Team was of good quality, with a small number of exceptions but systems and processes supporting the team needed to be strengthened and quality management and management oversight needed some work.
- An overview of the key elements of the improvement plan included organisational delivery (reviewing policy and procedures and service level agreements), which was near completion, preparation for the next national review, business support role updating learning and development for team members and ensuring the views of children and young people are properly considered.
- An overview of out of court remedies and related protocols which were currently being reviewed to ensure full engagement with parents and to fully incorporate the views of victims in any reparative work undertaken by young people (including a meeting with the young offender if the victim wanted this).
- The review undertaken by the Youth Offending Team to ensure it could properly interact with the Court system and meet the Court's requirements.
- How the Youth Offending Team intervened with young offenders to encourage changes to their lifestyle and to undertake learning and education to prevent the risk of further offending.
- Work with BAME youth to address the slight over representation within Swindon and in any discrimination arising.
- The role of youth engagement workers within the work of the Youth Offending Team.

Resolved – (1) The progress in relation to the strategies for meeting Government and local targets for preventing and reducing first time offending, re-offending, remand and custodial sentencing be noted and approved.

(2) That an update on the outcomes on the six youth offenders currently not in education, education or training be submitted to this Committee.

(3) That the information contained in paragraph 9.2 of the report be quantified by numbers and percentage and be forwarded to members of the Committee.

This page is intentionally left blank

COMMUNITIES AND PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 18 NOVEMBER 2020

PRESENT:- Councillors Matthew Courtliff, Jim Grant, Steve Heyes, Janine Howarth, Vinay Manro and Caryl Sydney-Smith.

Also in attendance: Councillor Maureen Penny (Cabinet Member for Highways, Maintenance and Waste Services) and Councillor Gary Sumner (Cabinet Member for Strategic Infrastructure, Transport and Planning).

An apologies for absence was received from Councillor Vera Tomlinson.

8. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded Members of the need to declare any known interests in any matters to be considered at the meeting. No declarations were made.

9. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 1st September 2020, be confirmed and signed.

10. Public Question Time

Mr Roy Worman asked public questions relating to the scheduling and management of major traffic schemes by the Council. The Cabinet Member for Strategic Infrastructure, Transport and Planning responded at the meeting.

Mr Roy Worman asked supplemental questions relating to (i) costs occurred as a result of traffic schemes not being completed on schedule and the recovery of such costs, and (ii) Covid-19 precautions taken by the workforce during work on highway schemes. The Cabinet Member for Strategic Infrastructure, Transport and Planning responded at the meeting.

Mr Roy Worman asked public questions relating to the operation of the Council's garden waste service. The Chair responded at the meeting.

11. Covid-19 Update

The Council's Director of Operations submitted a report setting out how the Operations Directorate has supported Council staff and services to continue to work safely throughout the pandemic in accordance with the pandemic the Council's Recovery Plan approved by Cabinet in July 2020.

The Director of Operations, Chief Operating Officer and Head of Streetsmart introduced the report and responded to Members' questions and comments in respect of:

- The majority of operational services have been maintained during the

pandemic lockdown period albeit with issues of maintaining the delivery of supplies, ensuring the workforce is socially distanced and shielding.

- Waste and Recycling teams due to social distancing went from three to two in cabs with other staff being transported to sites, which was labour intensive.
- Services were prioritised, as set out in paragraph 3.14 of the report, and lessons learnt in maintaining services during the initial lockdown were applied to the current lockdown.
- An increase in the volume of rubbish and recycling, possibly due to more homeworking, had led to pressures on capacity and time taken to complete collection rounds.
- The Council's Household Waste and Recycling Centre was initially closed but reopened on 20th May with the use of a booking system which had proven to be largely successful. Feedback had been positive with requests to keep the booking system currently in operation.
- Essential highway repairs had continued through the lockdown period although there had been an issue with the availability of materials and in maintain social distancing.
- Minor repairs and replacement capital works (ie bathrooms and kitchens) to the Council's housing stock had been suspended but this service had recommenced in September.
- Positive feedback from residents in relation to the household and recycling collections undertaken during the pandemic period.
- The need to advertise the ability to book an appointment at the Council's Household Waste and Recycling Centre via telephone for those unable to book electronically. It was noted that a successful secret shopper exercise, both electronically and by telephone, had been undertaken by the Cabinet Member for Highways, Maintenance and Waste Services during the lockdown period.
- The need to ensure the public had access to appointments at the Council's Household Waste and Recycling Centre, which appeared to have a lot of small tradesmen using it through block bookings online.
- Co-ordination with Parish Councils in respect of the provision of services during the lockdown period and the need for better communications.

Resolved – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Cabinet Member for Highways, Maintenance and Waste Services and officers be thanked for their attendance and presentation.

12. Strategic Transport Planning - Proposed schemes 2020/21

The Cabinet Member for Strategic Infrastructure, Transport and Planning submitted a report setting out strategic transport schemes being delivered during the 2020/21 municipal year and their impact on the delivery of the Council Vision's Priority One "Improve infrastructure and housing to support a growing, low-carbon economy".

The Cabinet Member introduced the report and responded to Members' questions in respect of:

- The scope of major schemes currently planned for 2022/21, including some major schemes whose delivery began in the Municipal Year 2019/20.
- The delivery of major schemes that had commenced in the current Municipal Year and whose delivery would continue into the forthcoming Municipal Year.

- A summary of the schemes set out within the appendix to the report and the capital commitment and funding streams, including Government grants available for their delivery.
- The adverse effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on the delivery of the planned work programme.
- Delays to some schemes arising from contractor staffing levels, the need to ensure safe working practices in respect of the pandemic and work being undertaken by utility companies.
- The need to schedule adjoining schemes, especially in the New Eastern Villages, to ensure a smooth delivery of infrastructure and to minimise any disruption caused.
- Reduced traffic levels during the pandemic lock-down period that had reduced disruption arising from some highways work.
- The delivery of some highway infrastructure outside of normal working hours to reduce disruption.
- Delays to works arising from the need to access third party property, for instance land owned by Network Rail for the delivery of works at the White Hart Junction.
- The ambitious and complex nature of some of the schemes such as the Southern Connector Road, which linked Commonhead Roundabout to the New Eastern Villages.
- The ambitious and complex nature of some of the schemes such as the Southern Connector Road and green infrastructure and ecology alongside it which linked Commonhead Roundabout to the New Eastern Villages.
- The principles and safety features supporting the design and delivery of major infrastructure schemes.
- The use of technology, such as traffic sensors, to improve traffic flow in new major highway infrastructure schemes.
- The effective use of social media to reduce disruption either through construction/maintenance work.
- Consultation with ward councillors prior to the commencement of road works.
- Improvement in congestion and air quality arising from traffic management schemes such as Oxford Road.

Resolved – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Cabinet Member for Strategic Infrastructure, Transport and Planning be thanked for his attendance and presentation.

(Councillor Matthew Courtliff had a personal declaration and non-prejudicial of interest in respect of this item as he was employed by Network Rail).

13. Work Programme 2020/21

The Committee considered a report by the Chief Legal Officer setting out the Committee's proposed Work Programme for the Municipal Year 2020/21.

The Chair reported that there had been an informal meeting of the Parking Grass Verges Task Group to discuss the parameters of the work it would undertake. The Chair invited additional comments in respect of key issues for the Task Group to consider. The Chair confirmed that the Task Group would endeavour to conclude its work during the current Municipal Year and would its findings to the Cabinet.

Resolved – That the report be noted and Work Programme for the current Municipal Year be approved.

GROWING THE ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 4 NOVEMBER 2020

PRESENT:- Councillors Kevin Parry (Chair); Junab Ali, Jenny Jefferies, Vinay Manro, Roger Smith, Rahul Tarar and Timothy Swinyard.

Also in attendance Councillor Dale Heenan (Cabinet Member for the Town Centre, Culture and Heritage) and Councillor Gary Sumner (Cabinet Member for Strategic Infrastructure, Transport and Planning).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Abdul Amin, Nick Burns-Howell and Mark Dempsey.

9. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded Members of the need to declare any known interests in any matters to be considered at the meeting.

Councillor Kevin Parry made a non prejudicial declaration of interest in respect of Agenda Item 5 as he was employed by Honda.

Councillor Roger Smith made a non prejudicial declaration of interest in respect of Agenda Item 5 as he was employed by Savilles.

Councillor Junab Ali made a non prejudicial declaration of interest as he was a Non-Executive Director for Business West.

10. Public Question Time

No public questions were received during the meeting.

11. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 13th September 2020, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

12. Swindon Employment Land Review

The Cabinet Member for Strategic Infrastructure, Transport and Planning, Director of Economy, Growth and Place and Director of Strategic Planning submitted a joint report updating the Committee on the work with business and other partners in support of ensuring that the Borough has a sufficient supply of employment land to meet our short and long-term needs through the Local Plan Review.

The Cabinet Member for Strategic Infrastructure, Transport and Planning and the Council's Planning Manager highlighted the following issues as part of their presentation and members' scrutiny:

- The Council's Local Plan was currently under review, including existing and

future employment land sites within the Borough.

- An overview of current employment land within the Borough which included, the optimisation of key employment areas, improving the quality of key employment areas, better marketing those employment areas and planning for longer term growth.
- Forward planning would take account of Government initiatives such as the Economic Heartland and improvements to the A419 which had a long-term effect on Swindon's employment offer and infrastructure to support employment land.
- The 36 employment areas in the town covering approximately 2 million square meters of floor space, including Offices (19%), Factories (33%) and Warehouses (48%).
- The town offered a strong industrial location with transport links, with a number of high performing sites with quality buildings.
- There were challenges with aging stock and some underperforming employment areas and the conversion of some aging office buildings into residential usage.
- The COVID-19 pandemic had seen an acceleration of the trend towards homework working and the flexible use of office space. Other trends saw a demand for larger units to accommodate automation and for large Grade "A" logistics and warehousing floor space.
- Examples of new employment developments such as (i) the Zurich Offices which offered high quality accommodation with a focus on staff wellbeing, collaboration space and which had high sustainability credentials, (ii) the BMW manufacturing building comprising a 0.8 hectares footprint, 3 mezzanine levels, 13,000 square metres of floor space and which was highly automated, and (iii) The Hub at Symmetry Park which was a 27 hectare site with 218 square metres of floor space over 4 storeys and which would create between 1,500 and 2,000 jobs.
- Work to market Swindon through digital and other approaches.
- The strategy responded to changing market needs through (i) optimising key employment land, (ii) opportunities to subdivide or assemble sites and (iii) a focus on bringing forward long time vacant buildings and/or sites.
- The underlying principles of the employment land review to promote and optimise employment land within the Borough.
- The current and potential future trends relating to retail both with the urban setting and in district centres and workshops with developers to promote retail and office opportunities.
- The improvement of the quality of employment areas including engagement with occupiers and site owners, improvement to maintenance, signage and upkeep, wider environmental enhancements, and facility and infrastructure improvements.
- The marketing of key employment areas through the identification of unique or key selling points such as fibre optic cables, the branding of employment areas and the promotion of sector clusters and collaboration between agents, businesses, owners and the council.
- An outline of current work in relation to the current Honda site, the Cheney Manor Industrial Estate, the R&D Hub at Wroughton Airfield, the Blackworth Business Park to fully utilise these.
- The need to repurpose ageing office accommodation in the town centre.
- The development and marketing of the Carriage Works and the creation of a

knowledge cluster at this site and the use of a historic building to create a distinctive offer.

- The development of an employment land register and how this might be utilised in the future.

Resolved – That work on the Swindon Employment Land Review be noted.

13. Town Centre Recovery Plan Update

The Director of Economy and Growth submitted a report updating Members on the progress of developing the Town Centre Recovery Plan which sets out the activity being undertaken by Swindon Borough Council in partnership with local business to lead safe reopening of the high street, and the recovery in the town centre.

In presenting the report the Cabinet Member for the Town Centre, Culture and Heritage and the Director of Economy, Growth and Place highlighted the following issues and responded to Members' questions in relation to:

- The impact on the town centre recovery plan arising from the current COVID-19 pandemic.
- Work with partners on an adapted version of the Institute of Place Management Recovery Framework going through crisis, pre-recovery, recovery and transformation phases and an explanation of each of these elements.
- The mission of the recovery plan to attract people and businesses to Swindon post COVID-19.
- The Plan's Strategy to position Swindon as a top UK town for quality of life, to attract investment and funding, to challenge perceptions and to react quickly as a collaborative network.
- The Plan's objectives to increase footfall levels, economic activity, and level of investment to reduce crime rates and other objectives that might be agreed by the Plan Ahead Teams.
- The establishment of shareholder networks and leadership group.
- A shared comprehension that these work could not be undertaken by one organisation but would require partnership working.
- The creation and work of plan ahead teams including (i) Retails (campaigns, advertising, events, empty units), (ii) Community (engagement strategy, art and pop-ups, social media), (iii) Leisure (outdoor seating, performance space), (iv) Commercial (flexible use of space, incubation hubs, promotions), (v) Public Space (markets, soft landscaping/window dressing, outdoor seating), (vi) Transport (EATF, ways to encourage visitors, liaison with bus and taxi operators), (vii) Marketing (communications plan, shared promotional events for the town centre), and (viii) Public Space (RHSS, active travel, social distancing, public health, enforcement).
- The diversification of the current town centre retail area to address the current perception of the town centre and its offer.
- The recovery of footfall in the town centre following the end of the initial lockdown period which had proven stronger than many other towns and cities.
- The identification of funding opportunities for businesses and to improvement the town centre environment.
- The use of social media to promote the town centre, businesses situated

within it and activities being promoted.

- The use of click and collect services to help support business through lock-down scenarios.
- The creation of safe areas in a landscaped setting to promote café/leisure type culture which could help extend patrons visits to the town centre.
- The promotion of the town centre through a number of business and Council social media and other opportunities such as Switch onto Swindon.
- The need to consolidate the number of retail outlets and area of the town centre area and how the wider area might be utilised.
- An increase of 15 new businesses in the town centre following the end of the first lockdown period.
- That only two of the vacant units in the town centre were owned by the Council and the role therefore, of the private sector, in the town centre regeneration process.

Resolved – That the report outlining work to support the recovery of Swindon Town Centre by working in partnership with local business and community groups to create safe, attractive and successful public spaces and to support local businesses as they reopen be noted and supported.

14. Apprenticeship Task Group - Plan of Action

The Head of Skills, Employment and Lifelong Learning submitted a report updating Members on work relating to Apprenticeships that has taken place to date, outline the key opportunities and challenges and to present the Plan of Action, outlining the recommended activity to achieve an increase in Apprenticeship opportunities.

In presenting the report the Head of Skills, Employment and Lifelong Learning and the Higher Education and Apprenticeships Project Manager highlighted the following issues and responded to Members' questions in relation to:

- Work undertaken by the Apprenticeship Task Group to address ongoing issues, both locally and nationally, since the previous meeting of the Committee.
- That the chairs of this Committee and the Children's Health, Education and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee had agreed to be champions for this work.
- The report outlined progress made by the Task Group in engaging employers and employer representatives (including schools).
- The percentage of apprenticeships against Government targets started since 2015 had largely been above the national figure but below the target set.
- Some of the reason for the reduction in apprenticeships against target had been due to significant changes in national regulations (funding and delivery and quality of apprenticeships) around 2017.
- This had required employers to reconsider funding of apprenticeships as well as their development and apprenticeship strategies.
- An overview of Intermediate, Advanced, Higher Level and Degree Level Apprenticeships following Government reforms.
- A breakdown of apprenticeship starts since 2015 which had only seen increases in Higher Level and Degree Level apprenticeships during that period.

- Reasons for the decline in Intermediate Apprenticeships included small and medium enterprise companies had previously focused on the 16-18 year age group and this funding had been reduced and business administration apprenticeships had also ceased.
- The government focus on Higher Level and Degree Level apprenticeships had seen these increase.
- A breakdown in the number and percentage of apprenticeships by sector within the Borough since 2105 with Business, Administration, Law and retail showing the greatest number of apprenticeship starts over the period.
- Challenges highlighted by employers included (i) the complexity of the apprenticeship landscape, particularly to Small to Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) who have limited resource, time and consequently expertise within their organisations, (ii) that although the profile of apprenticeships has been raised in the last few years, increasing the awareness of apprenticeships as a pathway to both acquiring new skills and as a route to upskilling and reskilling continues to be a challenge, (iii) that Higher Level and Degree Apprenticeships are not regarded consistently across schools as an alternative route into Higher Education and acquiring the skills required by employers, and (iv) ensuring that from entry level through to Higher Level apprenticeships have an inclusive range of options in the town, providing pathways for all residents to progress in their chosen career.
- Opportunities with apprenticeships include (i) apprenticeships provide the opportunity to recruit and train for those difficult to fill positions and skills shortage areas, (ii) apprenticeships enable employers to upskill and re-skill their existing workforce ensuring a solid pipeline of talent for the future, (iii) apprenticeships are a key route for residents to continue learning while working, helping them to progress in their chosen career, (iv) apprenticeships are now available at degree and Postgraduate level, enabling higher level skills to be achieved through an additional route to the traditional university one, (v) that there are more options for routes into apprenticeships through schemes such as Kickstart and enhanced Traineeships, as well as employer incentives.
- Key areas of the action plan which included (i) support to enable all businesses, and in particular Small and Medium enterprises to access the expertise and resources to navigate the apprenticeship landscape, (ii) increasing awareness of the benefits of apprenticeships to both employers and within the wider community, (iii) increasing awareness and engagement consistently across all Borough schools and colleges, particularly at Higher and Degree Level, and (iv) ensuring that the local range and quality of provision meets employer demand, and that employers are better able to understand the offer.
- Sharing best practice in respect of creating apprenticeships.
- How business representatives were chosen to serve on the Apprenticeship Task Group and how the Task Group could encourage and support smaller employers in employing apprentices.
- The need to identify how small business can be offered additional support, including levy transfers, when employing apprentices.

Resolved - That the progress to date, the challenges and opportunities and the draft Plan of Action in Appendix 1 to the report be noted.

15.

Work Programme 2020/21

The Committee considered a report by the Chief Legal Officer setting out the Committee's proposed Work Programme for the Municipal Year 2020/21.

Resolved – That the report be noted and Work Programme for the current Municipal Year be approved.

RESOURCES AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 23 NOVEMBER 2020

PRESENT: Councillors Rahul Tarar (Chair), Vinay Manro (Vice-Chair), Claire Crilly, Steve Heyes, Nick Martin and Adorabelle Shaikh.

Also in attendance was: Councillor Rob Jandy, Cabinet Member for Organisational Excellence.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Oladapo Ibitoye.

7. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded members of the need to declare any known interests in any matters to be considered at the meeting. No declarations were made.

8. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 21st September 2020 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

9. Public Question Time

There were no public questions submitted.

10. Customer Services - Channel Shift

Councillor Rob Jandy, Cabinet Member for Organisational Excellence, referred to the two items on the agenda for the Committee to consider at this meeting. Councillor Jandy confirmed that the purpose of both reports is to highlight the improvements in the efficiency and effectiveness of the services provided by the Council, and to demonstrate that residents have access to those services (with it being ensured that no-one is left behind). Councillor Jandy highlighted how the subject matters of both reports each contribute in a different way to achieve this, but that the ambition remains the same.

The Committee then considered a report designed to initiate discussion about the Council's approach to channel shift. Mr Rob Brown, the Head of Customer Strategy and Operations, introduced the report and highlighted the following points:

- The Customer Access Strategy 2018-2021 sets out where those customers who are able to contact the council online will be asked to do so, and where those who are less able to do so will be supported through assisted online channels. This is to ensure that methods of support for our most vulnerable service users are protected.
- There is a focus on how residents are supported to access the most effective channel for them, be it face to face, through the post or by telephone or online (all the methods via which customers communicate with the Council in terms of service delivery).
- It is estimated that it costs the Council around £2.15 for every phone call interaction

(with web transactions being around 70p) but that it is difficult to quantify as it depends on the nature of the query and the work that has gone in to that transaction.

- There has been a lot of focus on improving the standard of performance in the services delivered by the Operations Department recently, which fundamentally underpins the successful customer service offer and the channel shift that goes along with it.
- There has been a massive shift in both online take up and the web skills of residents over the last six months as a direct result of the pandemic.
- There has also been a significant shift in web usage over the last twelve months with around a 25% increase (from 200,000 a month in November 2019 to 250,000 a month in October 2020). This has been driven by some engagements moving online such as the Household Waste Recycling Centre booking system.

Following the introduction of the report the Committee discussed the following matters:

- The remaining processes that are planned for a move to online services, with particular focus on payments to the Council being next. The Committee noted that there is very little left that it is not possible to provide online in some way.
- The online referral form in to adult social care that is about to go live which will help to protect resources for those wishing to communicate via other channels.
- The notional target of 85/15 (whereby approximately 85% of interactions will be via online services) and the progress being made towards this.
- Whether the push to move residents to using online services was communicated effectively, as there appears to be panic that access to services via the usual channels has ceased.
- How residents who have raised cases online do not have the option to further the issue should they believe it has not been resolved once closed, and other examples of services acting in a transactional rather than customer friendly way.
- How all online forms (processes) are hosted on the Borough website and are accessible via any device type. The Committee noted that the requirement to register for My Account has been retained in areas where it is needed and/or useful but has otherwise been removed from processes.
- That the focus for around the last six months has been on designing for mobile phones as about 65% of people access websites using their mobiles first.
- How the Motion on Digital Services, agreed by Council at its meeting on 19th November 2020, is being incorporated, including:
 - That housing tenants have been contacted to reiterate and clarify the messaging about their ability to report issues via the Contact Centre.
 - That self-serve options have been rolled out within libraries.
 - That call centre handlers are being trained on how to lead people through the online opportunities available to them.
- The web chat facility, which utilises a friendly search function 'bot'. The Committee noted that it has had a reasonable amount of interaction with around 300 – 400 users a day. Officers are now looking at emerging technologies to help introduce a more interactive / intelligent / anticipative response than what we have at the moment.
- The aim to introduce 'live chat' behind improved bot capability which has fell behind in 2020 due to resources being refocused to deal with the pandemic.
- The IVR messaging for people waiting on the phone, which encourages them to go

online. The Committee noted that the Council does not currently have a way of measuring if this is reason why calls are disconnected, and that all IVR messaging will be updated at the beginning of January 2021 using customer feedback.

- The procedures and contingency plans in place at the Call Centre when background systems fail and call handlers are unable to assist residents with queries.

Resolved – To note the contents of the report.

11. Emerging Technology

The Committee considered a report, which provided an update on the progress made by the Emerging Technologies team since its inception in October 2019. The report contained detail on how the team was set up to ‘horizon scan’ and bring new technological capabilities to the organisation. The Committee noted that during this time the team has successfully developed new ways of working, delivered impressive efficiency results, and won accolades for their innovative approach and ideas.

Mr Phil Murkin, the Head of Digital and Business Change, introduced the report and highlighted the following points:

- Two recent successful projects had been around free school meals and fly tipping, both of which had delivered significant benefits to the Council during the pandemic when these services were in high demand. The Committee noted that both projects had been delivered in a short timeframe using innovative technology, and had been recognised for external awards.
- The current project at the Household Waste Recycling Centre to improve the throughput and customer experience on site.
- The future projects for the team, which include one in business intelligence and analytics around the use of data, and other areas such as sensors, voice technology, assistive technology, and robotics.
- The tangible benefits now being seen for the Council through the use of these new and emerging technologies.

Resolved – To note the content of the report and particularly the successes and future challenges for the team.

12. Work Programme 2020-2021

The Committee considered and noted a report of the Chief Legal Officer setting out the topics for inclusion in the 2020/2021 Work Programme, as agreed by the Committee at its meeting on 21st September 2020 and updated during the course of the Municipal Year.

Councillor Shaikh queried the capacity to deliver expectations and to meet deadlines within the enabling functions next year due to the redeployment of officers as a result of the pandemic. Ms Sam Mowbray, Chief Operating Officer, responded and advised that lessons learnt from the first lockdown has led to the second lockdown being less onerous, and that the Council had not categorically failed to deliver anything because of Covid. The Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development will be invited to explore this matter further in her report to this Committee at its meeting on 25th January 2022.

Section 3

Regulatory Committee Minutes

This page is intentionally left blank

PLANNING COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, 10 NOVEMBER 2020

PRESENT: - Councillors Timothy Swinyard (Chair), Junab Ali, John Ballman, Nick Burns-Howell, Matthew Courtliff, Malcolm Davies, Paul Dixon, Steph Exell, Steve Heyes, Jenny Jefferies, Vinay Manro, Nick Martin, Stan Pajak and Carol Shelley and Peter Watts.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Alan Bishop, Jane Milner-Barry and Vera Tomlinson.

18. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded Councillors to declare any known interests in any of the matters to be considered by the Committee. No such declarations were made.

19. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 6th October 2020, be confirmed and signed.

20. Public Question Time

There were no public questions

21. S/19/1221 - Erection of a three-storey building to provide 9 no. flats and associated works including revised parking layout for the dental practice, Mayhew Dental, 19 Covingham Square, Covingham

In respect of application numbered S/19/1221 - Erection of a three-storey building to provide 9 no. flats and associated works including revised parking layout for the dental practice, Mayhew Dental, 19 Covingham Square, Covingham the Committee considered: -

- (a) An application for permission to develop;
- (b) Recommendations of the Head of Planning, Regulatory Services and Heritage;
- (c) The views of interested persons set out in the report circulated with the Committee Agenda;
- (d) Late Papers;
- (e) Written comments received from Councillors Barbara Parry and Kevin Parry read out at the meeting;
- (f) The comments at the meeting of the following interested persons:-

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address/Organisation</u>
Dr. Rupal Gupta	Applicant

Councillors Nick-Burns Howell, Nick Martin and Peter Watts spoke in respect of this application.

The application can be broadly summarised as:

- The application was for the erection of a three storey building comprising of nine flats and associated works including revised parking layout for the dental practice.
- The site was located to the rear of Covingham Shopping Centre and currently comprised two buildings. The larger building to the east of the site was in use as a dental surgery and was to be retained, with the smaller building to the west side currently vacant and previously in use as a physiotherapy clinic and was to be demolished to pave way for the proposed residential flat block.
- The application had been brought before the Committee at the request of Councillor Dale Heenan (Ward Councillor).
- A number of issues had been raised including overdevelopment of the site, design, parking, loss of light, highway safety.
- Following negotiations with the applicant a revised plan had been submitted responding to overdevelopment, design and flooding concerns raised by officers. The revisions involved reduction in number of units from 12 to 9, reduction in footprint of the proposed building to create adequate separation with the existing dental building, accommodate onsite parking, refuse collection and opportunity to retain existing trees and additional planting.

Submissions in support of the application can be broadly summarised as:

- The applicant and her husband jointly owned the Mayhew Dental, a family business that not only serves the local and wider community.
- The family took over the dental practice and bought the site nearly seven years previously.
- Although it was felt that the site was clearly underused it was decided to focus on providing the best dental care service possible.
- With the practice continuing to run successfully it was a good time to look at developing the site in a manner that would add to the quality of Covingham.
- The development had been given careful consideration as the dental practice would remain on site and the design and quality of what to be provided would not compromise our successful dental business.
- At all stages through the process, the design has been developed in consultation with Council officers and their recommendations have been taken on board with the project being adapted accordingly.
- There will be a direct route now through the site which will also make the surgery more accessible for local people and as well as improving pedestrian accessibility for local residents to use the site, one of the many adaptations made to the project following the suggestion from the officers.
- It was hoped that better pedestrian access would encourage current patients to choose a greener transport option.
- The development would increase security for the existing adjacent houses and flats through increased surveillance.
- The layout had been designed to meet all parking needs for both the surgery and proposed flats.
- The scale of the development fits in with the adjacent shops and flats and had been significantly revised in conjunction with planning officers, using a brick to match local houses, and a two storey with setback mansard roof for the second floor design to minimise the impact of the building on its neighbours.

- All the flats are entered at the back of the building to create a sense of community amongst the residents, and the flats themselves are designed to be spacious and bright, and each with an external balcony, to create the highest quality living environments.
- The applicant had worked with the Environment Agency who were now satisfied with the adaptations made to address potential flooding issues; including the use of voids underneath and internal floor levels above levels of extreme flooding.
- The proposed application provided the type of accommodation needed in the area.

Submissions opposing the application can be broadly summarised as:

- Not all of the residents of Larksfield affected have been notified about the application nor consulted.
- The application represented an overdevelopment of the site.
- The design was not in keeping with the street scene of Larksfield, where it is three storeys high.
- The proposed development had a lack of parking provision.
- The development would lead to a loss of privacy to other properties which would be overlooked by the proposed flats.
- There was a concern over the lack of sewage and water capacity for further development of the site and in addition there were flooding concerns.
- There were highway safety and capacity concerns regarding the access to the site with the access to the development still being too narrow, meaning vehicles are likely to encroach on the footpath at its narrowest.

Resolved – That the application be granted subject to the revised drawings and conditions set out within the report and the amended condition tabled.

22. S/20/0851 - Change of use from light industrial workshops (Use Class B1(c)) to 3no. residential dwellings (Use Class C3), Workshops, Manor Farm, Manor Farm Lane

In respect of application numbered S/20/0851 - Change of use from light industrial workshops (Use Class B1(c)) to 3no. residential dwellings (Use Class C3), Workshops, Manor Farm, Manor Farm Lane the Committee considered: -

- (a) An application for permission to develop;
- (b) Recommendations of the Head of Planning, Regulatory Services and Heritage;
- (c) The views of interested persons set out in the report circulated with the Committee Agenda;
- (d) Additional proposed conditions;
- (e) Written comments received from Councillors Barbara Parry and Kevin Parry read out at the meeting;
- (f) The comments at the meeting of the following interested persons:-

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address/Organisation</u>
Hilary Evans	Agent

Councillors Junab Ali and Stan Pajak spoke in respect of this application.

The application can be broadly summarised as:

- The application has been brought before the Planning Committee at the request of the Parish Council who raised water capacity and drainage issues with the proposed development.
- The concerns of the Parish Council had been addressed with proposed conditions tabled at the meeting who had agreed additional conditions and had withdrawn their objection.
- The application was the change of use from light industrial workshops to 3no. dwellings and had recently refused permission due to noise and ecology reasons.
- The current application was a resubmission of the same proposal with an attempt to overcome the noise and ecology reasons for refusal and subject to appropriate conditions, officers were now satisfied the reasons for refusal for the previous scheme have now been adequately addressed.

Submissions supporting the application can be broadly summarised as:

- The applicants had operated a gardening company from the workshops for over twenty years.
- The business was now winding down and the future use of the buildings was being considered.
- Whilst a change of use to residential development would normally be permitted development the wording of the original consent meant that planning permission was required.
- An application was submitted in 2019 was refused due to a lack of information relating to ecology and noise.
- Following this a number of issues raised during the earlier application had been diligently addressed with a bat survey and undertaking an approved acoustic assessment. Officers were content with these outcomes.
- Parish Councils regarding drainage and fresh water had been addressed through conditions; in addition a water pressure test had been undertaken which confirmed that water pressure on site was excellent.
- There had never been issues of flooding or standing water on site which would be further helped by the removal of a large area of concrete and 20% of the building footprint which will further improve drainage on-site.
- The completion of the Bellway homes site and new sewerage pump on the hotel site would also improve the sewerage infrastructure once it was adopted by Thames Water.
- The applicant agreed to the proposed condition pertaining to the application.

Resolved – That the application be granted subject to the conditions set out in the agenda papers and the additional conditions tabled.

23. Development Brief - Groundwell Park & Ride Site, Swindon

The Director of Strategic Development submitted a report seeking for a Development Brief for the Groundwell Park & Ride Site, Cricklade Road, Swindon.

Resolved – (1) That, subject to a minor change to the document to (a) provide equal prominence to the current use of the park and ride site as a potential future use, and

(b) a change of paragraph 4.1 of the Directors report to read “Any redevelopment scheme coming forward for the Site would still be subject to the statutory planning application process, with the exception of Park and Ride usage which currently has planning permission” the Development Brief attached as Appendix 1 of the report for the Groundwell Park and Ride Site, Cricklade Road, Swindon for development control purposes be approved; and

(2) That the Director of Strategic Development be authorised to make minor typographical and presentational changes to the content of the document before publication, including updating the report to reflect the expectations detailed in paragraph 2.20 of the report.

This page is intentionally left blank

PLANNING COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, 8 DECEMBER 2020

PRESENT: - Councillors Timothy Swinyard (Chair), Junab Ali, Alan Bishop, Nick Burns-Howell, Matthew Courtliff, Malcolm Davies, Paul Dixon, Steph Exell, Jenny Jefferies, Vinay Manro, Nick Martin, Jane Milner-Barry, Stan Pajak, Carol Shelley and Peter Watts.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors John Ballman and Vera Tomlinson.

24. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded Councillors to declare any known interests in any of the matters to be considered by the Committee.

Councillor Vinay Manro made a declaration of interest in respect of application numbered S/20/0546/RA as this was considered by Haydon Wick Parish Council which he served as a Parish Councillor. As the interest was personal but not prejudicial, and given he did not participate in its consideration by the Parish Council, he remained in the room during the discussion and voting on the application.

25. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 10th November 2020, be confirmed and signed.

26. Public Question Time

There were no public questions

27. S/OUT/20/0422/SASM - Outline planning application for 250 dwellings (including 30% affordable housing) with public open space, landscaping and sustainable drainage system (SuDS) and vehicular access point from Shrivenham Road. All matters reserved except for means of access, Land at Shrivenham Road, Highworth, Swindon

In respect of application numbered S/OUT/20/0422/SASM - Outline planning application for 250 dwellings (including 30% affordable housing) with public open space, landscaping and sustainable drainage system (SuDS) and vehicular access point from Shrivenham Road. All matters reserved except for means of access, Land at Shrivenham Road, Highworth, Swindon the Committee considered: -

- (a) An application for permission to develop;
- (b) Recommendations of the Director of Strategic Development;
- (c) The views of interested persons set out in the report circulated with the Committee Agenda;
- (d) Additional information circulated prior to the meeting;
- (e) The comments at the meeting of the following interested persons:-

Name

Address/Organisation

Helen Ball	Agent
Norman Jeffery	Local Resident
Mr Crawley	Local Resident
Kim Trueman	Local Resident
Julie Murphy	Parish Councillor

Councillors Alan Bishop, Nick Burns-Howell, Matthew Courtliff, Jenny Jefferies, Vinay Manro, Jane Milner-Barry, Stan Pajak, Carol Shelley and Peter Watts spoke in respect of this application.

The application can be broadly summarised as:

- The application has been brought to planning committee at the request of Highworth Town Council.
- The application sought outline planning permission for up to 250 dwellings (including 30% affordable housing) with associated open space, drainage, highways infrastructure and landscaping.
- The site was just over 11 hectares of greenfield agricultural land located outside the settlement boundary of Highworth. It is approximately one kilometre from the centre and relatively close to Highworth Warneford Secondary School.
- Shrivenham Road borders the site to the west with open countryside to the east and south.
- The recommendation was amended to read:

“That the Director of Strategic Development be authorised to GRANT outline planning permission subject to:-

- (a) Completion of a legal agreement to secure the planning obligations that are material to the decision in respect of open space, affordable housing, off site highway improvements, Travel Plan, and subject to suitable projects in the ward being identified as CIL compliant contributions to off-site sports provision and allotments; and,
- (b) The planning conditions set out in this report, with delegated authority to make reasonable amendments, additions or omissions to those conditions before issuing formal consent as may be necessary.”
- In determining the application, special attention should be paid to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting as required in Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- There was the need to consider the effect of the development on designated heritage assets and the reference to these in the National Planning Policy Framework the tilted balance in paragraph 11d was not triggered unless the proposal can first pass the simple balancing exercise; in this respect of addressing any harm to the setting of the listed St Michael’s Church and Conservation Area.
- The Conservation Officer considered that there was harm to the setting of St Michael’s Church and the setting of the Conservation Area with the level of harm identified as less than significant at the lower end of the scale.
- This harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal and these are set out in paragraph 41 of the report. In this respect it was considered that the significant benefits of the proposed development were demonstrable and outweighed the less than substantial harm on the

significance of the setting of the listed St Michael's Church and the setting of the Conservation Area.

- There was a similar situation in policy terms with the site recently developed on the other side of the road, now known as Wrag View.
- The housing policy of the Local Plan had been detailed in the report and as a consequence of the lack of a five year housing land supply officers did not consider it is reasonable to object to the proposal on the grounds that it does not comply with Policy SD2 in respect of the settlement boundary for Highworth as that policy is currently considered out of date in accordance with paragraph 11(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- The allocation of the site in the emerging Local Plan Review was a material factor in the application's favour and taking the Government's guidance on prematurity there was no objection on policy grounds.
- The Highways officer advised that, subject to a package of highway works, a safe and effective means of access to the development site can be secured. New vehicle movements associated with the development would give rise to impacts on the safe and effective operation of the wider highway network but, subject to appropriate works, these impacts could be mitigated.
- Highways England was primarily concerned with the ongoing safe and efficient operation of the strategic road network; in this case the A419 trunk road. It had no objections following the submission of further details submitted by the applicant but advised that appropriate contributions should be sought from the development site towards the future transport strategy supporting the Local Plan and its allocations.
- Ideally any development proposal should await the production of the transport strategy underpinning Local Plan allocations but enforcing this was not possible as the Council had a lack of a 5 year housing supply. Government guidance in relation to prematurity of development proposals had been set out in the report.
- The proposed development would be subject to highways obligations totalling £90,000 which had been justified as being directly related to this development.
- There would be the loss of some roadside hedgerow which was regrettable, although it was to be mitigated by the provision of a proposed new hedgerow of native species set back within the development site from the road frontage which would become established in time.
- The development would also allow for the planting of new trees and green open spaces within the design in place of an open agricultural field.
- Over four hectares of green infrastructure was proposed comprising 37% of the total area. This and the additional provision for the accommodation of bats and birds within the development provided for by condition would lead to a net gain in biodiversity for the site.
- The setting was a hilltop settlement which was surrounded by more open fields with built development extending south but would remain a hilltop settlement surrounded by more open fields.
- It was considered that there was harm caused to the open agricultural landscape within the setting of Eastrop Grange. However, the development has been sited to avoid any impact on the views to the south east from the property. Officers considered that on balance with appropriate landscaping on the development site closest to Eastrop Grange the proposal was considered satisfactory.
- Two play areas were proposed on the site and officers proposed a change to condition 28 that triggers the two open spaces at different times; the Leap

would be provided by the occupation of the 25th dwelling and the Neap provided by the occupation of the 75th dwelling.

- According to the Open Space standards the application generated the need for off-site contributions for sports pitch provision and allotments (although projects for these funds have yet to be identified).
- Following trenching work the County Archaeologist has advised that there is no more work to be carried out and no conditions were recommended.
- The Drainage Engineer considered that the site is generally well planned in terms of surface water drainage and further details could be provided for by conditions.
- Late objections to the proposal had been received on the grounds that (i) the site was outside the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan, (ii) the impact on the Public Right of Way and on infrastructure and (iii) the impact on Shrivenham Road when the schools were open. These matters had been considered in the report although there was no proposal to divert the public right of way with this proposal.
- Officers considered that there are a number of benefits arising from the development proposal and that it would make a significant contribution to meeting the overall housing needs of the Borough, and the shortfall in provision against overall Local Plan expectations. It would also make a significant contribution to supporting the vitality and viability of shops and services in Highworth Town Centre, provide (i) 30% affordable housing, (ii) a number of accessible dwellings, (iii) short term economic benefits through construction, (iv) an improvement of the Public Right of Way linking the site to Kings Avenue, (iv) a contribution to the improvement of cycle connections between Highworth and Swindon, and (v) subject to suitable projects in the ward being identified as Community Infrastructure Levy compliant, contributions to off-site sports provision and allotments.
- Officers did not consider that there were adverse impacts which would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole, subject to conditions and the satisfactory completion of a S106 Agreement.

Submissions in support of the application can be broadly summarised:

- The applicant has worked closely with Officers over the past nine months to carefully address all issues and have tried wherever possible to accommodate suggested amendments to the proposals.
- Whilst an outline application at this stage, careful consideration has been given to indicative design principles to ensure that the foundations are set for a high-quality development to be achieved through any subsequent reserved matters applications.
- The site was a proposed allocation in the emerging Local Plan and has therefore been identified by Council Officers to be in a sustainable location and a suitable site for further growth within Highworth.
- By delivering 250 new homes the application would make a very significant contribution to meeting the Borough's housing needs and bolstering the Council's five-year housing land supply, which was currently between two to three years, leaving a significant shortfall of 3-4,000 homes.
- As outlined in the officer report, the site is accessible to the services and facilities within the Town Centre. The policy officer at the Council has not

objected to the proposed development and suggested that it will in fact contribute to enhancing vitality and the viability of shops in Highworth. This was particularly pertinent following the impact the recent pandemic has had on town centres.

- Much of the Community Infrastructure Levy monies would be utilised to enhance local facilities with the Town Council expected to receive approximately £268,000 to spend directly on local projects that could make a significant difference to the town.
- The application would provide a significant range of measures to help promote, encourage and enable sustainable transport within the town including electric vehicle charging points. It would also make a significant financial contribution, in the region of £90,000, including towards the improvement of local public rights, including the public right of way and the wider cycle networks linking Highworth to Swindon Town Centre.
- The application would deliver 75 affordable dwellings for real people and families in real need of a home. This would lift around 180 local people out of housing need.
- The site offered a biodiversity net gain of 17% and commitment to the use of 50% native plant species and green infrastructure on site accounts for over 37% of the total site. It provided two large play areas, which would be accessible early in the development by all local residents in addition to contributions to offsite sports provision and allotments.
- Whilst some roadside hedgerow loss is regrettable this was not unusual in any new housing development and was to be mitigated by the provision of a proposed new hedgerow of native species set back within the development site from the road frontage.
- The applicant had worked closely with officers to amend the visibility splays to ensure minimal hedgerow losses, significant compensatory planting as well as retaining highway safety.
- Council officers had carefully considered all of the technical matters to conclude that, on balance, there are no unacceptable impacts and that the public benefits would outweigh the perceived harm to local heritage and landscape, which had been outlined to be less than substantial.
- The applicant fully endorsed the officers recommendation for approval and in line with this respectfully invited the Committee to grant permission for the scheme.
- The traffic surveys related to this site were undertaken prior to lock-down and the impact of Covid-19.

Submissions opposing the scheme can be broadly summarised as:

- The applicant had failed to engage constructively with Highworth Town Council and had refused to hold a public consultation, instead sending flyers to local residents.
- The site was located outside of the Neighbourhood Plan boundary as well as those of the Local Plan.
- The Town Council had unanimously refused the application at its planning committee meeting.
- Local resident strongly opposed the application.
- The Town Council had requested a road survey during those time schools were open and not in a lock-down situation.

- All traffic generated by the site will use the B4000, Shrivenham Road which was a narrow country road. It was anticipated that 20% of the site traffic would turn east and link up with the A420 to head towards Oxford. The remaining 80% would turn right towards the Fox roundabout which was a bottleneck at school start and finish times and after travelling through a single track road would travel along the A361 and through Sevehampton which was already a rat-run.
- Once the site was finished there could be an additional 350-400 vehicles using the road network.
- There were adverse implications for the two schools located in Shrivenham Road with a potential danger to pupils attending these schools arising from increased traffic volumes.
- There were adverse environmental implications and on the health of the pupils and residents of Highworth through vehicle pollution generated by the application.
- There were grounds for refusing the application on traffic grounds alone with Shrivenham Road being extremely busy at some times of the day. This included Heavy Goods Vehicles.
- Hundreds of pupils walked to and from Highworth Warneford school on a three foot pavement which was currently dangerous without adding further traffic.
- Resident's cars parked outside the cottages cause a traffic jam for cars trying to go down the road while others travel the other way causing more pollution.
- Information from Health Awareness UK showed many Councils were creating traffic free zones. Whilst this was not possible in Shrivenham Road the Council shouldn't be adding traffic for the safety and health of the children attending school.
- Cars can queue outside of Warneford school for a distance of over three hundred yards with parents waiting for children when the school day finished causing a complete logjam with children walking past and cars doing three-point turns.
- The Localism Act was aimed at devolving power in order to improve people's lives by taking account of local circumstances and making the planning system more democratic. The majority of people opposed the proposed application and their concerns appeared to be ignored.
- The application was being rushed through by a developer during restrictions imposed due to Covid-19 and who was driven by profit rather than local need.
- The application had seen the proposed number of houses rise from 200 to 250 with insufficient consideration to the development on Shrivenham Road and the town's infrastructure.
- The development should be refused on the grounds that it was contrary to the Neighbourhood Plan and Local Plan. There were unresolved objections to the site and the development of the site outweighed the public benefit with considerable vegetation destroyed.
- The development of this site was considered inappropriate during consideration of the Neighbourhood Plan and should be treated as open countryside.
- The Council has not provided an evidence based traffic assessment.
- Should 250 additional homes be built there would be a need to increase educational and health facilities serving the town and there was no such provision in the application.

- In 2019 the site was reviewed as part of the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) and the Swindon Borough Council Landscape Officer consider the development of any part of this field harmful to Highworth and should be avoided. In the final draft the site wasn't mentioned so the application contravened the Neighbourhood Plan and emerging draft Local Plan.
- During the Neighbourhood Plan process a Shrivenham Road site was assessed by the Inspector who considered development inappropriate as it was intrusive on open countryside.
- Swindon Borough Council are reviewing Highworth's infrastructure needs to support future development and have identified that substantial investment is required for a new primary school, upgrades to the water and waste network as well as enhancement to walking, cycling, transport and highways.
- The pandemic has allowed the applicant to forego the public consultation process and evidence based traffic surveys. The highways officer acknowledges potential harm to users in the vicinity of Highworth school and that the Fox roundabout is already above capacity at peak times. However formal traffic concerns have not been addressed nor have officers undertaken a traffic survey.
- There are 67 houses being built nearby to the proposed site, with a further 125 proposed in the planning process, also on Shrivenham Road. This will lead to a significant increase in vehicular and pedestrian traffic on an already congested road.
- Both the Town Council and Warneford School have opposed the application and raised concerns of highway and pedestrian safety as per LA19 F and G of the emerging Local Plan with their being material harm to the safety of pedestrian crossing the road.
- The one uncontrolled crossing proposed contravened the minimum two required and would leave children without a safe crossing; the nearest access to the school from the site was the exit where there is no footpath.
- The traffic consultant estimated 150 car movements am and pm peak times and most of this traffic would travel through Sevenhampton which already had an unacceptable volume of traffic speeding through the village which had narrow footpaths.
- Sevenhampton was not considered as part of this application, although in a nearby application on the opposite side of the road an impact assessment was considered necessary for the village. This showed an inconsistency in considering the application.
- The delivery of the site was questionable due to a covenant on adjoining land.

Resolved - That the application be deferred to allow for further assessment of the highways impact of the proposal particularly in relation to the impact on the pedestrian and vehicular movement associated with the schools at the beginning and end of the school day.

28. S/20/0435/RA - Erection of 3no. dwellings and associated works, Land At Ashley Close, Walcot, Swindon

In respect of application numbered S/20/0435/RA - Erection of 3no. dwellings and associated works, Land at Ashley Close, Walcot, Swindon the Committee considered: -

- (a) An application for permission to develop;
- (b) Recommendations of the Director of Strategic Development;
- (c) The views of interested persons set out in the report circulated with the Committee Agenda;

Councillors Alan Bishop, Paul Dixon, and Jane Milner-Barry, Stan Pajak and Peter Watts spoke in respect of this application.

The application can be broadly summarised as:

- The application had been called to Planning Committee by Councillor Amin due to concerns raised by local residents and the Parish Council.
- The application had been submitted by the Council's Housing Department for three specialist bungalows designed for wheelchair users and for those with mobility needs.
- Each dwelling is proposed with 2 car parking spaces, two visitor spaces in the close and three additional spaces for general use. This accorded with the Council's Parking Standards.
- The site was identified as open space both within the Local Plan and the Open Space Audit and Assessment. However it had been assessed as below standard due to its quality and small size it had limited recreational value.
- It was considered that, specialist bungalows, the community benefit outweighed the loss of open space.
- The application was recommended for approval subject to a legal agreement to secure contributions towards the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust and open space within the vicinity of the site.

Submissions in support of the application can be broadly summarised as:

- That there was inherent benefit to the community arising from the development of three social housing bungalows and outweighed any potential negative impact.
- The open space loss was minor and was not of high quality.
- Previous bungalows of this design had operated successfully as social housing.
- That whilst this type of social housing was welcome the Council had missed the opportunity to design and build zero carbon houses and set an example for other house builders.

Resolved – That, subject to the completion of a legal agreement to secure open space and Wiltshire Wildlife Trust contributions the Director of Strategic Development be authorised to grant planning permission.

29. S/20/0546/RA - Erection of 8no. dwellings and associated works (Site 1) and construction of parking area (Site 2), Land At Ventnor Close, Haydon Wick, Swindon

In respect of application numbered S/20/0546/RA - Erection of 8no. dwellings and associated works (Site 1) and construction of parking area (Site 2), Land At Ventnor Close, Haydon Wick, Swindon the Committee considered: -

- (a) An application for permission to develop;
- (b) Recommendations of the Director of Strategic Development;
- (c) The views of interested persons set out in the report circulated with the Committee Agenda,
- (d) The comments at the meeting of the following interested persons:-

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address/Organisation</u>
Councillor David Renard	Ward Councillor

Councillors Matthew Courtliff, Paul Dixon, Jane Milner-Barry and Peter Watts spoke in respect of this application.

The application can be broadly summarised as:

- This application been called to Planning Committee by Councillor Robbins regarding concerns around achieving Passivhaus certification.
- The application was for eight bungalows 8 no. two bedroom bungalows and the additional provision of 16 on-street car parking spaces for general use in front of the bungalows and a car parking area of 10 spaces at the most eastern end of Ventnor close.
- The site was identified as open space both within the Local Plan and the Open Space Audit and Assessment but it had to weighed against the community benefit arising from the provision of specialist social housing units.
- The application was recommended for approval subject to a legal agreement to secure contributions towards open space and play areas within the vicinity of the site.

Submissions in support of the application can be broadly summarised as:

- The open space was steep and had limited recreational value.
- There was other open space that could be used for recreation and leisure in the vicinity.
- Additional parking would be provided as part of the application in an area that parking was at a premium and that often saw vehicles parked on pavements on older narrow roads.
- The specialist accommodation would be used by older people who could be housed within the Borough in suitable accommodation.
- The buildings would be low carbon energy efficient.
- The road would be widened and re-laid as part of the proposed scheme and would improve access for service and emergency vehicles and local allotments.
- That whilst this type of social housing was welcome the Council had missed the opportunity to design and build zero carbon houses and set an example for other house builders.

Resolved – That, subject to the completion of a legal agreement to secure open space and play area contributions the Director of Strategic Development be authorised to grant planning permission.

**30. S/19/1755/CHHO - Erection of 11 no. dwellings and associated works,
Land East Of Berricot Lane, Badbury**

In respect of application numbered S /19/1755/CHHO - Erection of 11 no. dwellings and associated works, Land East Of Berricot Lane, Badbury the Committee considered: -

- (a) An application for permission to develop;
- (b) Recommendations of the Director of Strategic Development;
- (c) The views of interested persons set out in the report circulated with the Committee Agenda;
- (d) Additional information from the applicant circulated to Members prior to the meeting;
- (e) The comments at the meeting of the following interested persons:-

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address/Organisation</u>
Councillor Keith Williams	Swindon Borough Council
Peter Mapson	Applicant
Anthony Cohen	Local Resident
Paul Walton	Local Resident

The Chair advised the meeting that under the Council's Planning Protocol that governs the meeting he had decided to use his discretion to depart from the normal protocol to allow Councillor Keith Williams, Cabinet Member for Climate Change, who was not a Ward Councillors or a Member of the Committee to speak on the application for up to five minutes subject to points already made not being repeated. The Chair exercised his discretion as it was an important development within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and relevant to Councillor William's Cabinet portfolio. During his tenure and prior to it the Committee had allowed Councillors not serving on the Committee to address it. In exercising this discretion he was ensuring consistency.

Councillors Junab Ali, Nick Burns-Howell, Matthew Courtliff, Jenny Jefferies, Vinay Manro, Jane Milner-Barry, Stan Pajak, Peter Watts spoke in respect of this application.

The application can be broadly summarised as:

- The application was brought before Planning Committee at the request of Councillor Sumner for the reason that it is locally controversial.
- The application was for eleven dwellings on a greenfield site to the north of Badbury together with a new access onto Medbourne Lane.
- The site had previously been assessed against the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment for potential development and had been included as a potential housing allocation site in the Regulation 18 (Emerging Strategies) consultation of the Local Plan.
- However, the proposed site has not been taken forward as part of the Submission Draft Local Plan due to landscape and conservation concerns.

- The site fell within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the proposal site is located outside the Badbury rural settlement boundary and conservation area boundary to the south of the site.
- There are a number of listed buildings in vicinity of the site and in accordance with Section 66 the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 special attention must be paid to the desirability of preserving listed buildings and their setting.
- Although located outside the rural settlement boundary, contrary to Policy SD2, as the Council cannot currently demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply Paragraph 11(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework; therefore consideration must be given as to whether the application of policies in the framework that protects Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and heritage assets provide a clear reason for refusing the development.
- The site currently contributes to the rural setting of the village and conservation area providing an open and undeveloped aspect to the village approach and providing visual links to the surrounding countryside.
- The site also forms the setting of listed building and a key building of local interest with the countryside surrounding contributing to their legibility and therefore significance.
- The application would add a cul-de-sac style development at odds with the predominant linear pattern of development and undermining the open rural setting of the village edge.
- The development has benefits including the provision of market and affordable housing although these benefits were limited and didn't outweigh the harm to heritage assets via development within their setting.
- The scale of development would overly urbanise this approach to the development, dominating and interrupting views to the wider open countryside to the detriment of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and its special qualities. The proposed dwellings by reason of scale, density, layout and design would have a harmful effect on the landscape character of Badbury and the natural scenic beauty of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, dominating and interrupting views of the wider countryside. The development would be contrary to the North Wessex Downs Management Plan resulting in a discordant urban intrusion into the rural landscape which did not respect the historical settlement pattern.
- The development constituted a major development within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty when considered with the existing development pattern and size of Badbury which no exceptional circumstances in the public interest demonstrated.
- Badbury is limited in terms of facilities and services with the site deemed to be car dependent with the site not well located to minimise travel and maximise the use of sustainable transport modes.
- Chiseldon provides services and facilities but was a 15 to 20 minute walk away along a poor walking environment with a lack of pavement through the village and limited street lighting.
- Officers drew Members' attention to Paragraph 80 of the Committee report which should be amended to reflect that there is limited rather than no street lighting in some parts of the village core
- The harm to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Designated Heritage Assets provided a clear reason for refusal of the application; the presumption of sustainable development or tilted balance in paragraph 11 of the National

Planning Policy Framework did not apply due to the less than significant harm caused to the various heritage assets.

- That due to the very limited detail on green energy efficiency homes contained within the application submission, if Members were to approve the application giving weight to the green credentials of the scheme, they may wish to impose a condition requiring further details of these measures are provided via condition.

Submissions in support of the application can be broadly summarised as:

- There is a need for sustainable development within the Borough with housing that is of high energy efficiency and lessens reliance on fossil fuels.
- The development was on the edge of the village but was between two current dwellings in the area.
- The historic setting was 150 meters from the M4 motorway.
- The proposed development was highly energy efficient, with 150mm cavity walls, 50 meters of air gap, 100mm of insulation followed by thermalite bricks on the interior, with dry lining to provide additional insulation, underfloor heating powered by air source heat pumps, triple glazing and with sympathetic materials such as thatched roofs. This meant that there was no reliance on fossil fuels and making them some of the greenest homes in the Borough.
- All properties had electric vehicle charging points.
- The development included more than the expected 30% affordable dwellings but not enough to be considered a rural exception site.
- These energy efficient properties were being delivered by the private sector and were being built to a very high standard.
- The developer had won over thirty national and local design awards and developed properties to be sympathetic to their environment.
- The development would increase the range of housing within the village offering a choice of homes to all families, not just the affluent, making the village accessible to all.
- The design followed the Council's residential guidance in respect of the density of the development with six principle buildings, Overall the scheme offered three 5 bed detached homes, one 4 bed detached home, two 2 bed terraced homes and five 3 bed terraced homes. This mix included 4 affordable terraced units built using the same materials as the rest of the development ensuring that they were just as sustainable.
- More than 55% of the village had not objected to the application, despite the use of a standard worded letter by objectors
- Objections to the application were subjective with no objections on highway drainage, amenity, noise, archaeology or other grounds.
- The application was not contrary to the North Wessex Downs Management Plan as no objections had been received from that quarter following the reduction in the number of proposed units.
- The site was half a mile from a bus stop with a good service, which was better than many other proposed developments in a rural setting.
- The design scheme was very sensitive to the local environment.
- The development would add young families to the village supporting local amenities.

- The current properties within the village were a mix of designs, including properties built in the 1970's that were more discordant with the local countryside than the application.
- The application enhanced the local housing stock using materials that enhanced and protected the character of the surrounding countryside and should be considered in that light and was well designed.
- The proposed development of the site didn't offer anything exceptional to the village and had previously been identified for potential development in the Section 18 emerging strategies consultation of the Local Plan.

Submissions opposing the application can be broadly summarised as:

- Many residents of the village opposed the application and commended the reasons set out within the report why the proposed development is unacceptable.
- Village residents had taken professional advice before submitting objections. It became clear that the residents objections were well made.
- Planning applications needed to be considered on their individual merits, in this case beginning with the principle of development in this location, whether it is sustainably located in terms of accessibility to services, its impact on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, its impact on the countryside, its impact on heritage assets and its impact on the settlement as a whole, not least in this case Badbury's delicate pastoral setting.
- Formal consultees considered the proposal, for reasons set out in the report, to be substantially at variance with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework, the Council's development plan and supplementary planning guidance, particularly that setting out the characteristics of the Badbury Conservation Area and its management.
- Badbury had no services or community facilities save for the local pub.
- The proposal would increase the number of dwellings in our hamlet by 27% or so and this is a substantial extension to a modest sized settlement. Moreover, the development would take place within part of the landscape filling a gap that is integral to the setting and charm of Badbury.
- The design typology is unrepresentative of and therefore wholly at odds with, the linear form of the settlement. The result is a discordant proposal of closely packed dwellings with much hardstanding, parked cars and little landscaping.
- The alien suburban and inward-looking nature of the development would be further highlighted by street lighting during the hours of darkness.
- Resident's concerns made in their objections were supported by the Council's urban design team.
- The proposal represents a harmful major development in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a contention supported by Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty unit. As a consequence, and notwithstanding the Council's housing land supply position the "Tilted Balance" contained within paragraph 11 of the Framework is not engaged.
- Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing the landscape and scenic beauty of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Planning permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest which is not the case here. The proposed development is

wholly inappropriate in our hamlet and we fully support the reasons for refusal set out in your report.

- To go against the officer recommendation would be unreasonable and not supportable.

Resolved – That, subject to the completion of a legal agreement to secure open space contributions and affordable housing, together with appropriate conditions, that the Director of Strategic Development be authorised to grant the application.

Reasons:

1. That in accordance with foot note 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework the Committee did not determine that the application would constitute major development taking into account its nature, scale and setting.
2. The development complemented the nature, scale and setting of Badbury village.
3. The nature of the development complemented the primarily linear development of the village, it being noted that other properties within the village were off-set.
4. The proposed design of the development, including thatched roofing, did not adversely affect the current type of property designs within the village.
5. That the sustainable design of the development was in accordance with national and local policies.
6. That the development offered affordable housing and a mix of property types that enhance the housing options within the village.

31. S/20/0957/TB - Erection of a pavilion with associated works, Maunsell Way Pavilion, Maunsell Way, Wroughton

In respect of application numbered S/20/0957/TB - Erection of a pavilion with associated works, Maunsell Way Pavilion, Maunsell Way, Wroughton, the Committee considered: -

- (a) An application for permission to develop;
- (b) Recommendations of the Director of Strategic Development;
- (c) The views of interested persons set out in the report circulated with the Committee Agenda;
- (d) Additional representations received
- (e) The comments at the meeting of the following interested persons:-

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address/Organisation</u>
Councillor Brian Ford	Ward Councillor
Councillor Cathy Martyn	Ward Councillor
Parish Councillor John Hewer	Applicant
Sarah Clarke	1st Wroughton Scouts, Cubs and Beavers
Finley Ballantyne	Local Resident
Jennifer Purcell	BMX Wroughton

Councillors Matthew Courtliff, Stan Pajak and Peter Watts spoke in respect of this application.

The application can be broadly summarised as:

- The application had been called to Planning Committee by Cllr Brian Ford (Ward Councillor).
- The application seeks planning permission for the erection of a detached pavilion/community building at Maunsell Way playing fields, Wroughton.
- The application would create space for a number of community uses, including the scouts and youth facilities.
- The existing structure was no longer considered fit for purpose and would be removed as part of the development.
- The proposed would be larger than the current building but would not be much higher.
- The parking space would be reconfigured to provide cycle and motorcycle parking as well as dedicated disabled parking spaces.
- The building would be divided up to provide a main hall, smaller secondary hall, dedicated rooms/space for early years (nursery/crèche), storage (internally and externally accessible), shared kitchen plus associated office and toilet and shower facilities.
- The development also proposes a secure outdoor play area, the reconfiguration of the car park and tree planting.
- Additional representations had been received although the subject of these were covered by paragraph 7 of the report.
- The application was supported by a drainage strategy and the local flood authority had not objected to the application subject to conditions 8 and 9. There was confidence therefore that the development would not lead to increased flooding.
- The recommendation of the report outlined in paragraph 27 was that the Director of Strategic Development be authorised to GRANT planning permission subject to the completion of a legal agreement to secure £6,000 towards the implementation of waiting restrictions on Maunsell Way and subject to the conditions set out below or any amended, omitted or additional conditions that may be appropriate.

Submission in support of the application can be broadly summarised as:

- New facilities were required to support the scouts and other youth provision in the vicinity, and to replace the current dated facilities which were not of the required standard for the building or parking. These were also sub-standard for changing and toilet provision.
- The site was chosen as it would replace an existing pavilion that was not fit for purpose and did not meet the needs of current or potential future users.
- The application had taken full regard of the national and local planning regulations and plans.
- To make the building sustainable a number of groups would be using the proposed new facilities.
- Over 350 young people aged 6-16 used the community facilities through youth activities such as football groups and scouts.

- The Wroughton Scout Group was established in 1917 and the current facilities were built in 1952 had subsidence issues and was expensive to heat, was cold and not big enough to house the current user groups.
- Local groups had raised over £100,000 in support of providing new facilities; work had been undertaken with Wroughton Parish Council to build new community facilities.
- The site had large playing fields for youth activities such as football and BMX riding and storage facilities for equipment with a community forest area adjacent to the site.
- The scouts were also involved in conservation activities within the Parish as part of their activities which would be supported by the new facilities.
- Due to the variety of groups using the facility it would be a sustainable development with frequent usage and low maintenance costs.
- The proposal would help support the planned future development of Wroughton providing support for the current and future young people.
- If granted the development would enable the site currently occupied to be returned to Swindon Borough Council for other uses.
- The new building would support a wider range of activities for young people and would replace a pavilion that had been condemned and was not fit for purpose acting as a storage only facility.
- The BMX group helped to maintain the current track and promote cycling across age groups; this work and the offer to users would be greatly enhanced with new facilities.
- The new facilities would provide facilities that met the standards of bodies such as Sports England.
- Consultation with the public, sports governing bodies and statutory authorities had been on-going for over two years and the proposal was widely supported by Wroughton's residents.
- The development was a very positive development for Wroughton residents.

Submissions opposing the application can be broadly summarised as:

- The proposed building was too large.
- There had not been a drainage survey undertaken and there were concerns in respect of increased ground water and flooding arising from the development.
- Around 40 years ago properties around the location were prevented from being sold because of the drainage problems in the area.
- A drainage survey should be undertaken prior to permission being granted.
- Additional consideration needed to be given to parking provision, especially for football activities.

Resolved –That the Director of Strategic Development be authorised to grant planning permission subject to the completion of a legal agreement to secure £6,000 towards the implementation of waiting restrictions on Maunsell Way and subject to the conditions set out in the report with condition 8 be amended to include foul water and any other omitted, amended or additional conditions that may be appropriate.

32. S/OUT/20/0556/TB - Erection of 104no. dwellings, traffic roundabout, roads and associated works - Means of Access, Layout and Scale not reserved - (without compliance with condition 29 of permission S/OUT/15/1750 regarding substitute drawings), Land To The Rear Of

Woodland View, Wroughton, Swindon

In respect of application numbered S/OUT/20/0556/TB - Erection of 104no. dwellings, traffic roundabout, roads and associated works - Means of Access, Layout and Scale not reserved - (without compliance with condition 29 of permission S/OUT/15/1750 regarding substitute drawings), Land To The Rear Of Woodland View, Wroughton, Swindon, the Committee considered: -

- (a) An application for permission to develop;
- (b) Recommendations of the Director of Strategic Development;
- (c) The views of interested persons set out in the report circulated with the Committee Agenda;
- (d) The comments at the meeting of the following interested persons:-

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address/Organisation</u>
Councillor Cathy Martyn	Ward Councillor
Councillor Brian Ford	Ward Councillor
Steven Smallman	Applicant
Joy Bells	Local Resident
David Martyn	Parish Council

Councillors Matthew Courtliff, Jane Milner-Barry, Stan Pajak, Tim Swinyard and Peter Watts spoke in respect of this application.

The application can be broadly summarised as:

- The application had been called to Planning Committee by Councillors Brian Ford and Cathy Martyn (Ward Councillors).
- The application sought seeks outline planning permission for the erection of up to 104 dwellings and associated works with all matters reserved apart from the means of access, layout and scale on land to the rear of Woodland View, Wroughton without compliance with condition 29 of consent S/15/1750.
- Condition 29 of the consent relates to the relevant drawing numbers and lists those approved as part of the permission and thereby the applicant is seeking consent for a variation of the permitted scheme by substituting new drawings.
- The former permission was granted in 2019 following the agreement of a Section 106 agreement.
- The proposed variations are minor and are required partly in order to accommodate the houses types that have now been designed and typically relate to changes to the footprint of some of the buildings, including the flat block and the positioning of car parking spaces. Changes are also proposed as a result of minor adjustments to the alignment of access roads. In addition parallel parking spaces at the access have been switched from one side of the road to the other. Furthermore changes are proposed to the footprint of the cricket pavilion and its associated parking area plus some minor adjustments to finished ground levels.
- The principle of residential development on the site has already been established by virtue of the 2018 permission; all that needs to be determined is the minor amendments. These have been assessed by officers who consider that no significant impact arises.

- It was recommended that the Director of Strategic Development be authorised to grant the application subject to suitable conditions and the completion of a legal agreement to secure necessary mitigation.
- There is a need to make minor amendments to a number of conditions set out within the report with regard to numbering which would be covered within the recommendation.

Submissions in support of the application can be broadly summarised as:

- This was an allocated site within the Wroughton Neighbourhood Plan and outline planning permission had been granted on 15th February 2018.
- In granting the application the Council had agreed the principle of the development as well as the scale of the development, the access arrangements and the layout.
- The only matters outstanding were appearance and landscaping.
- The Section 73 application had been submitted in May and proposed several amendments to the approved layout of the development.
- Applications for the outline and pre-commencement conditions were submitted at the same time but had been held in abeyance pending the conclusion of the Section 73 application.
- The amendments were necessary for the housing currently being designed and detailed in the reserved matters application.
- Similarly there were some changes to the footprint of the buildings, including the block of flats, and the positioning of car-parking spaces, some of which were repositioned for improved tree protection.
- The footprint of the cricket pavilion and car parking had been amended had been amended following discussions with Wroughton Parish Council and Wroughton Cricket Club and there were changes to finished ground levels.
- The decision before Committee related to the acceptability of the changes proposed to the approved layout. Officers had found they were accepted and had recommended approval.
- Matters raised by residents following the grant of outline permission do not relate to the proposed amendments to be determined and Hills had previously consulted extensively with the Parish Council, Cricket Club and general public. Any additional meeting with the Parish Council or public should be separate from the current planning process.
- There were no difference to the separation distances under the current application.

Submissions opposing the application can be broadly summarised as:

- Disappointment that the separation between adjoining Clyde cottages, built prior to 1910, and the site development was so small. The new development elevation would be higher than the cottages.
- The developer had refused to consider moving the new buildings an additional two meters from the boundary adjacent to the cottages.
- Parking provision only saw eight parking spaces to replace that lost on the entrance to the development.
- The removal of a tree line on the south of the site would have an adverse effect on the water table levels.

- There had been no response from the developer to a request that the narrow access road be tarmacked as part of the development.
- The communal garden to the side of No.1 Clyde Cottage should be maintained.
- Changes should be made under Priority one, Pledge 6 of the Council's Vision of Swindon; the 7 meter strip of land behind Clyde Cottages will be reduced to 1.2 meters reducing the buffer and removing land that had been used for community events for decades.
- In front of the cottages was a 2.3 meter land that was unadopted, unsuitable for children playing, and needed to be tarmacked; it was currently too narrow for a fire engine to access. If 3.5 meters of the strip of land on the development boundary were retained it would allow access for emergency vehicles.
- The height of the new development would impact on the amenity of the residents of Clyde Cottages.
- If there was a track around the cricket pitch, additional parking and a village shop this would enhance the development and community.
- Site access was via Woodland View and road markings on Swindon Road would need to be repainted for safety reasons and to accommodate the additional traffic generated by the development.
- The 30mph speed zone should be extended past the Woodland View access point.
- There was a lack of 20 mph zones (this site should be a designated 20 mph zone) and cycle ways with the number of children walking through the site expected to increase.
- There was a shortage of visitor parking spaces on the development with 26 required under parking standards with proposed parking arranged as tandem parking. Other schemes show this create driving hazards and spoils the street scene of the development.
- On the north of the site there were concerns from residents about being able to safely access their properties.
- Street Lighting along the access should use LED bulbs programmed to dim after 10:00pm to mitigate light pollution on adjoining properties.
- The two horse chestnut trees at the entrance to Woodlands View should be retained.
- There should be a construction management plan which should cover the prevention of construction vehicles queuing on the main road to the site.
- Additional traffic from the development would have an adverse effect on congestion and air quality in Old Town.

Resolved - That the Director of Strategic Development be authorised to grant planning permission subject to the conditions listed in the report and any varied, omitted or additional conditions that may be appropriate and the completion of a deed of variation S106A legal agreement to secure the necessary mitigation.

As per the S106 for the previous approval the deed of variation legal agreement will secure:

- The provision and mix of affordable homes.
- If required, to provide for access through the site, to the adjoining land for the purpose of redeveloping the adjacent site for educational purposes or such other use as may be agreed by the parties.

- Open space: The timing of the provision of the cricket pitch, pavilion and parking and an agreement for the future management / operation of the pitch and pavilion.
- Access to the rear of Clyde Cottages to continue to be maintained.

33. S/19/1565/TB - Demolition of existing tented market and erection of a two storey building comprising 4no. Food and Drink units (Class A3), 1no. shop unit (Class A1) and associated works, Market Hall, Market Street, Swindon

In respect of application numbered S/19/1565/TB - Demolition of existing tented market and erection of a two storey building comprising 4no. Food and Drink units (Class A3), 1no. shop unit (Class A1) and associated works, Market Hall, Market Street, Swindon, the Committee considered: -

- (a) An application for permission to develop;
- (b) Recommendations of the Director of Strategic Development;
- (c) The views of interested persons set out in the report circulated with the Committee Agenda;
- (d) The comments at the meeting of the following interested persons:-

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address/Organisation</u>
Councillor Bob Wright	Ward Councillor
Christopher Moore	Applicant

Councillors Junab Ali, Paul Dixon, Nick Martin, Jane Milner-Barry and Stan Pajak spoke in respect of this application.

The application can be broadly summarised as:

- The application is brought before the Committee for consideration at the request of Councillor Bob Wright.
- The application sought permission for the redevelopment of the tented market site to demolish the existing Tented Market and to replace it with a two storey building comprising four food and drink units (Class A3) and one coffee shop unit (Class A1). The application also included a cycle store on the small area of land to the west of the tented market and external works to marry into the existing paving in Market Street and Wharf Green.
- The application was very similar to an application allowed on appeal in 2016 which remains a material consideration.
- There are minor design changes which are acceptable in principle being even less fussy than the approved scheme along Commercial Road/Farnsby Street with regards to materiality and design.
- No concerns have been raised in respect of the impact on the character of the area, residential amenity, highways or drainage and the application is recommended for approval subject to conditions.
- There was a need to extend the offer available in the town centre which the development would help achieve.

Submissions in support of the application can be broadly summarised as:

- The architect had worked with Ward Councillors prior to the submission of the application.
- The application consisting of six floors would not have the impact the previous application would have had.
- The site had been identified in the Swindon Town Centre Master Plan as a multipurpose/multi use site to balance the area in the vicinity of the Debenhams site to provide a draw on both sides of the town centre.
- The previous application for commercial mixed use and residential had been granted in 2017 subject to the completion of a Section 106 Agreement.
- This permission had not been granted as the S106 agreement had never been completed; this was due to an economic downturn with the agreement not being signed with the result that the tower scheme was no longer viable.
- The scheme was redesigned with 68 flats and a lower height in order to make it more viable and had taken into account the need for land prices to recover following the impact of Covid-19.
- The two applications were submitted together to prevent the demolition of the existing building without building the replacement to prevent the site being a blight on the town centre.
- The two storey building was a full back position which would be constructed with the foundations, lift shafts and other building infrastructure to implement the residential scheme whilst being capped at two storey until that time.
- If there were insufficient demand for restaurants at the podium level the applicant would consider other uses and seek the appropriate authorisations from the Council.

Submissions opposing the application can be broadly summarised as:

- The application consisting of six floors would not have the impact the previous application would have had but reduced the potential offer in respect of use of floor space.
- The proposed development needed a defined feature matching the Brunel Centre and looked an ordinary building and the same was true for the end facing market street.
- If the development was based on restaurants, cafes and shops the development was likely to fail. With recent events it was questionable whether there would be enough tenants given the current market for retail outlets.
- The design was the same standard that the Council originally rejected.
- There should be more flexibility on the types of business that could be housed in the new development in order to make it commercially more viable in line with the Town Centre Master Plan.
- There was no rationale for giving planning permission if the development were not to proceed in the immediate future.
- There were a lot of single aspect flats in the proposed development which did not strictly accord with the Local Plan.
- There appeared to be little design connection between the lower and upper parts of the proposed development.

Resolved - That planning permission be granted subject to conditions set out in the report.

34. S/17/0673 - Demolition of existing tented market and erection of a replacement building of between 6 and 10 storeys high comprising 68no. Flats, 4no. Class A3 (Food and Drink) units, 1no. Class A1 (Shop) unit, cycle and recycling store, substation and associated works, Market Hall, Market Street, Swindon

In respect of application numbered S/17/0673 - Demolition of existing tented market and erection of a replacement building of between 6 and 10 storeys high comprising 68no. Flats, 4no. Class A3 (Food and Drink) units, 1no. Class A1 (Shop) unit, cycle and recycling store, substation and associated works, Market Hall, Market Street, Swindon, the Committee considered: -

- (a) An application for permission to develop;
- (b) Recommendations of the Director of Strategic Development;
- (c) The views of interested persons set out in the report circulated with the Committee Agenda;

Councillors Stan Pajak and Peter Watts spoke in respect of this application.

The application can be broadly summarised as:

- The application is brought before the Committee at the request of Councillor Bob Wright.
- The application was a revised scheme from one considered by Members in 2017 which was for a building up to fifteen storeys in height with a number of food and drink outlet on the ground floor and 101 flats above.
- Members had agreed that scheme subject to a legal agreement which was never entered into; planning permission expired and a revised application submitted.
- The scale of the development has been reduced to ten storeys and sixty-eight flats.
- The mixed use development was appropriate and acceptable in the town centre and it was recommended that the application be approved subject to the completion of a legal agreement.

Submissions in support and opposing the application were broadly that set out in respect of agenda item 12 (application numbered S/17/0673).

Resolved - That the Director of Strategic Development be authorised to grant planning permission subject to the conditions set out in the report together with any amendments, omitted or additional conditions and the completion of a section 106 agreement to secure the necessary mitigation. In the event that the applicant fails to agree to an extension of time to allow sufficient time for the Local Planning Authority to deal with these matters then the Director of Strategic Development be authorised to refuse planning permission as set out in the Committee report.

35. Planning Committee Protocol for Agenda Items on the Main Schedule

The Chief Legal Officer submitted a report seeking to update the protocol and guidance on how agenda items (on the main schedule only) are dealt with by the Planning Committee including how both Councillors and members of the public can address the Committee, including the holding of virtual meetings.

Resolved – (1) That subject to, the protocol's amendment to permit officers to respond to points or questions at any time during the consideration of an application, the protocol as set out in the agenda papers be adopted for future use.

(2) That the reduction of Councillors attendance at the planning pre-meeting to the Chair and Vice-Chair be approved.

This page is intentionally left blank

EDUCATION TRANSPORT APPEALS SUB-COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, 1 DECEMBER 2020

PRESENT:- Councillors Ray Ballman, Jenny Jefferies and Caryl Sydney-Smith.

16. Appointment of Chair

Resolved – That Councillor Caryl Sydney-Smith Chair this meeting of the Sub-Committee.
Councillor Caryl Sydney-Smith took the Chair

17. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded Members of the need to declare any known interests in any matter to be considered at the meeting. No declarations were made.

18. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 14th October 2020 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

19. Exempt Items - Exclusion of Press and Public

Resolved – That in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1092, the public be excluded during the discussion of the matters referred in Agenda item 8 on the grounds that it would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act, and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information concerned (Minute 20 refers).

20. Home to School Transport Appeals

On consideration of (a) a report of the Director of Children Services setting out education transport appeals that officers could not determine under delegated authority, and (b) the comments and written submission of parents.

Resolved – (1) That due to the exceptional circumstances set out in the appeal, the appeal for JK be upheld and a bus pass be provided.

2) That, due to there being no exceptional circumstances set out in the appeal, the appeal for NR be refused.

This page is intentionally left blank

EDUCATION TRANSPORT APPEALS SUB-COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 16 DECEMBER 2020

PRESENT:- Councillors Ray Ballman, Caryl Sydney-Smith and Steve Heyes.

21. Appointment of Chair

Resolved – That Councillor Caryl Sydney-Smith Chair this meeting of the Sub-Committee.
Councillor Caryl Sydney-Smith took the Chair.

22. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded Members of the need to declare any known interests in any matter to be considered at the meeting. No declarations were made.

23. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 1st December 2020 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

24. Exempt Items - Exclusion of Press and Public

Resolved – That in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1992, the public be excluded during the discussion of the matters referred in Agenda item 8 on the grounds that it would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act, and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information concerned (Minute 24 refers).

25. Home to School Transport Appeals

On consideration of (a) a report of the Director of Children Services setting out education transport appeals that officers could not determine under delegated authority, and (b) the comments and written submission of parents.

Resolved – (1) That due to the exceptional circumstances set out in the appeal, the appeal for RH be upheld and a place on a school bus be provided.

2) That, due to there being no exceptional circumstances set out in the appeal, the appeal for KY be refused.

This page is intentionally left blank

Section 4

Children Services Bodies Minutes

This page is intentionally left blank

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

TUESDAY, 24 NOVEMBER 2020

PRESENT:-

Group A: David Burbidge (Baptist Church), Malkrit Babbra
Christian Denominations and (Buddhist Community), Jo Backus (Buddhist
Other Religions or Religious Community), Dinesh Patel (Hindu Community) and
Denominations Reverend David Howell (Swindon Evangelical
Alliance)

Group B: Ruth Williams and Reverend Clive Deverell
Church of England

Group C: Tracy Mason, Lottie O'Brien and Emma McCarthy
Teacher Organisations

Group D: Councillors Fay Howard, Matthew Courtliff and
Councillors Imtiyaz Shaikh

Also in attendance: Katy Staples (SACRE Advisor) and Gareth Cheal
(Interim SEND Lead)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Garry Perkins and Oladapo Ibitoye along with members Helen Redhead, Sarah Stewart, Clare-Marie Burchall, Atiff Ghafar, Michelle Howard and Steve Bogg.

1. **Declarations of Interest**

The Chair reminded Members of the need to declare any known interest in any matters to be considered at the meeting. No declarations were made.

2. **Public Question Time**

There were no public questions.

3. **Minutes**

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd March 2020, be confirmed as a correct record.

4. **Agreed syllabus review process**

The SACRE Advisor confirmed that SACRE has a statutory obligation to review its Agreed Syllabus and to convene an Agreed Syllabus Working Party every 5 years. She advised that she had contacted the Senior Primary Commissioner regarding this matter and was waiting for confirmation regarding the allocation of a budget. Garth Cheal confirmed that the budget allocation request was being submitted to the Schools Forum in January 2021.

The SACRE Advisor asked for volunteers to sit on the working party being set up to review the syllabus and the following agreed to assist: Councillor Shaikh, Ruth Williams, Jo Backus, Tracy Mason, Dinish Patel and Lottie O'Brien. She confirmed that surveys, including virtual ones, had been issued and once responses were received, the working party will analyse the results and the next course of action will be agreed. She advised that she had been in negotiations with RE Today Services about the potential costing for a renewed licence for the current RE syllabus. Members noted that there will be an extra SACRE meeting in April/ May 2021. This will also be an Agreed Syllabus Conference where the working group will present its findings and group determine the next course of action.

Resolved – (1) That a working group be set up to review the RE syllabus.

(2) That an Agreed Syllabus Conference meeting be set up in April/ May 2021.

5. Collective Worship/ Assemblies under current restrictions

Mr Burbidge advised that the Baptist church had produced a programme for the Christmas term suitable for Year 5/6 children and was called Christmas Unwrapped. Mrs McCarthy referred to assemblies recorded by the Swindon Evangelical church that she was using as lesson aids. Mrs O'Brien referred to teaching aids for secondary schools. Members heard that guidance circulated in the agenda focused on primary school collective worship and noted that it would be beneficial to have similar information made available for secondary schools. The SACRE Advisor confirmed that she will collate the available supportive information from various churches and organisations, and following feedback from Mrs O'Brien and Mrs Stewart, will circulate to schools.

Resolved – That the SACRE Advisor be requested to compose and circulate guidance on worship to primary and secondary schools.

6. National Updates for RE

The SACRE Advisor informed the group about the impact of the Commission on Religious Education report. Understanding the meaning of world views was important and the debate regarding diversity in religious opinions had to be encouraged within and across different religious and non-religious groups. She referred to the effect on curriculum design and how the Religious Education Council has commissioned an academic literature review and guidance for agreed syllabus conferences for SACRE on how to design a new syllabus. Members noted that RE Today Services were proposing to write a syllabus to encompass the teaching of world views. Members further noted that RE syllabi will be different in five years' time.

The SACRE Advisor confirmed that the number of student undertaking RE at GCSE level was comparative to previous years and in the "A Level" setting, it compared well with other Humanities subjects. She also advised that a new Welsh RE curriculum will come into effect from September 2022 and will be called Religion, Values and Ethics.

The SACRE Advisor drew the groups' attention to the availability of training by Farmington Fellowship for RE Teachers in respect of subject knowledge and pedagogical expertise. The group also noted the provision of new materials for schools from free churches and the National Association of Teachers of RE.

Resolved – That the SACRE Advisor be requested to circulate links to resources to primary and secondary schools headteachers.

7. Feedback from online RE Hub meeting held on 10th November 2020

SACRE received an update from Emma McCarthy, Hub Leader, about the recent RE Hub meeting. The Hub Leader explained that the virtual meeting was well attended by both primary and secondary schools. She confirmed that the session focused on anti-racism and advised that the SACRE Advisor gave a presentation regarding the Black Lives Matter movement. This helped members focus their thoughts on future RE planning material. There was also a discussion on the agreed syllabus and members agreed to meet again during the next scholastic term. Members noted that there were quite a number of new RE teachers attending who were interested in the new RE syllabus being proposed. The Hub Leader referred them to a course being undertaken by the SACRE Advisor and her colleague, Adam Robertson.

Resolved – That the feedback from Hub meetings be noted.

8. Any Other Business

Members noted the following:

- That the SACRE Advisor was now also advising Wiltshire SACRE.
- That due to Covid-19, the school websites review would not be undertaken this scholastic year.
- The Dillington Conference usually held at Dillington House, Ilminster, Somerset will now be held virtually on 1st March 2021.
- That the Bristol and South Gloucestershire Annual Religious Education Conference 2021 that will be held on 31st January 2021 and this will also be held virtually on the 29th January.

Resolved – That Mrs McCarthy be requested to circulate the flyer for the Bristol and South Gloucestershire Annual Religious Education Conference 2021.

9. Date and Time of the Next Meeting

Next meeting is due to be held on 16th March 2021 at 6.00 p.m. Members of the SACRE were asked to suggest venues or indicate where this meeting should be held.

This page is intentionally left blank

SCHOOLS FORUM

TUESDAY, 8 DECEMBER 2020

Maintained School Members:

Rhian Cockwell	Primary Headteacher
Kate Higham	Special Headteacher
Lindsey Hull,	Pupil Referral Unit
Alison Lowe	Primary Headteacher
Ray Williams	Primary Governor

Academy Members

Bob Buckley	Mainstream Academy
Nick Capstick	Special Academy
Gary Evans	Mainstream Academy
Fiona Godfrey	Mainstream Academy
Bob Linnegar	Mainstream Academy
James Povoas	Mainstream Academy
Karen Pyman	Mainstream Academy
Jackie Smith	Special Academy
Clive Zimmerman	Mainstream Academy

Non-School Representatives

Andrew Henstridge	Clifton Diocese
Margaret Clark	Diocese of Bristol
Jo Morris Golds	Early Years
Peter Smith	Trade Unions

Officers:

Annette Perrington	Director: Inclusion and Achievement
Gareth Cheal	Interim SEND Lead, Education
Dawn Sexstone	Head of Finance, Children Services
Phil Wirth	Principal Solicitor (Litigation)

Also in attendance: Councillor Russell Holland, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Commercialisation, Education and Skills.

An apology for absence was received from Sherryl Bareham.

17. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Resolved - That the minutes of the meeting held on 6th October 2020 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

18. Public Question Time

In accordance with Standing Order 28, Mr Alastair Dixon-Patterson of Lydiard Park Academy, Swindon, submitted a written question regarding the undertaking of an Equalities Impact Assessment to support its proposed actions for the deficit recovery plan.

The Chair thank Mr Dixon-Patterson for his question and said that a written response had been provided and circulated to all members. Mr Dixon-Patterson confirmed that he had no supplementary questions.

19. 2021-22 Dedicated Schools Grant - Funding Principles and related items

The Forum considered a report by the Head of Finance, Children Services, on the 2021/22 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) settlement which is expected in January 2021. She opened her presentation (attached) by reminding members of their agreement to meet in January 2021 to agree the 2021/22 Dedicated Schools Grant Settlement and Budget. She drew attention to the report that provided members with the opportunity to review and agree the funding principles that will be used to prepare mainstream budgets for 2021/22. The report addressed the following: a) Local Mainstream Funding Formula Consultation Responses; b) Transfer of Schools funding block to High Needs Funding block- to include current High Needs Budget and draft 2021/22 budget; c) statutory services carried out on behalf of all schools and academies and d) statutory Services carried out on behalf of all maintained schools (the 2021/22 Education Function Charge).

The Head of Finance, Children Services gave a presentation and drew the following key issues to member's attention:

- The current DSG deficit in Swindon.
- The expected additional funding of £3.335m for the HNF block in the next financial year.
- An estimated shortfall of £0.629m was expected next year.
- How other Local Authorities had similar pressures and how the Swindon deficit compared with theirs.
- The proposed process for the DSG recovery plan.
- The level of attendance at the three consultation sessions.
- The level of responses through the survey and an analysis of the outcomes.
- The low response rate to the survey and an analysis of the outcomes.
- A breakdown and information on the impact of each option was presented for members to vote on.
- How, at the request of Primary headteachers, Options 1 and 3 were split, providing other options for members to consider.
- An analysis of the variance on a per pupil basis for all schools.
- The impact by the change of the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG)
- Varying outcomes of applying differential percentages to National Funding Formula (NFF) and MFG, which included a transfer to High needs blocks and how this would impact the DSG deficit.
- A breakdown of how the six options being considered would impact on the deficit levels over the next five years.

Following her presentation, the Head of Finance, Children Services responded to members' comments and questions in respect of the following matters:

- The benefit of reducing the number of options to be considered.
- How in 2019/20, the LA retained a £17.00 per pupil Education Function charge fee to help meet the cost of providing its statutory duties for all maintained pupils and this was referred to in Appendix 5 of the report.

- An explanation of how the proposed 50p increase was arrived at as this percentage increase was higher than the staff salary percentage increase.
- The increase cost impact to maintained schools for the provision of statutory services by the LA as a result of local schools converting to academy status.
- An education funding charge of £0.603m to be retained by the local authority for services provided to academy and maintained schools.

Following an explanation from the Head of Finance, Children Services highlighting that the breakdown of services to be provided were explained in Appendix 5, members from the Maintained Schools representatives continued to voice their concerns regarding the financial impact resulting from the proposed 50p increase per pupil fee to help meet the cost of providing its statutory duties for the maintained pupils. A maintained school representative enquired if voting was mandatory. The Director, Inclusion and Achievement confirmed that de-delegation was an option that is voted on annually by the Forum. This enabled some services to maintained schools to be provided centrally and funding to do so retained by the LA. If de-delegation stops, then the local authority would have to review services to be provided and this would have an impact on the budget going forward. In response to a query regarding the benefits of remaining a maintained school, she agreed with a member of the Forum that this was not the right environment to discuss the matter and confirmed that the LA had no influence on any school's decision to remain maintained or convert to academy. The Chair summed up member's concern and advised that she understood:

- a) The mathematical logic of how the fee was to be calculated.
- b) That as the number of maintained schools decreases, the contribution to the central fund would need to be increased.
- c) The concerns by the maintained schools representatives who felt that as the number of maintained schools have decreased, there should be a corresponding decrease in work required from the LA and as such, the fee per pupil should decrease.
- d) That a sub-group would need to be set up before the next meeting of Schools Forum in January 2021 to enable the LA and the maintained school representatives to further discuss de-delegation proposals.

Resolved: (1) The Schools Forum agrees the following principle to be implemented when setting the local Mainstream Funding Formula:

Option 3A - Apply the Core NFF formula excluding Mobility factor:

- Remove the Mobility factor
- All pupil lead factor values would be 101% of NFF
- Minimum Per Pupil Level (MPPL) - (Primary £4,180; Secondary £5,415)
- Lump Sum
- MFG +2%
- This is an increase of £0.504m to schools over NFF

(2) That Schools Forum agrees the principle that the LA retains the funding that is expected to be announced in January 2021 as part of the Central Schools Services Block to contribute to the costs of the LA meeting its statutory duties for all pupils.

(3) That further to (2) above, it be noted that the actual value of the retained Central Schools Services Block will be confirmed to Schools Forum at its meeting on the 19th January 2021.

(4) That Schools Forum agrees to defer the decision for the LA to retain a £17.50 per pupil fee to help meet the cost of providing its statutory duties for all maintained pupils, to its meeting on the 19th January 2021.

(5) That further to (4) above, the Head of Finance, Children Services be requested to meet with the maintained school representative to produce a number of options regarding de-delegation of funding to the central fund for discussion at the next meeting of Schools Forum on the 19th January 2021.

.

Section 5

Minutes of Wiltshire Police and Crime Panel, Fire Authority and Town Twinning Network

This page is intentionally left blank



**DORSET & WILTSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE
AUTHORITY**

Item 20/39

DRAFT Minutes of the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority meeting at 10:00 hours on 30 September 2020. This was an online meeting held in Microsoft Teams.

These are draft minutes prepared by officers to be approved by the Fire and Rescue Authority at its next meeting.

Members present:

Cllr Rebecca Knox (Chair)
Cllr Abdul Amin
Cllr Pete Barrow
Cllr Malcolm Davies
Cllr Peter Hutton
Cllr Bob Jones
Cllr Paul Oatway
Cllr Pip Ridout

Cllr Byron Quayle (Vice Chair)
Cllr Steve Baron
Cllr Richard Biggs
Cllr Paul Hilliard
Cllr Toby Johnson
Cllr Christopher Newbury
Cllr Garry Perkins
Cllr Ann Stribley

Officer attendance:

Chief Fire Officer (CFO), Ben Ansell
Clerk & Monitoring Officer, Jonathan Mair
Head of Financial Services and Treasurer, Ian Cotter
Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO), Derek James
Director of Community Safety, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO), Jim Mahoney
Director of People Services, Jenny Long
Head of Information and Communications, Vikki Shearing
Head of Strategic Planning & Corporate Assurance, Jill McCrae
Area Manager (AM), Andy Cole, Response Support, Response Development,
Resourcing & Review
Corporate Governance Manager, Nicki Whitehouse
Democratic Services Support, Steph Howard.

20/21 Welcome

- 20/21.1 The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed attendees. Members introduced themselves and the Chair gave a roll call of officers in attendance.

Initials _____

20/22 Apologies

- 20/22.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Ernie Clark, Cllr Brian Mattock and Director of Service Support, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO), Byron Standen.

20/23 Code of Conduct, Declarations of Interest and Notifications of Any Other Business

- 20/23.1 The Chair asked the meeting for any disclosures of pecuniary interests under the Localism Act. Cllr Paul Oatway reported that he had consulted the Monitoring Officer regarding his employment with Wiltshire Police in relation to agenda item 20/26, which he has disclosed on his Register of Interest. The advice from the Clerk & Monitoring Officer was that he does not need to leave the meeting for the item. The Clerk & Monitoring Officer, Jonathan Mair clarified that it was not simply that Cllr Paul Oatway has registered his interests, but that he is employed by Wiltshire Police, not the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, which is why he is able to take part in the item.

20/24 Minutes of the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority meeting on 18 June 2020 and any matters arising

- 20/24.1 The Chair asked Members to review and approve the minutes from the last meeting.

Cllr Abdul Amin commented that he had been able to be in the meeting at some point. Post meeting note: Cllr Abdul Amin was able to listen to part of the meeting via the public gallery and the minutes have been updated to reflect this.

- 20/26.2 Chief Fire Officer (CFO) Ben Ansell drew Members' attention to paragraph 20/19.6, noting that the Local Performance and Scrutiny Committees had taken place remotely, and this had highlighted of the effectiveness of remote meetings, particularly in respect to quorate, as Cllr Rebecca Knox had been able to act as substitute at one of the meetings to ensure it was quorate and able to be held.

- 20/24.3 **RESOLVED that the minutes be confirmed without amendment and signed by the Chair as a correct record.**

20/25 Receive the minutes of the Finance & Audit Committee meeting on 4 March 2020 and a verbal update from the 17 September 2020 meeting.

- 20/25.1 Cllr Bob Jones presented the minutes of the meeting of 4 March, which he confirmed had been signed as a true record. He gave a verbal update on the meeting of the 17 September 2020. Cllr Bob Jones explained that he had discussed the Service's strategy of undertaking property valuations on a five-year rolling basis with the External Auditor, noting that this was a more cost

Initials _____

effective option and in line with others. He reported that External Audit agreed that this was accepted practice and that the rating for this area in the Auditor's report would be ranked as green rather than amber. He further explained that External Audit had provided a good unqualified opinion. Cllr Bob Jones went on to report that Internal Audit provided an update for quarters 1 and 2 of 2020-21 and had raised no issues of concern.

20/25.2 **RESOLVED: Members received the minutes of the Finance & Audit Committee meeting of 5 March and a verbal update from the meeting held on 17 September 2020.**

20/26 Request to join the Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority

20/26.1 Jonathan Mair presented the report, which Members considered and discussed in detail. Members discussed the content of the letter received from the Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and raised concerns about the lack of detail of how involvement of the PCCs would make the Authority more effective and efficient. Members agreed that the Service currently works very well with both Police Forces.

20/26.2 Members expressed a range of views on the proposal and when asked, the Clerk and Monitoring Officer clarified the fact that any appointment to the Authority of a Police and Crime Commissioner would be for that person's term of office, rather than for the post on an ongoing basis. Members discussed the fact that this would mean there would be very little time for the current PCCs to make a lasting contribution, due to the fact that both have indicated that they will not be standing at the forthcoming PCC elections.

20/26.3 The Chair drew Members' attention to the current Home Office consultation on a review into the role of the Police and Crime Commissioners, which was due to report its outcome in the near future.

20/26.4 Members agreed that under the Combined Fire and Rescue Authorities (Membership and Allowances) (Amendment) Regulations 2020, the Authority must give reasons for its decision to agree to or refuse a request.

20/26.5 Jonathan Mair summarised the debate and concerns as follows:

a) Timing

It is the Authority's understanding that the term of office of the current PCCs come to an end at the beginning of May 2021, when elections are held. Even if appointments were to be made to the Authority with immediate effect, they would only have served as Authority Members for seven months. Members were of the view that this was too little a time to be able to make a lasting contribution to the governance of the Authority.

b) Contribution to efficiency and effectiveness:

When a Police and Crime Commissioner applies to become a member of a Fire and Rescue Authority there is no requirement to provide a business case.

Initials _____

Nevertheless, Members were disappointed by a lack of any detail in the application letter to explain how the PCC involvement would make what has already been judged to be a good fire and rescue service more effective and more efficient or what additional benefits would be achieved.

c) Home Office Consultation:

Members did not wish to accept a request whilst there is an ongoing consultation concerning the role of PCCs.

20/26.6 Cllr Ann Stribley proposed the following resolution to replace the two recommendations in the report. 'That the request from the two Police and Crime Commissioners be declined' and the reasons be provided as summarised by Jonathan Mair. Cllr Pip Ridout seconded the proposal.

20/26.7 The resolution was put to a vote and 13 Members agreed, one disagreed and two Members abstained.

20/26.8 **RESOLVED: Members declined the request from the two Police and Crime Commissioners to join the Authority.**

20/27 Treasury Management Annual Report 2019-20

20/27.1 The Head of Financial Services & Treasurer, Ian Cotter presented the report. He drew Members' attention to page 4 paragraph 3.3, explaining that the Authority had borrowed £4.4m in August 2019. As at the end of March 2020, the under-borrowed position had reduced to £9.7m from £13.1m last year. Ian Cotter explained the table in paragraph 3.5, showing balances in terms of the borrowing of new loans, repayment and interest paid during year 2019-20. He reported that there had been no new borrowing since that time.

20/27.2 Ian Cotter explained that there was a consultation on Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) borrowing results later this year may result in a reversal of the sudden increase in the rates that had been applied last October. Current PWLB rates remain historically low at 2% over ten years, but it is not necessary for the Authority to borrow at this stage. In terms of investments in section 4 of the report, Ian Cotter reported that targets had been slightly exceeded for income last year, but that this would not be repeated this year due to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on interest rates.

20.27.3 Ian Cotter reported that treasury management activity had been managed within the Prudential Indicators set for the year and that the Capital Prudential Indicators were all favourable, mainly due to the lower than forecast capital spend for the year. He confirmed that a full report had been provided to the Finance & Audit Committee on 17 September 2020.

20.27.4 RESOLVED: Members noted the report.

Initials _____

20/28 Annual Report 2019-20

- 20/28.1 CFO Ben Ansell presented the report with an accompanying presentation. He referred Members to pages 19 and 20 of the Annual Report in appendix A, 'Being there when you need us' on which Members focus in detail at their Local Performance & Scrutiny Committee meetings. He gave an overview of the Priorities on page 7 of the report and explained that for each there was a summary of the outcomes of the work of the Service and a narrative of the focus moving forwards.
- 20/28.2 CFO Ben Ansell went on to explain the impact to wider society of Safe and Well visits which help to reduce the demand on the Service's emergency response and that of partners, as well as providing value for money. He referred Members to the successful national Armed Forces Day event held in Salisbury in June 2019, which was reported on page 13.
- 20/28.3 Moving to page 16 of the report, CFO Ben Ansell referred to actions the Service was taking in fire safety following the Grenfell Tower fire and subsequent Phase 1 report from the Inquiry.
- 20/28.4 CFO Ben Ansell was pleased to report a 5% reduction in accidental dwelling fires. 86 people had been rescued from fire and 301 from road traffic collisions during the year. At the time of publication of the draft report, sadly there had been six deaths in fire related incidents, of which the Coroner had determined two were caused by fire. He reported that the Coroner had since determined one further death was fire related, with three still awaiting a Coroner's verdict. He confirmed that the report would be amended to reflect this prior to publication.
- 20/28.5 Referring to page 23 and the Priority 'Making every penny count', CFO Ben Ansell reported that the Authority continues to be low spending, with firefighter costs per person lower than the national average and he referred to the chart on page 24, showing the Authority's charges within band D council tax against other fire authorities in England.
- 20/28.6 CFO Ben Ansell reminded Members that the Service had achieved 'good' ratings across all three pillars of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services inspection regime in June 2019.
- 20/28.7 He was delighted to receive the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme Silver Award and reported that the area has a significant military presence with the Service employing a number of military spouses and ex-forces personnel and releasing a number of reservists.
- 20/28.8 Referring to page 29 of the report on diversity and inclusion, CFO Ben Ansell pointed to Appendix B, the Annual Workforce Equality Report and referred Members to page 30, the Priority 'Developing and supporting our people' and the good work being done.

Initials _____

- 20/28.9 CFO Ben Ansell referred to the strategic performance on page 32 and took Members through the reported performance. In particular he was pleased to report that the Service had achieved the ISO standard 45001 Occupational health and safety management.
- 20/28.10 CFO Ben Ansell explained to Members that he would amend the performance rating of 'For sickness absence, to be no higher than average reported for other comparable fire and rescue services in England' from green to amber as the performance was slightly under target.
- 20/28.11 He summarised by saying that the Service was self-aware and knew where it needs to focus.
- 20/28.12 In response to a Member's question, Director of People Services, Jenny Long explained the positive action the Service had taken in respect to previous recruitment campaigns, including 'have a go days', by encouraging people to come onto station with an opportunity to speak to staff. She explained that since the coronavirus pandemic, the Service had moved to have more information on social media and the Service's website. The Service had recently run two Facebook live activities which gave people an opportunity to pose questions to staff and had introduced a buddying scheme for under-represented groups to ask questions which might be deterring them from applying.
- 20/28.13 In answer to a question about the support the Service provides in bullying and harassment cases, Jenny Long explained that strong procedures are in place and the Service will not tolerate bullying and harassment. She reported that cases are always investigated, and the Service provides support to those making allegations via the HR business partners (HRBPs) which are aligned to all workplaces. There is also support available from Workout Solutions, the Service's counselling provider and from the Health and Wellbeing team.
- 20/28.14 The Chair congratulated officers on the work reflected in the Annual Report and commented that she was very pleased to see the Annual Workforce Equality report.
- 20/28.15 RESOLVED: Members considered and approved the Annual Report as set out in Appendix A with the amendments indicated by the CFO.**
- 20/28.16 RESOLVED: Members considered and noted the Annual Workforce Equality Report as set out in Appendix B.**

20/29 Statement of Assurance 2019-20

- 20/29.1 The Head of Strategic Planning & Corporate Assurance, Jill McCrae, presented the report, explaining that the Statement of Assurance was a requirement of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England and that the Service's process for producing it had been reviewed by Internal Audit and

Initials _____

the Local Government Association (LGA) during their recent review of the Authority's governance arrangements. She explained that it covers three assurance areas, governance, financial and operational.

20/29.2 Jill McCrae drew Members' attention to the current and future challenges detailed on page 11 of the Statement, which align to the Authority's Strategic Risk Register. She also referred to paragraph 1.41, a quote from Her Majesty's Inspector, Wendy Williams, which stated the Service is performing to a high standard in all areas'.

20/29.3 In response to a Member's question, ACFO Jim Mahoney explained how the Service was evaluating prevention activities to ensure that they produce positive outcomes and value for money and some of the challenges in doing this.

20/29.4 RESOLVED: Members approved the Statement of Assurance 2019-20.

20/30 Report on the implications of Building and Fire Safety Bills - verbal update

20/30.1 ACFO Jim Mahoney gave a presentation and explained that the Grenfell Tower fire, the subsequent reports and Government responses had been a catalyst for change. He explained that the Service had adapted its processes where necessary and that these were soon to be tested at the Fire Service College to ensure these revised procedures were effective. ACFO Jim Mahoney confirmed that in terms of multi-agency specific areas, the Service had been working effectively for a number of years.

20/30.2 ACFO Jim Mahoney reported that the Service had set up an internal working group to ensure there were no gaps in procedures and arrangements with an action plan which was on track.

20/30.3 In terms of the legislative environment, ACFO Jim Mahoney highlighted the new legislation and changes to the Regulatory Reform Order. He reported that the Building Safety Act has resulted in some changes in Building Regulations and highlighted the establishment of a Building Safety Regulator, with which fire and rescue services will be heavily involved. There is a Building Risk Review programme underway, focussing on high rise residential buildings and other building safety matters.

20/30.4 ACFO Jim Mahoney explained that a Building Risk Review programme has been established to focus on high-rise buildings over 18m or six floors and that the Service has a list of 218 buildings from MHCLG, which are currently being triaged for inspections in a programme planned to run to December 2021.

Initials _____

- 20/30.5 Legislative changes are expected to receive Royal Assent early in 2021 and the impacts are still emerging, but likely to include external facades, fire doors, floor and evacuation plans, lift testing records, premises information boxes and personal emergency evacuation plans. This work will be an addition to what the Service currently does. The Service's risk-based inspection programme will be larger than it is currently, as will be the number of premises and criteria or scope of inspection.
- 20/30.6 ACFO Jim Mahoney explained that there is a revised competency framework for fire safety staff, which will require at least a two year lead time for those new in this area, before they can be considered competent to inspect unsupervised.
- 20/30.7 The Service is developing a management information system to assist and ensure added value in terms of risk management and working on the capacity requirement to manage the larger scale of work. It aims to integrate protection work across the Service and use other staff members to understand building safety systems and carry out lower level fire safety checks, as well as acting as the eyes and ears of the protection teams.
- 20/30.8 ACFO Jim Mahoney reported that the Government has provided a one-off grant of £340k, which, whilst welcome, will not address the longer-term sustainability of this work and the Service and sector are currently lobbying for additional funding to be built into base budgets. He confirmed that the Service will be investing in the Protection team but is mindful of the financial challenges and it is a focus within the Resourcing and Savings Programme.
- 20/30.9 CFO Ben Ansell explained that this is the most significant change in fire safety legislation for a generation. Currently, the focus is on higher risk residential properties, but he explained that this is not just high-rise, but all high-risk buildings, for example, care homes, hospitals and schools. CFO Ben Ansell reminded Members that he sits on the Building Regulations Advisory Committee as a direct appointment by the Ministry of Housing and Communities and Local Government and can provide assurance that the Service is involved nationally and locally.
- 20/30.10 The Chair commented on the importance of this issue and reminded Members that they all have the ability to influence local authorities to ensure the Service is supported, in particular in areas such as installation of sprinklers in schools.

20/31 Strategic Financial update

- 20/31.1 Ian Cotter presented the report, an update on some of the key financial planning issues the Authority faces. He drew Members' attention to the table on page 3, which detailed the Medium Term Finance Plan, with a balanced budget for 2020-21, but facing projecting deficits of £1.5m for next year rising to just over £3m in 2023-24. He confirmed that this position was before the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic.

Initials _____

- 20/31.2 Ian Cotter explained that he was considering the assumptions for the taxbase within the agreed financial principles and proposing to reduce these down to 1% from 1.5% to align with local authority assumptions. He referred to recommendation 2 in the report, which asked Members to approve this change.
- 20/31.3 Ian Cotter referred to paragraphs 2.3 and 2.4 of the report, detailing future significant budget pressures in terms of pay awards and pensions funding.
- 20/31.4 Section 3 of the report related specifically to the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic, of which the financial impacts are currently not clear. £1.3m of one-off funding had been received from the Government to cover some specific impacts, but it was clear that the impacts will continue past this financial year. Ian Cotter reported that the Service is making savings where it can.
- 20/31.5 The biggest concern is the impact on future funding, as 75% comes from council tax, but it is too early to predict the impact and the Service is waiting to see if this is addressed in the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR). Ian Cotter explained that the three-year CSR may be replaced by further one year rolling settlement.
- 20/31.6 Ian Cotter referred Members to appendix B, the Fire Spending Review Proposal, a collaborative Local Government Association and National Fire Chiefs Council submission, that makes the case for an increased base funding to help with the funding pressures for the expectations of the new fire protection activities.
- 20/31.7 Ian Cotter explained the Service's Resourcing and Savings programme, a comprehensive financial review detailed on page 7, with a working assumption on the need to make savings of between £2-2.5m from 2021-22. The work is looking across the Service, with a range of scalable savings options. Ian Cotter referred Members to the table on page 7, outlining the key milestones of the programme including the engagement with Members.
- 20/31.8 CFO Ben Ansell concluded by explaining that the Authority is in a financially challenging place, although the Service is lean and efficient. He reminded Members that the Government grant is a small part of the income and that it would be appropriate for a modest increase in council tax, an issue that he and the Chair had been discussing with all 15 local MPs.
- 20/31.9 RESOLVED: Members noted and considered the content of the report.**
- 20/31.10 RESOLVED: Members approved the changes to Financial Principles outlined in paragraph 2.2 of Appendix A.**
- 20/32 Members Podcast**
- 20/32.1 CFO Ben Ansell introduced the Members Podcast.

Initials _____

20/33 Date of Next Meeting

20/33.1 The Chair confirmed the date of the next Authority meeting as 10 December 2020 from 10am.

20/34 To consider passing the following resolution:

20/34.1 In accordance with Section 100A (2 & 3) of the Local Government Act 1972, to exclude the press and public for the business specified below because it is likely that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act and the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information to the public.

20/34.2 RESOLVED: To close the meeting to the press and public.

Meeting closed at 13:03hrs

Signed: _____

Initials _____

TOWN TWINNING NETWORK

WEDNESDAY, 23 SEPTEMBER 2020

PRESENT:- Councillors Kevin Small (Chair) Junab Ali, Brian Mattock, Jim Robbins and Caryl Sydney-Smith.

Cristina Bennett (Swindon Ocotal Link) and Christina Tripper (Swindon Madhyapur Thimi Friendship Group).

1. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded Members of the need to declare any known interests in any matters to be considered at the meeting. No declarations were made.

2. City of Sanctuary - Update

The Forum was updated on work related to the City of Sanctuary Since the last meeting of the Network which included:

- There were a number of challenges for people seeking sanctuary within the Borough that were directly related to Covid-19 including , including extreme isolation, with no or fewer face to face support services available.
- Often people seeking asylum in Home Office accommodation would share a house, possibly with people they didn't know or even speaking the same language, and not have internet access which increased the sense of isolation with little privacy.
- The isolation felt and limited ability to get out of the property crated additional mental health problems. City of Sanctuary with some funding from the Wiltshire Community Fund to support people, through a remote befriending project although not all people seeking sanctuary were comfortable seeking this type of support.
- The wellbeing project where people could go to yoga and 1-2-1 sessions and schools of sanctuary project work also had be halted.
- The Family Box Project (staff and volunteers had put together activity boxes for asylum seeking families with schools aged children which supported school learning at home) supported by the Wiltshire Community Fund had been very successful. This project had been undertaken working alongside the Harbour Project and all the materials used (including 100 new books donated by the library) were new. Feedback from families showed the importance of these boxes.
- Refugee week in June was held on-line working with volunteers and a local artist who had designed a colouring book which were given to the children of the 20 families supported by the Family Box Project and a Borough wide colouring competition link to the colouring book was also held.

- During the lock-down there had been reflection on the best way forward and there would soon be a consultation to enhance work undertaken to date in respect of welcome, support and inclusion within the town and to breakdown hostility towards asylum seekers.
- There were discussions about moving towards a more network related support and to make a welcoming town.
- The need to consult on what would encourage people to become volunteers and to gauge what support asylum seekers felt they required.

Resolved – That the update be noted.

3. Friendship Links

The clerk requested a contact for the Swindon/Ocotol Link as a member of the public had contacted him wishing to become involve with the organisation. Christina Bennett indicated that she would discuss this request with the Link and respond to the clerk.

The Chair reported Councillor Nick Burns-Howell had written to the Chair regarding concerns for LGBT community due to recent events in Poland crating LGBT free zones and asking if the Chair was aware of any issues in Torun and if there were adverse issues if action could be taken to register concerns about such zones. The Chair had responded to Councillor Burns-Howell regarding the issue in Poland and other eastern European countries and read his response to the meeting and would continue to monitor the situation and report to the network.

The network supported the action taken by the Chair.

4. Reports from Town Twinning Associations and Links

Madhyapur Thimi, Bhaktapur

In June a discussion was held regarding getting schools Covid ready, working from home and schooling from home. This had been organised with the deputy head of Lawn Manor School and 40 head teachers in Nepal had participated asking questions and explaining how there were approaching the situation. Nepal had gone into lock-down early with virtually no cases, the lockdown had ended two weeks previously with there now being approximately 470 reported cases and with schools still closed and had been shut for six months. From her experience with schools she supported 50% of pupils were doing online learning although many pupils didn't have this facility and were losing out on education. During the meeting guidance on providing online courses was given and this was well received. The association had provided some financial assistance to teachers who were not receiving wages. The Nepalese Government, who were facing territorial and internal issues, was not providing much guidance and no aid for schools. Newsletters were being produced by the Association but there had not been the opportunity for fund-raising events.

The Nepalese Mayor who had visited Swindon last year had been proactive in his community and had established a local covid testing centre and organised food

packages for local people without food. India had put up the price of staple foods in retaliation for territorial disputes.

Swindon Ocotol Link

Everyday life was a struggle due to Covid and Dengue fever in Nicaragua. The network was continuing to communicate with contacts in Ocotol. The network expressed concern that struggles in many countries in need of assistance was not being widely reported.

Salzgitter

In Lower Saxony there had been around 17,500 reported covid cases and 665 deaths which was broadly in line with the German national average. He had spoken to the Mayor regarding how Salzgitter was handling the covid crisis. A visit to Salzgitter planned for April had been cancelled although it was hoped that a visit would take place in May 2020.

This page is intentionally left blank