



## **SWINDON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**Municipal Year 2020/21**

**Meeting of Council on Thursday, 25 March 2021**

### **ITEM - MINUTES OF OTHER COUNCIL BODIES**

#### **SECTION 1 - SPECIAL, AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEES**

1. Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 17 February 2021 of Audit Committee (Pages 5 - 8)
2. Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 2 February 2021 of Standards Committee (Pages 9 - 14)

#### **SECTION 2 - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

3. Minutes of meeting Monday, 11 January 2021 of Scrutiny Committee (Pages 17 - 22)
4. Minutes of meeting Monday, 8 February 2021 of Scrutiny Committee (Pages 23 - 30)
5. Minutes of meeting Thursday, 28 January 2021 of Adults' Health, Adults' Care and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Pages 31 - 36)
6. Minutes of meeting Wednesday 27 January 2021 of Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Pages 37 - 40)
7. Minutes of meeting Thursday, 25 February 2021 of Children's Health, Social Care and Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Pages 41 - 50)

8. Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 10 February 2021 of Growing the Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Pages 51 - 56)
9. Minutes of meeting Monday, 25 January 2021 of Resources and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Pages 57 - 62)

### **SECTION 3 - REGULATORY COMMITTEES**

10. Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 26 January 2021 of Planning Committee (Pages 65 - 72)
11. Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 9 February 2021 of Planning Committee (Pages 73 - 78)
12. Minutes of meeting Thursday, 14 January 2021 of Licensing Committee (Pages 79 - 80)
13. Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 13 January 2021 of Education Transport Appeals Sub-Committee (Pages 81 - 82)

### **SECTION 4 - CHILDREN SERVICES BODIES**

14. Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 19 January 2021 of Schools Forum (Pages 85 - 92)

### **SECTION 5 - POLICE AND FIRE AUTHORITIES**

15. Minutes of meeting Thursday, 10 December 2020 of Dorset and Wiltshire Fire Authority (Pages 95 - 100)
16. Minutes of meeting Thursday, 10 December 2020 of Police and Crime Panel (Pages 101 - 106)
17. Minutes of meeting Thursday, 7 January 2021 of Wiltshire Police and Crime Panel (Pages 107 - 110)
18. Minutes of meeting Thursday, 4 February 2021 of Wiltshire Police and Crime Panel (Pages 111 - 114)

## **Section 1**

# **Special, Audit and Standards Committee Minutes**

This page is intentionally left blank

## AUDIT COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2021

PRESENT:- Councillors Steve Weisinger (Chair), Nick Martin (Vice-Chair), Claire Crilly, Malcolm Davies, James Robbins, Kevin Small and Roger Smith

### **24. 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.

### **25. Public Question Time**

No public questions were submitted.

### **26. Minutes**

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2020 be confirmed and signed.

The Chair asked a question with regard to Minute 19, in which the Committee had requested information about the issues with the Oracle system. The Chief Operating Officer apologised that this had not been circulated and undertook to do so via the Committee Officer.

### **27. Corporate Risk Management Update**

The Committee received a summary report of risk management activity within the Council, including the most recently updated Corporate Risk Register as reported to the Council's Corporate Management Team.

The Chief Executive introduced the report and informed the Committee that Simon Phillips had moved from his role as a Principal Auditor to become Head of Data, Performance and Insight. The Committee was invited to acknowledge Martin Bell's work was the lead officer in obtaining the data and producing the report.

The Chair and Councillor Jim Robbins asked a number of questions to which the Chief Executive and the Chief Operating Officer responded, details of which are set out below:

- (1) Could there be more detail about the welcomed lowering of the risk around finance from the additional tier of 'purple', as well as information about why health and safety has been raised to red? The Council has received significant financial contributions to cover the budget concerns raised in the previous report. Both Health and Safety officers and Learning and Development colleagues have prioritised risk assessment work to support the Council's operations during the

Covid-19 pandemic. There was less resource and less availability of external trainers to ensure that all the health and safety training could be delivered in a Covid-safe way. A rapid action plan is being developed in consultation with Councillor Jandy, the Cabinet portfolio holder, and Councillor Burns-Howell of the Joint Safety Committee.

- (2) On Growing the Economy, where the risk is rated high, what is the latest position regarding the closure of Honda due in July 2021? Honda is working well with the Council, the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership and other agencies to help all of its associates find new opportunities once the plant closes. More detail cannot be provided at this time because Officers have had to sign non-disclosure agreements.
- (3) What has the impact of Brexit been on the Council and Swindon's businesses? Companies such as Honda that rely on 'just in time logistic models' have experienced disruption. The Council had not reported any effects yet but this would be monitored and reported via the existing risk management processes.

Resolved: That the risk management approach and the risks captured in the Corporate Risk be endorsed.

## **28. Treasury Management Strategy Update**

The Corporate Director of Finance and Assets submitted a report on Treasury Management Strategy for 2021/22, including Prudential Indicators up to 2025/26, the Annual Investment Strategy, and the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement.

The Chair drew Members' attention to the amended Appendix that had been circulated. The Head of Finance set out the report's context and informed the Audit Committee that this is the forward-looking report, which includes the capital plans for the years ahead, prudential indicators, how debt is charged to the budget, the Treasury management strategy, along with the non-cash and investment strategy.

Councillor Kevin Small, referring to Table 6 in Appendix One, asked if the Capital Financing Requirements contained only those schemes that had already been approved or if it also contained those schemes that were yet to be adopted by Council at its Budget meeting? The Head of Finance stated that it includes all the existing commitments and he undertook to provide a response, before 19.00 on Thursday 18th February 2021 if possible to confirm whether it included proposed schemes yet to be approved.

Resolved: (1) That the Treasury Management Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision Policy and Prudential Indicators, as set out in Appendix 1, be recommended for approval by Full Council on 18th February 2021.

(2) That the prohibition of borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board to support the purchase of 'debt for yield' investments, as detailed in paragraphs 3.27 to 3.2 of the main report be noted.

## **29. Annual Audit Letter**

Mr Barrie Morris introduced the report and, in thanking Ms Sophie Morgan-Bower for her work, advised the Committee that she would be leaving her role for maternity leave. Mr

Morris introduced Grace Hawkins, who would be taking on the role after which Ms Hawkins gave the Committee some details about her prior local government external audit experience.

Mr Morris drew Members' attention to the report, which highlighted issues that had been reported previously to the Committee in November 2020 as part of the Audit Findings Report on the Financial Statements. He also advised Members that, as set out in Appendix A, the additional work to complete the audit because of Covid-19 had resulted in a request for additional fees of £18,555.

The Chair welcomed the fact that there were no errors reported on the Housing Benefit subsidy, to which Mr Morris said more would be reported on this in the external audit update.

Resolved: That the Annual Audit letter be noted.

### **30. External Audit - progress report**

Ms Morgan-Bower introduced the report, which set out the progress as at February 2021. She confirmed that the 2019/20 Audit had been concluded on 3rd February and then highlighted aspects from the report. She drew Members' attention to the fact that the Housing Benefit Subsidy claim had received an unqualified opinion, as the auditors identified no issues through their testing, which was a rare distinction for a local authority. The Teachers' Pensions claim and the pooling of Housing Capital receipts were also certified.

Ms Morgan-Bower advised the Committee of the challenges still presented by Covid-19 and possible changes to the timetable for audit; however, Members would be kept updated.

The Committee was informed of two changes to the 2020/21 External Audit. First, the External Auditors were now required to comment on all elements of the value for money audit, not just by exception, which would mean additional work. Second, the Committee was informed that Members would be challenged about their understanding of the processes and methods used to make accounting estimates as well as how they oversee the management process for making these estimates as part of the new external audit requirement.

Mr Morris also emphasised how unusual it was to have an unqualified opinion on Housing Benefits and that the service area was to be recognised for this achievement. The Chair added his congratulations to the Revenue and Benefits Team for achieving this.

The Chair proposed and Councillor Nick Martin seconded that Ms Morgan-Bower be thanked formally for her work as well as having the Committee's best wishes for her future. The Committee approved unanimously.

Resolved: (1) That the External Audit progress report be noted  
(2) That the Committee's thanks to Ms Morgan-Bower be recorded along with Members' good wishes.

**31.**

**Head of Internal Audit - Update report**

The Head of Internal Audit introduced the report setting out the internal audits completed since the Committee's last meeting as set out in Appendix A along with audits completed this financial year in Appendix B. He drew Members' attention to an update on the performance of the corporate fraud team.

The Chair thanked the Head of Internal Audit and his team for their work during Covid-19.

Councillors Kevin Small and Jim Robbins asked the following, to which the Head of Internal Audit responded.

- (1). Empty Homes audit – will this look at the obstacle to bringing these homes back into use? This audit has been completed and will be brought to the next meeting. It did address this issue. The Housing department is preparing a business case to respond to the recommendations.
- (2). Did the car parking audit look at the investments being made as part of the capital programme, the on-going effects of Covid? The audit was focused on the collection and control of income. There was a recommendation to look at credit card/phone payments given the health and safety issues of solitary staff when collecting cash from isolated locations.
- (3). Media reports referred to significant car-parking income losses from machines-being out of order, is there a figure of how much was lost? The Head of Internal Audit offered to find out and respond to Members.

Resolved: That the report be noted.



## STANDARDS COMMITTEE

**TUESDAY, 2 FEBRUARY 2021**

PRESENT: Councillor Caryl Sydney-Smith (Chair), Councillor Steve Weisinger (Vice-Chair), Councillor Claire Crilly, Councillor Steph Exell, Councillor Steve Heyes (Deputy), Councillor Jenny Jefferies, Councillor Jane Milner-Barry, Councillor Barbara Parry (Deputy), Councillor Roger Smith, Councillor Bazil Solomon, Councillor Andy Spry, Mr Richard Hailstone (Parish Representative) and Mr Paul Morris (Independent Person).

Also in attendance were: Councillor David Renard (Leader of the Council) and Ms Susie Kemp (Chief Executive).

Apologies for absence were received from: Councillor Janine Howarth, Councillor Oladapo Ibitoye, Councillor Vera Tomlinson, Mr Trevor Davies (Lay Member), Mr David Dawson (Lay Member), Mr Mick Compton (Parish Representative) and Mr Keith Strickland (Independent Person).

### **18. Declarations of Interest**

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

### **19. Minutes**

Resolved – That the Minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2020 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

### **20. Public Question Time**

There were no public questions.

### **21. Exempt Items - Exclusion of Press and Public**

Resolved - That, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded during the discussion of the matters referred to in Agenda Item 8 (Minute 24) on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the Paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

### **22. Question and Answer Session - Leader of the Council and Chief Executive**

The Leader of the Council, Councillor David Renard, and the Chief Executive, Ms Susie Kemp, addressed the Committee.

The Leader referred to the report within the agenda pack and that there had been no standards issues in the previous year. The Chief Executive referred to the unprecedented response to the Covid-19 pandemic throughout the last year, and expressed her pride at

how officers had pulled together and the help and support received from members when difficult decisions had to be taken. The Chief Executive stated that she believes this has set our council as an exemplar of how to react in a major incident, and thanked members for that support.

The Leader and Chief Executive then responded to a number of comments made by members as follows:

- That the Council has been very supportive to residents by helping them to be aware of, and keep in line with, any Covid-19 restrictions.
- That any landline numbers in the internal directory for officers could be changed to mobile numbers, but only where a Council-owned mobile has been provided and where diverting procedures are not in place. The Committee noted that Microsoft Teams can also be used to place calls to officers, but that a balance has to be struck as officers need time for matters other than responding to member queries.
- How frontline services been maintained, particularly waste collection.
- The motivational communication to residents on Covid-19 which has worked well.
- The sad news that Captain Sir Thomas Moore had passed away.
- Whether it would be possible for the Council to record the history of this time, to create a booklet of personal experiences and how the Council helped them.
- The large number of members who have been able to join monthly briefings via Microsoft Teams, plus the other opportunities this tool provides to enable member engagement and to help both officers and members maintain a better work life balance.
- The legislation on holding virtual meetings which ends on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021. The Committee noted that the Local Government Association is lobbying to ensure that Councils can choose to hold either virtual, physical or hybrid meetings after this point but that, at the moment, all members will be obliged to return to the Civic Office for meetings after the election. Council will have to consider health and safety implications and take a view dependent on what happens with the legislation.
- How it is hoped that the excellent work on communication and liaising with the Parish and Town Councils will continue post-Covid-19.
- The work being undertaken to look at improving members' induction, increasing the engagement of existing members with learning opportunities, and assisting both members and officers to understand each other's roles.

Resolved - That the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive be thanked for attending the meeting and for their full and open responses to members questions on matters relating to the Council's ethical governance framework and issues of probity.

## **23. Ethical Framework Update**

The Committee considered a report from the Chief Legal Officer, which provided an update on the following matters relating to the Ethical Framework and issues of probity in the Council.

### Consideration of any recommended updates to Codes and Protocols

In accordance with the previously utilised review process, the Committee noted that the

Monitoring Officer had consulted on each of the Codes and Protocols with relevant officers, the political groups on the Council and the Parish and Town Councils, with responses having been set out in the relevant sections of the report. The Committee was advised that copies of the Codes and Protocols listed below are contained within the Council's Constitution, and can be inspected on the Council's website as Appendix 1 to the report.

The Committee was invited to consider, in turn, each of the Council's Codes and Protocols to determine whether changes were required to ensure they remain effective and fit for purpose, taking into account any matters as set out in the report.

### **Members' Code of Conduct**

The Monitoring Officer confirmed that since agenda publication it has been publicised that the Local Government Association (LGA) is intending to review / revise its Model Code of Conduct, and has commissioned an accompanying guidance. Given this information, the Monitoring Officer advised that it was no longer recommended for this Committee to devote its next meeting to reviewing the Code and that the Committee was instead recommended to postpone its review until such time as an update had been provided by the LGA.

The Committee noted that Councillor Brian Ford and Haydon Wick Parish Council had both submitted representations regarding the Code of Conduct, which would be considered by Committee at the time of its review. No changes were therefore proposed.

### **Officers' Code of Conduct**

The Committee considered the comments submitted by Councillor Brian Ford as set out in the report. The Monitoring Officer also advised that this Code is being reviewed separately with respect to gifts and hospitality, and that any proposed changes would be brought before Committee for consideration at a future point. No changes were therefore proposed.

### **Monitoring Officer Protocol**

The Committee considered the comments submitted by Councillor Brian Ford and Haydon Wick Parish Council as set out in the report, and noted the comments and recommendations from the Monitoring Officer as set out in Appendix 2. It was noted that the term 'Chair' was satisfactory as a gender neutral name, and no changes were proposed.

### **Councillor Role Definitions**

No changes were proposed.

### **Media Guidelines for Councillors**

The Committee was reminded of the concerns expressed at its last meeting regarding the use of two social media accounts by members (one for personal use and one for councillor related activity). It noted that the Local Government Association's background information on the use of social media for councillors briefly mentions Councillors choosing to have separate accounts for their Councillor / private presence (Section 3 'Responsibilities of Councillors on social media'). The concerns raised at the previous meeting stemmed from the FAQs page on Facebook. When looking at the fuller version on their current community standards there does not appear to be an actual prohibition on maintaining more than one account. The rules seem mainly to be based around authenticity (i.e. not using false names

or creating fake profiles). No changes were therefore proposed.

#### **Protocol for Member / Officer Relationships**

No changes were proposed.

#### **Members Code of Good Planning Practice**

The Committee considered the comments submitted by Haydon Wick Parish Council as set out in the report. It was also queried whether Section 7 on Site Visits was up-to-date given that visits do not appear to be formally arranged by the Council for members any more. It was agreed that it would be prudent to seek the views of Planning Committee and planning officers on the appropriateness of this section of the Code, prior to this Committee revisiting its review at its next meeting.

#### **Local Code of Corporate Governance**

No changes were proposed.

#### **Recording, Photography and use of social media protocol and guidance**

No changes were proposed.

#### **Public Question Time at Council meetings Protocol and Guidance**

The Committee considered the comments submitted by Councillor Brian Ford as set out in the report. No changes were proposed.

#### **The Whistleblowing Policy**

No changes were proposed.

#### Arrangements for considering Code of Conduct Complaints

The Committee has previously indicated its intention to review the arrangements currently in place for the consideration of Code of Conduct Complaints. A full review has yet to be started but, in the meantime, it was agreed that the following changes would be implemented to facilitate a small but significant difference to the process:

- That it be formalised within the Arrangements for determining Code of Conduct Complaints that the Chair of the Standards Committee be automatically appointed as Chair of the Standards Assessment Panel when it is convened (unless the Chair has a perceived bias with regards to the Complaint to be considered).
- The six proposed changes to the Complaint Form completed by Complainants, as set out in Appendix 3 of the report.

#### Dispensations

The Committee noted that, at its meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2020, it had agreed to: authorise the Monitoring Officer to grant dispensations to Members on the subject matter of the Budget and Council Tax matters; to grant these and any additional applications received until 11<sup>th</sup> October 2024; that any dispensations granted under these conditions be for the maximum period of four years, ending on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2024, and; that dispensations will be granted in consultation with the Chair of the Standards Committee and reported back to the next available meeting.

Also at its meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2020, the Committee noted that it had authorised the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chair of the Standards Committee, to grant applications for urgent dispensations on any subject matter in between meetings of this Committee, with any such dispensations being reported to the next available meeting.

The Committee noted that no requests for dispensations had been granted since its last meeting.

#### Summary of Code of Conduct Complaints

The Committee noted the summary of Code of Conduct complaints, set out in the table at paragraph 3.31 of the report.

#### Independent Remuneration Panel - Membership

The Committee noted that it had previously agreed to re-appoint Mr Keith Strickland as a Lay Representative for a period of one year, which will be ending in March 2021, at which point the position will be vacant. The Committee also noted that Mr Ram Thiagarajah had indicated that he did not wish to seek re-appointment as a Lay Representative, and his current term expired at the end of October 2020. The Committee noted that in order to reduce costs, the recruitment process for both positions had been taking place at the same time. The vacancies have been advertised, and applications have been submitted. The interviews will be held in the week commencing 15<sup>th</sup> February 2021 and it is anticipated the Committee will be invited to appoint the new members at its next meeting.

#### Member Training

The Committee noted the details of the learning and development events planned for the remainder of the 2020/2021 Municipal Year as set out in Appendix 4 to the report. A log of member attendance, and the feedback received from councillors at these events, will be kept and reported to this Committee at a future meeting.

The Committee was advised that parish councillors are able to attend training sessions as advertised in the Members Bulletin. The details of parish councillor attendance will be kept and reported to this Committee at a future meeting.

The Committee also noted that the Member Development Advisory Group is working on proposals for the learning and development activities that will take place for councillors during the 2021-22 Municipal Year.

Resolved – (1) That, having considered the submissions received following consultation and the update provided by the Monitoring Officer with regards to the Local Government Association Model Code of Conduct, the Committee determines that the Council's Codes and Protocols (excluding the Members Planning Code of Good Practice) remain fit for purpose and do not require to be amended at this time.

(2) That the review of the Local Government Association Model Code of Conduct be postponed until the expected publication of any revised Code and associated guidance.

(3) That the Monitoring Officer be authorised to consult on potential changes to Section 7 (Site Visits) of the Members Planning Code of Good Practice, with any suggested revisions

to be considered by this Committee at its next meeting.

(4) That the next meeting of this Committee be moved from 19<sup>th</sup> April 2021 to 11<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

(5) That it be formalised within the Arrangements for determining Code of Conduct Complaints that the Chair of the Standards Committee be automatically appointed as Chair of the Standards Assessment Panel when it is convened (unless the Chair has a perceived bias with regards to the Complaint to be considered).

(6) That the six proposed changes to the Code of Conduct Complaint Form completed by Complainants, as set out in Appendix 3 of the report, be adopted.

(7) That the Ethical Framework Update, including: the dispensations granted to members; the Summary of Code of Conduct complaints; the membership of the Independent Remuneration Panel, and; the latest position regarding councillor training and development within the Borough, be noted.

## **24. Ethical Compliance Report**

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Legal Officer regarding the outcome of various ethical compliance matters, including the details of any Whistleblowing cases, breaches of the Member / Officer Protocol, and Code of Conduct complaints received since the last Committee.

Resolved – That the Ethical Compliance report be noted.

## **Section 2**

### **Overview and Scrutiny Committee Minutes**

This page is intentionally left blank



## SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**MONDAY, 11 JANUARY 2021**

PRESENT:- Councillors James Robbins (Chair), Steve Weisinger (Vice-Chair), Junab Ali, Emma Bushell, Matthew Courtliff, Jim Grant, Jane Milner-Barry, Barbara Parry, Kevin Parry, Roger Smith, Andy Spry, 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), Maureen Penny (Cabinet Member for Highways, Maintenance and Waste Services), Gary Sumner (Cabinet Member for Strategic Infrastructure, Transport & Planning) and Jenny Jefferies.

### **41. Declarations of Interest**

The Chair reminded Members of the need to declare any known interests in any matters to be considered at the meeting. The following declaration was made:

- Councillor Roger Smith made a personal, non-prejudicial declaration of interest in respect of agenda item 6 (Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session - Cabinet Member for Strategic Infrastructure, Transport and Planning) as an employee of a company involved with the review of the Local Plan.

### **42. Minutes**

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2020 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

### **43. Public Question Time**

There were no questions submitted under this item.

### **44. Budget Setting Process 2021-2022**

The Committee received a report from the Chief Legal Officer about the Budget setting process for 2021/22.

The Chair welcomed Councillor Russell Holland, Deputy Leader of the Council, and Cabinet Member for Commercialisation, Education and Skills to the meeting.

The Chair along with councillors Emma Bushell, Jim Grant and Jane Milner-Barry, raised the following issues set out below, to which Councillors Russell Holland and Brian Ford, together with Mick Bowden, Corporate Director of Finance and Assets, and David Haley, Corporate Director, Children Services, responded at the meeting.

- The 2020/21 Local Grant settlement for Swindon.

- The position of the budget following receipt of the Local Grant settlement, the details of any proposed savings planned and how Cabinet will be able to submit a balanced budget for scrutiny at the Council meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup> February 2021.
- The opportunity for all councillors to provide feedback on the draft budget before its submission to the Council meeting.
- How some grants received were one-off payments for this financial year, and that this would result on budget pressures in future years.
- The effect of long-Covid on demand for services.
- The array of short- and long-term pressures on the Adult Social Care budget and Children Services.
- The Dedicated Schools Grant recovery plan and how it is to be submitted for discussion at the next Schools Forum on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2021.
- How the Covid related grant was reserved for Covid related activity and reference was made to other grants received that included the new homes bonus, social care grant and a lower tier grant.
- An overview of potential risk factors and financial impact associated with the second Covid-related lockdown.
- The financial basis utilised to calculate the draft budget.
- Managing demand for older people and disability, learning disability and mental health services through robust dialogue and support provided to the service user and their carer and how community engagement would be essential.
- The methods implemented to ensure Adult Social Services aligned their programme of work to operate in a more modern, efficient and effective way.
- Confirmation that the car park financial forecast was based on pre-lockdown calculations and that the forecast did not identify specific car parks.

Resolved: – (1) That the budget position update be noted and that the Cabinet Member for Commercialisation, Education and Skills’ responses to questions about the financial context within which the budget proposals have been framed along with the budget and policy framework utilised by the Council in setting its 2021/22 budget, be noted.

(2) That the Corporate Director of Finance and Assets be requested to circulate the Local Grant settlement figures.

(3) That the Corporate Director Adult Services, Health and Housing be requested to circulate:

a) Information regarding “strength based” conversations held to support service users.

b) Information regarding the methods to be used to ensure the Directorate aligned the programme of work to operate in a more modern, efficient and effective way.

(4) That the Clerk be requested to circulate Schools Forum minutes to the meeting being held on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

#### **45. Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session - Cabinet Member for Strategic Infrastructure, Transport and Planning**

Councillor Gary Sumner (Cabinet Member for Strategic Infrastructure, Transport & Planning) 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:

- Have overview of the Strategic Spatial Planning and Development Planning Framework.
- Provide political leadership for the New Eastern Villages programme.

- Have overview of the Wichelstowe Joint Venture.
- Set the direction for future strategic infrastructure programmes to support economic growth including housing and transport.
- Ensure that the Council's agreed priorities within the portfolio are delivered.

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

- Pledge 3: Refresh and implement the Masterplan for Swindon Town Centre, supporting our vision that Swindon is a vibrant, modern place.
- Pledge 6
  - Deliver infrastructure in a timely way to assist in phased housing & employment delivery for the New Eastern Villages including White Hart Junction & A420.
  - Working with Barratt Homes through the Joint Venture we will deliver the District Centre facilities including a public house, the next phases of housing, a retirement complex and education facilities – whilst also delivering new sections of canal.
  - Create the Southern access to Wichelstowe via a tunnel to be constructed under the M4 to link to Junction 16.
  - Through the Local Plan review identify brownfield and green field sites for housing to deliver homes and employment land on a range of sustainable sites whilst ensuring that urban extensions are of the highest quality.
  - Continue to work with the developers at Tadpole Garden Village to bring forward facilities to ensure a sustainable community can continue to thrive.
  - Ensure that there is a range of good quality housing options in Swindon, including affordable opportunities to buy and rent.
  - Work with Nationwide Building Society to deliver homes at the former Oakfield campus.
  - Support final phases of additional housing at Badbury Park with community space and improvements to Day House Lane to link to Coate Water.

The Cabinet Member also has delegated responsibility for:

- Traffic and Transport Forward Planning (including Local Transport Plan and Implementation of Local Transport Plan).
- Neighbourhood Planning and Sustainability.
- Building Control and Local Land Charges.
- Housing Strategy.
- Design-based consultancy.
- Wichelstowe (Commercialisation).
- Strategic flood and water management.
- Street Naming.
- Environmental Issues Landscape & Countryside.
- Highways Strategy.
- Local Plan – oversight and assurance around delivery of housing numbers, employment land, planning policy.
- Strategic Infrastructure Plan.
- Developer Contributions.
- Transport Schemes – Delivery of existing schemes & determination of future schemes.
- Bus & Rail network – Network Rail & GWR – Swindon Station.

Councillor Sumner introduced his report and referred to the delivery of the infrastructure programmes across Swindon, particularly at Wichelstowe and the on-going construction development at Symmetry Park that will provide significant employment opportunities.

Councillor Sumner responded to questions put by Councillors Junab Ali, Jim Grant, Jane Milner-Barry, Steve Weisinger and the Chair on the following matters:

- The proposed timescale for the completion of the 3 and 5 year housing supply targets set in the Neighbourhood Plans and the progress made to date.
- The progress made on the number of houses completed in the Eastern Village sector.
- Adverse effects of Covid on new housing delivery.
- The report published on the Planning Resource website regarding Swindon's position in meeting the government housing requirements and confirmation that currently no government interventions have been proposed.
- The Council's performance in meeting current housing delivery targets.
- The promotion of Swindon as an ideal town for housing developers, how the number of planned houses currently surpasses the number of houses already built and that construction delays sometimes resulted from the need to lay in the services infrastructure prior to commencing any housing developments.
- An explanation that whilst work was being undertaken by the Planning Department to ensure that the Local Plan met the achievable and deliverable targets, it was beyond its control if developers opted to "park the land" until what they deemed 'the right financial climate to build houses.'
- The myriad approaches used to engage with local business, landowners and commercial agents to promote town centre regeneration by utilising achievable solutions that will lead to a wider sustainable regeneration.
- How the Town Centre Master Plan, which was originally drafted in 2009, was continuously updated to include a) recommendations made by local businesses and b) take into consideration on-going concerns arising over time, such as the latest Covid-19 pandemic.
- How an on-line interactive tool was being developed, as part of the revamped Town Centre Master Plan, enabling the public to stay abreast of the latest developments on the town centre regeneration.
- Planning tools and drivers put in place to encourage stronger engagement with absent landlords of town centre properties.
- How delays in the completion of infrastructure schemes being undertaken at Meads Way and the Moonraker Junction was due to essential work being undertaken by utilities and the adverse effect the pandemic has had on manpower.
- An explanation of the challenges being met by the Strategic Development Department including financial elements and how its restructuring has resulted in efficiencies and savings.
- The range of topics raised in the department's response to the White Paper included developers concerns regarding planning permissions and community engagement and that this information had been circulated to members in an all members briefing note.
- The robust discussions held by the Climate Change working group included understanding factors that best promote sustainable construction practices and energy efficiencies that are being used within the modern construction industry.

- How through partnership working, developers ensured building projects were financially viable and that the local authority ensured good quality developments are built, which encompassed a number of affordable housing within each development.
- That a mechanism was in place allowing for the recoupment of infrastructure costs invested as part of joint ventures between the local authority and developers and confirmation that these costs are being recouped over the period of the project.
- The successful construction of electric car charging points at Wichelstowe.

Resolved – (1) That Councillor Sumner 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 the Strategic Planning Policy Manager be requested to circulate information regarding:

a) The number of houses completed since the current Local Plan was adopted and whether the Council is on target to complete the anticipated 22 thousand houses within the plan.

b) The scheduled end date for the infrastructure schemes being undertaken at Meads Way and the Moonraker Junction.

3) That the Head of Finance, Economy, Regeneration and Skills, be requested to circulate information regarding the timescale to recoup infrastructure costs from the developers at Wichelstowe.

#### **46. 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 7<sup>th</sup> July 2020, and updated during the course of the Municipal Year.

#### **47. 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.

This page is intentionally left blank

## SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**MONDAY, 8 FEBRUARY 2021**

PRESENT:- Councillors James Robbins (Chair), Steve Weisinger (Vice-Chair), Junab Ali, Matthew Courtliff, Jim Grant, Jane Milner-Barry, Barbara Parry, Kevin Parry, Kevin Small, Roger Smith, Andy Spry, 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), Robert Jandy (Cabinet Member for Operational 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 & Planning), Keith Williams (Cabinet Member for Climate Change), Oliver Donachie, Jenny Jefferies and Vinay Manro.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Emma Bushell.

### **48. 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 personal, non-prejudicial declaration of interest in respect of agenda item 6 (Progress towards the Council's Vision, Priorities and Pledges) as he is employed by Honda.

### **49. Minutes**

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

### **50. Public Question Time**

Mr Roy Worman, Haydon Wick resident, had submitted a question prior to the meeting relating to the closure of the Oasis being reviewed by two different Committees and a Cabinet Member Advisory Group (CMAG), and which queried the openness of information, the roadmap and the timescales involved amongst the three.

The Chair responded to the question at the meeting.

Mr Worman asked a number of supplementary questions at the meeting regarding:

- Minutes of the CMAG meetings not being publically available due to the confidential nature of the discussions held.
- Whether any of the £5m amendment to the Capital Programme as referred to at the last Cabinet meeting (which is being made available for leisure) will be spent on the Oasis.

Councillor David Renard, Leader of the Council, and Councillor Russell Holland (Deputy Leader of the Council, Vice-Chair of Cabinet, and Cabinet Member for Commercialisation, Education and Skills), responded at the meeting.

## **51. Consideration of Cabinet Decisions**

The Committee considered a report introducing decisions arising from the Cabinet meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2021.

### *Item Number 44. Budget Management Update (February)/Draft Budget 2021/22*

Councillors Renard and Holland responded to questions put by Councillors Oliver Donachie and Kevin Small on the following matters:

- The wording of the Minute for Confirmation from Cabinet to Council regarding the Budget and the perceived lack of opportunity this presents to members to discuss any details in depth, though the option for members to pass amendments or proposals to the budget will still be available in the usual manner.
- Whether non-specific savings identified in the report will be achieved and the £1.5m contingency fund will therefore not be used.
- The expected funding gap between what is being used as one-off money to support ongoing expenditure in 2021/2022 that will have to be found again as new in 2022/2023, the details of which will be circulated subsequent to the meeting.
- Whether all political parties represented on the Council had been consulted on the budget proposals.

Resolved – (1) That Minute 44 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.

### *Item Number 45. Capital Programme to 2025/26*

Councillors Renard, Holland and Dale Heenan (Cabinet Member for the Town Centre, Culture and Heritage) responded to questions put by Councillors Oliver Donachie, Jim Grant, Vinay Manro and Kevin Small on the following matters:

- The Council Motion which tasked the Leader to ensure that the lease holder protects the Oasis building from criminal activity and is properly maintained, and the reports that the building is not being maintained and how likely that is to prejudice a future business case.
- The anticipated resolution on the Oasis between GLL and Seven Capital and the options available to the Council should that not prove possible.
- The likelihood of the Oasis continuing to be run as a not for profit amenity within any future business case, and of other GLL-run sites across Swindon not re-opening following the pandemic.
- The option of publically subsidising the Oasis as a budget proposal.
- Which facilities that GLL operate on behalf of the Council are subsidised, the details of which will be circulated subsequent to the meeting.
- The interest repayments on the £5m approved borrowing for leisure facility, expected to be in the region of between £250k and £300k, and how these will be funded either by development or potential revenue.



- How the original plans for Oasis and North Star pre-supposed that development would take place as part of the wider commercial arrangements, with the administration being open-minded to the variation of the original proposals for the North Star site.
- The purpose behind the amendment to the capital programme being to see if the parameters of what is possible can be stretched, and to open up avenues of discussion and focus that may not have been available otherwise. The Committee noted that the amendment does not specifically mention the Oasis because it is anticipated that GLL and Seven Capital will resolve any issues.
- That the figure of £5m has been based on the knowledge of operating costs from when Oasis was under the Council's control, but it is speculation.

Resolved – (1) That Minute 45 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.

*Item Number 46. Treasury management strategy statement 2021/22*

Resolved – That Minute 46 of the Cabinet be noted.

*Item Number 47. Housing Revenue Account (HRA) - Rents and Charges 2021/22*

Councillor Cathy Martyn (Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Safety) gave a brief update on the timetable for the options appraisal process on Milverton and Torrington as follows:

- Consultation with Ward Members on possible options should take place in June or July 2021.
- Design work to support public consultations should be carried out in August and September 2021.
- Public consultations and consultations with residents (subject to any pandemic restrictions) should take place in September and October 2021.
- Scheme proposals should be put forward as part of the HRA budget for 2022/23 from November 2021 onwards.
- The initial options report focussed on the refurbishment of the existing scheme and layout, with preliminary sketches of what new build options could offer. In the light of various recommendations post-Grenfell, it is become increasingly important to revisit that initial work to make sure the best solution for tenants is delivered.

Resolved – That Minute 47 of the Cabinet be noted.

*Item Number 48. Pay Policy Statement: April 2021 (Minute for Confirmation)*

Resolved – That Minute 48 of the Cabinet be noted.

*Item Number 49. Introduction of a Permit Scheme for Roadworks*

Resolved – That Minute 49 of the Cabinet be noted.

*Item Number 50. School Admission Arrangements and Home to School Transport Policies 2022-23*

Resolved – That Minute 50 of the Cabinet be noted.

*Item Number 51. Carbon Reduction Strategy*

Councillor Keith Williams (Cabinet Member for Climate Change) responded to a question put by Councillor Jane Milner-Barry on whether the target of a 68% reduction in emissions for the whole of the UK should still be included as a target in the Council's Strategy, even though its achievement will be subject to receiving funding from Government.

Resolved – That Minute 51 of the Cabinet be noted.

*Item Number 52. Apprenticeships*

Councillor Holland wished to record his thanks for the work done by Councillors Barbara Parry and Kevin Parry in their roles as Chairs of the Children's Health, Social Care and Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Growing the Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee respectively.

Councillor Barbara Parry asked the Cabinet Member to note that she had attended an apprenticeship session that day led by the Borough Council, and it had become apparent that some apprentices felt they would have benefited from more support in terms of a transition from school to a workplace. Councillor Parry suggested that workshops could be introduced to better prepare them.

The Chair thanked officers for the support given to care leavers entering apprenticeships.

Resolved – That Minute 52 of the Cabinet be noted.

*Item Number 53. Proposed Transfer of land for Residential Development Proposal*

Councillor Holland responded to a question put by Councillor Jim Grant on the number of affordable houses included in the development of the former Stratton Education Centre site by The Swindon Housing Development Company Ltd, which has been limited due to the intention to preserve the school building.

Resolved – That Minute 53 of the Cabinet be noted.

**52. Progress towards the Council's Vision, Priorities and Pledges**

Councillor Renard presented to the Committee a report which provided details of the progress being made towards the Council's Vision, Priorities and Pledges.

Councillor Renard introduced the report and highlighted the following points:

- The Vision, Priorities and Pledges were first approved by Council in 2015, and took a view on what the Council should achieve by 2030 in terms of day-to-day services, improving standards, and improving the performance of the Council.

- The Vision, Priorities and Pledges have been through one revision around two years ago, and it is proposed that they be refreshed again in summer / autumn 2021 to review if they need refocussing.

Councillors Renard, Heenan, Holland, Mary Martin (Cabinet Member for Children's Services), Gary Sumner (Cabinet Member for Strategic Infrastructure, Transport & Planning) and Williams responded to questions put by Councillors Junab Ali, Oliver Donachie, Jim Grant, Jenny Jefferies, Jane Milner-Barry, Kevin Small and the Chair on the following matters:

- That the link in the report to the Council Plan on the website shows an out-of-date document, which officers are aware of and plan to update shortly.
- How the rollout of the second tranche of the Emergency Active Travel Fund from Central Government will improve the walking and cycling routes in central Swindon.
- The upgrade works being done with CityFibre and OpenReach to deliver ultrafast broadband in Swindon, and other work being undertaken to cover the 'notspots' in Swindon.
- Plans that are progressing in terms of assuring the future of the Honda site.
- The Government's Honda Task Force, which is still meeting regularly, and the work being done by the five sub-groups under it.
- The detrimental impact of Covid-19 on the leisure industry, and the perceived lack of private sector appetite for investing in leisure destinations at this time.
- The future of the Oasis being a matter for Seven Capital, which has a development agreement and planning approval in place, and it being up to them to come forward with relevant funding as and when the market allows them to do so.
- How GLL currently has the lease for the Oasis and has a responsibility for maintaining it, but that if and when the lease goes back to Seven Capital, Seven will then take on that responsibility.
- The current education outcomes in Swindon (as published by the Department for Education) and the work being done to improve the education and attainment of children within the Borough.
- The report which had incorrectly identified Swindon as having one of the most unhealthy town centres in the country.
- The projects currently being delivered upon such as the housing development in Wichelstowe, the Zurich building being built, and the £400m warehouse distribution centre at Symmetry Park.
- The loss of senior officers at the Council and how this will affect the functioning of the Council going forward, particularly given the ongoing concerns over the impact of Covid-19 on services and staff.
- The recent Ofsted inspection in Children's Services, which focussed specifically on the Council's response to Covid-19 over the last twelve months, and had praised what the Council has done.

Resolved – That the contents of the report be noted.

### **53. Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session - Cabinet Member for Highways, Maintenance and Waste Services**

Councillor Maureen Penny (Cabinet Member for Highways, Maintenance and Waste 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 the strategic direction for the Council's StreetSmart, rubbish collection, and recycling services.
- Set the priorities for the maintenance of the highways network.
- To provide overall political leadership for the Demand Management 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 3: Delivering improvements to the strategic town centre transport network.
- Pledge 5: Enhance Wellington Street as a prime thoroughfare for the town.
- Pledge 13: Find new ways to engage communities and neighbourhoods to increase the cleanliness of their local areas.

The Cabinet Member also has delegated responsibility for:

- Strategic Highways & Maintenance Works.
- Car Parks and Bus Gates.
- Building community capacity.
- Public Transport (including Concessionary Fares, Specialist Transport, Council Transport and Fleet Management).
- Political oversight of Waterside Depot, including Household Waste Recycling Centre.
- Recycling and Refuse Collection – Domestic & Trade.
- Waste Disposal / Waste Minimisation.
- Street Lighting [maintenance and strategic].
- Street Cleaning including removal of graffiti and abandoned vehicles.
- StreetSmart.
- Public Toilets.
- Ground & Tree Maintenance and open spaces.
- Parks (StreetSmart services only).
- Playgrounds, including those that are not presently utilised.
- Maintenance of Roundabouts and non-HRA verges.
- Building Services, cleaning, catering & security services.
- Gullies and drainage, minor road repairs, potholes.
- Repair and Improvements to Council Housing Stock.
- Enforcement.

Councillor Penny introduced her report and highlighted the following points:

- That the portfolio had been recalibrated in May 2020 following the dismantling of the former Communities and Housing Directorate and the introduction of a specific operations function.
- The recalibration separated out the strategic element of the former Communities and Housing Directorate and put responsibility for strategy, operations and performance in different portfolios.
- The Cabinet Member for Organisational Excellence has responsibility for parking charges policy. The Cabinet Member for Climate Change has responsibility for waste strategy. The Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Safety has responsibility for policy and strategy relating to housing matters. The Cabinet Member for Highways, Maintenance and Waste Services now presides over the operational elements of housing, highways, parking and waste.

Councillor Penny responded to questions put by Councillors Matthew Courtliff, Oliver Donachie, Jane Milner-Barry, Kevin Small, Timothy Swinyard, Steve Weisinger and the Chair on the following matters:

- The focus for the new Director of Operations on improving the facilities and working conditions at Waterside, which will include around £150k investment.
- The reasons behind the improvements in performance in highways maintenance, recycling and refuse collections, and repairs and improvements to housing stock, which included:
  - There is more structure around the management of operations.
  - Performance is reviewed on a daily basis.
  - Managers are held to account for their actions, failures are reviewed, lessons are learnt and corrective action is taken.
  - Greater focus on the customer by paying attention to complaints and driving up efficiency.
- The AA report which had incorrectly identified Swindon as one of the worst performing Councils in the country on pothole repairs due to the following matters:
  - The report was about the length of road works that needs to happen in any particular area and the data considered only a snapshot of a couple of years.
  - Investment in the highway network needs to be looked at over a much longer timeframe to get an accurate picture.
  - The data considered were for carriageway major maintenance only and so gave a limited picture of the highways assets that the Council maintains.
  - Over the last few years, the Council has consistently invested more on capital maintenance of highway assets than the capital grant available from Central Government and has prioritised this spend annually through its Local Transport Implementation Plan.
- Confirmation on the percentage rate of pothole repairs within the Borough, the details of which will be circulated subsequent to the meeting.
- The delays to the Mead Way roadworks, which had mainly been caused by the inability of utility companies to go on site due to Covid-19, and the new expected completion date of June 2021.
- An update on the rollout of food waste collection across the Borough which included:
  - That an end to end waste review has been completed.
  - The objective is to fund food waste within current costs incurred.
  - There are two available options that may allow this by collections being done in a different way.
  - The two options will be reviewed, sign off will be sought, and then officers will look to purchase vehicles during the first quarter of 2022.
- That contractors are scheduled to erect new signage at the Mannington roundabout on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021.
- The projected savings required to fund the rollout of food waste collections across the Borough which includes £300k already identified in the 2021/22 budget, as well as a further £800k to £1m that will be found through:
  - A review of the end to end food waste trial.
  - A change to the way some of the recyclates are collected.
  - Public Power Solutions are looking at efficiencies to help in the reduction of costs for waste collection.

- The waste collection review has identified that waste could be collected using less vehicles and people, with efficiencies to be found in kerbside collections.
- A reduction in back office costs.
- A reduction in the costs of some contracts.
- The reasons behind the non-delivery of £222k savings from the waste collection service for 2020/21 due to the way staff had to be organised because of Covid-19 measures, and the twenty to thirty smaller projects that were not delivered also as a result of Covid-19.
- Confirmation on when Whitehill Way in west Swindon is due for resurface and repair work, the details of which will be circulated subsequent to the meeting.
- A portion of the new highway asset management system has gone live following funding being received from the Local Enterprise Partnership. The new system will significantly improve the management of highways data, highway inspections, works ordering and workforce operations.
- The impact of the closure of the local tarmac plant in Swindon on the ability of the Council to repair potholes.
- How the rollout of the food waste collection across the Borough should improve the Council's recycling rate by up to at least 50%, with the remaining 10% being found through changes to what the public can recycle, with the expected 60% target being hit by 2030.
- The reasons for Akcess dial-a-ride vehicles being parked on the public highway, the details of which will be circulated subsequent to the meeting.

Resolved – (1) That Councillor Penny 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.

#### **54. Work Programme 2020/2021**

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

The Chair referred to the scope for a Task Group on the Oasis closure and potential reopening that was included at Appendix 1 to the report, and requested that members consider its addition to the Work Programme for the current Municipal Year. Following a vote, the Task Group was added to the Work Programme for the 2020/2021 Municipal Year.

#### **55. 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, 28 JANUARY 2021

PRESENT:- Councillors Roger Smith (Chair), Alan Bishop, Malcolm Davies, Steph Exell, Jenny Jefferies (Vice-Chair), Roger Smith (Chair), Robert Wright, Alan Bishop, Steve Heyes and Paul Dixon and Rosemary Curtis (Homeless Organisations Standing Together in Swindon), Gifty Tawiah (Equality Advisory Group), Olawumi Ibitoye (BAME) and Vanessa Scott (Healthwatch).

Also present: Councillor Brian Ford, Cabinet Member for Adults and Health attended the meeting regarding Minute 20.

Councillor Cathy Martyn, Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Safety.

Councillors Junab Ali and Abdul Amin attended the meeting regarding Minute 19.

An apology for absence was received from Phil Matthews (Tenant Scrutiny Panel).

### **16. 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 Paul Dixon made a personal and non-prejudicial declaration of interest, as his wife is the Chief Executive of Swindon Advocacy Movement and that he delivers activity packs on their behalf.

### **17. Public Question Time**

In accordance with Standing Order 28, Mr Roy Warman, Swindon resident, submitted written questions regarding an aspect of Covid-19.

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 a supplementary question relating to the response he received on local and national support services available. The Corporate Director of Adult Services, Health & Housing responded at the meeting and referred to the work being undertaken with all communities to reduce the number of transmission cases. She advised that this work has been ongoing since the summer and discussions with community leaders in hotspot areas were being undertaken.

### **18. Minutes**

Resolved - That the minutes of the meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2020 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

### **19. The Impact of the Covid-19 on Ethnic Minority Communities in Swindon**

The Head of Elections and Democracy submitted a report inviting the Committee to determine how it wishes to proceed with the request from two Members to consider the

impact of Covid-19 on members of the Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Communities in the Borough. The Committee heard from Councillors Abdul Amin and Junab Ali who explained how BAME communities were adversely affected during the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic and continued to be affected through the current phase. They advised that this was both a local and national issue. They raised concerns about the lack of engagement by the BAME community in receiving the Covid-19 vaccine. They also referred to the differences in engagement by different groups. They added that healthy collaboration, commissioning with health agencies, service providers and practitioners will improve services to the community.

The Director of Public Health thanked Councillors Amin and Ali for their report and advised the Committee how it highlighted Covid-19 issues at both local and national levels. He explained that Swindon's community was made up predominately of White/ White Other/ Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups, with fifteen percent identifying as BAME. The Committee noted the targeted work undertaken focusing support on the BAME community, resulting in a decrease in percentage within these communities effected by Covid-19 since summer. The Director of Public Health referred to one of the testing sites that was located in SN1 and this was aimed to help the BAME community in those areas. He commented on the department's engagement to ensure that messages and communications were cascaded across all groups and how this was aided by the BAME Communities Reference Group.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Director of Public Health referred to the number of groups already set up, together with the Covid-19 and Equality Cabinet Member Advisory Groups that focus their work on points raised within the report. The Committee discussed the matter and agreed that a task group be set up.

Resolved – (1) That a start and finish task group regarding the impact of Covid-19 on the BAME community in Swindon be set up.

(2) That further to (1) above, officers be requested to provide a report to Members setting out the Council's role and options in detail.

## **20. Performance for Adult Social Care Commissioning (ASCC)**

Councillor Brian Ford, the Cabinet Member for Adults and Health, presented a report that provided an update on performance and key issues relating to Adult Social Care commissioning. The Corporate Director of Adult Services, Health & Housing introduced the report and explained that it had been structured to highlight the strengths and challenges of the work undertaken. The following key issues were drawn to members' attention:

- The on-going financial pressures on Adult Social Care.
- The implementation of the Covid-19 recovery plan to manage its impact.
- How the Learning Disability Services continues to align spend with spend in similar authorities through service re-design and strength based assessments and reviews.
- The publication of the 2019/20 Safeguarding Annual Report.
- The timely assessment and review of carers.
- How since March 2020, Live Well Swindon has been focussing on Community Resilience to manage the impact of COVID on local residents.
- That the reablement service continues to support people to live independently.



- How, when it was necessary for people to be placed in a Care Home or Extra Care Housing, Swindon Borough Council endeavoured to have them placed near family and friends.
- The ongoing focus to drive quality improvements across care homes in Swindon and continuing collaboration with the Care Quality Commission to ensure high standards.
- The essential contribution made by voluntary sector providers.
- The high satisfaction rate within Adult Social Care provision and how it continues to resolve complaints at an early stage and uses them positively to change processes or practice where appropriate.
- The significant focus since March in supporting Great Western Hospital and the National Health Service in their work to help prevent hospital admissions and assist with transfer of care on discharge when necessary.

Following the introduction of the report, the Cabinet Member for Adults and Health, together with the Corporate Director Adult Services, Health and Housing, the Director of Public Health and the Chief Executive, Great Western Hospital (GWH), responded to member's questions and comments on the following issues:

- The current recruitment challenges in both Adult's and Children's Services for qualified social workers has resulted in the launch of a new national recruitment campaign.
- The recruitment of the general social care workforce, particularly homecare and domiciliary care had been more successful.
- Recruitment at GWH was currently not a pressing issue as some staff were recruited from overseas. However, challenges faced by GWH included staff reduction due to self-isolating and shielding.
- Staff management at Great Western Hospital and how the hospital was utilising staff returning to work, student nurses and trainee doctors.
- How the Committee could benefit from Adult Social Care information being presented as an overarching picture, utilising a flow chart format.
- The period between doctor's referral and assessment by a social worker was dependent on the needs of the patient.
- How obesity poses a significant challenge for the health care system as it is a complex problem with numerous interconnections and elements.
- The effective impact of the weight management programme aimed at tackling obesity.
- The impact of high density housing resulting in limited green spaces for promoting healthy exercise and living.
- The number of patients with learning difficulties awaiting an assessment and how an improvement plan has been set up. The Committee heard that continuous dialogue is undertaken with patients.
- How contracts with the voluntary sector organisations ensure their engagement with the BAME community and that ethnicity recording was undertaken as part of this work.
- Diversity impact assessments are undertaken on services provided and this will be reflected in future reports.
- How national guidance is followed with regards to the standard of masks and personal protection equipment being used.

Resolved – That the report updating the Committee on performance and key issues relating to Adult Social Care Commissioning and performance, be noted.

## **21. Great Western Hospital NHS Foundation Trust Update**

Mr Kevin McNamara, Chief Executive at Great Western Hospital (GWH) NHS Foundation Trust, submitted a report providing the Committee with a performance update and a summary of the following key issues in relation to the planning and provision of health and social care services provided by the hospital:

- Dealing with the current patient backlog. The Trust is dealing with COVID-19 patients and also a high level of non-COVID patient care.
- Actions taken following the declaration of a critical incident. Staff undertook patient discharge assessments to improve bed availability and improve patient through-flow.
- There are eight areas within GWH where Covid-19 patients were being cared for.
- The re-deployment of staff between departments to improve services.
- Actions being taken to eliminate the risk of hospital acquired infections.
- The dedication of staff, particularly when under pressure.
- The launch and roll-out of the vaccination programme.
- Key strategic site developments included the development of the urgent treatment centre, the radiography centre, updating the oxygen infrastructure, the expansion of the emergency department and the development of an integrated front door service.

Following his introduction of the report, Mr McNamara responded to Members' questions and comments on the following issues:

- How, currently, due to various external factors, it was unclear on when the backlog of postponed operations would be cleared.
- Future provision of some services to be relocated within the community, particularly those that were not required to be located at GWH. It would be more beneficial to patients if some services were more community based. An example being sexual health.
- The £50m investment for a new urgent treatment centre that will be built this year.
- The need to free up space within GWH as space is limited due to the impact of social distancing.
- Discussions were undertaken to ensure accessibility to community services by those patients living on the M4 corridor and North Wiltshire.
- The business case highlighting the need to increase the number of bed spaces at GWH
- Services to be provided by the walk-in centre, the new urgent treatment centre and extended emergency department.
- How GWH was preparing to address the impact of long Covid.
- How GWH had yet to secure the necessary land for expansion and discussions were being held to build a robust business case for its acquisition.
- The recruitment of an equality and diversity officer.

- The equality work being undertaken to ensure all equality characteristics were being included in service provision and that future reports will reflect points raised by diversity impact assessments.
- The need to ensure the BAME community actively uptake the Covid-19 vaccine.
- The survey being conducted by Healthwatch to address vaccine hesitancy.
- The smooth running of the Covid-19 vaccine rollout in Swindon and how this would be dependent on the continued timely delivery of vaccines.
- Methods used by the community to contact GWH regarding booking a Covid-19 vaccine.

Resolved – (1) That the report providing the Committee with a performance update of the key issues in relation to the planning and provision of health and social care services provided by the hospital, be noted.

(2) That the Healthwatch Manager be requested to circulate information regarding the survey being undertaken regarding vaccine hesitancy.

(3) That further to (2) above, the Committee be requested to contact the Healthwatch Manager if there were any particular groups they thought Healthwatch should focus on.

## **22. Work Programme 2020/21**

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.

Resolved - 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 to include:

- a) That a) the Obesity report; b) the Prevent Duty and c) needle exchange reports be presented during the next Municipal year.
- b) That the BaNES, Swindon and Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group be requested to submit one report encompassing information on a) the promotion of self-care and self-selection of alternative services and b) an update on the number of current vacancies in Primary Care.

## **23. Status of Requests for Action and / or Information**

Update on actions.

This page is intentionally left blank

**COMMUNITIES AND PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**WEDNESDAY, 27 JANUARY 2021**

PRESENT:- Councillors Matthew Courtliff (in the Chair); Steve Allsopp, Jim Grant, Steve Heyes, Janine Howarth, Jenny Jefferies, Vinay Manro and Caryl Sydney-Smith

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Vera Tomlinson.

**14. 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.

**15. Minutes**

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2020, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**16. Public Question Time**

Mr Roy Worman submitted public questions regarding (a) the financing of the Council's LED replacement programme, and (b) the Council's solar farms. Written responses were tabled at the meeting.

Mr Worman asked supplemental questions regarding (a) savings arising from the LED replacement programme, (b) benefits arising from the LED replacement programme. The Chair responded at the meeting.

**17. LED Street Lighting Installation**

The Council's Head of Strategic Transport and Infrastructure, and NEV Programme Lead submitted a report setting out progress of the Council's LED Street Lighting installation programme that will help reduce the Council's carbon footprint and achieve significant savings in electricity consumption.

The Cabinet Member for Highways, Maintenance and Waste Services and Director of Operations, Chief Operating Officer and Head of Strategic Transport and Infrastructure, and NEV Programme Lead introduced the report and responded to Members' questions and comments in respect of:

- Progress made to date in the LED Street Lighting installation programme.
- The anticipated savings, both financial and environmental, arising from the programme.
- The ability to vary lighting levels in different areas of the Borough and to turn individual lights off following completion of the project.
- The ability of the system to control when lights were turned on and off and to reduce the current 1% of lights operating outside of programmed times and to highlight centrally when lights needed replacement in real time.
- The savings that would accrue from the need to replace light bulbs less frequently due the longer life of the replacement bulbs.

- The on-going installation programme and issues highlighted by it, such as the need for some replacement columns.
- How unadopted roads might be upgraded as they did not currently fall within the replacement programme. It was noted that these could be added to the programme once the road infrastructure was brought to the appropriate standard for adoption.
- Following the completion of the project lighting in unadopted roads could be fitted with nodes to allow an upgrade following a roads adoption but that it wouldn't form part of the current contract.
- The installation and maintenance of street lighting in unadopted roads by the developer; it would be anticipated that street lighting would form part of any adoption package subject to them meeting transport requirement standards.

Resolved – (1) That the report and progress of the LED Street Lighting programme be noted.

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

## **18. Solar Update**

The Council's Energy and Climate Change Manager submitted a report setting out progress of the Council's progress and performance of our solar schemes that generate clean, green energy within the Borough.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Energy and Climate Change Manager introduced the report and responded to Members' questions and comments in respect of:

- The three solar farms under the Borough's ownership as well as the Wroughton Airfield solar farm.
- The 12 Megawatt capacity of the Council's three solar farms which produced approximately three times the energy of a typical coal power station (although the solar farms peaked in spring and summer).
- During the day the Council's solar farms could power 60,000 of 90,000 homes within the Borough.
- The use of energy generated by the Council's solar farms at the Barnfield site, this would increase as the Council increasingly moved to an electric fleet of vehicles.
- The financial benefit of using the electricity generated by solar farms whilst also receiving a feed-in tariff for the energy generation, this would increase as vehicles replaced those using fossil fuels.
- The progress of the solar farms financially and technically against their original business plans with an anticipated lifespan of twenty-five to thirty years, at which time depending on technical advances and a business plan they might be replaced.
- Reductions in Feed-in Tariffs and the effect this had on the cost recovery of fitting new solar panels and number of years you can claim the payment. It was noted that to some degree this was reflective of the reduction in installation costs.
- New electric car chargers that could identify when it was cheaper to use solar energy or that from the grid when accounting for feed-in tariffs. This technology and battery storage was being examined by the Council for future use, both commercially, and for residential use.

- The capacity of the current electric grid system given increasingly efficient appliances and smart technology for energy use at periods of low demand.
- The potential for alternative usage for and/or recycling of large vehicle batteries in the future.
- The private investment in battery technology at waterside.
- Future investment models for the installation, generation and storage of solar power.

Resolved – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and officers be thanked for their attendance and presentation.

## **19. Work Programme**

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 Committee received an update on the current status of the Council's Cycling Strategy (Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan) which had been scheduled to be considered at the meeting. The draft document was undergoing amendment. It was anticipated that it would be available for consideration by the Committee early in the new Municipal Year.

The Chair reported that there had been further meetings of the Parking Grass Verges Task Group. The Chair confirmed that the Task Group would endeavour to conclude its work during the current Municipal Year.

Resolved – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That items concerning (i) Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, (ii) Carbon Reduction Strategy, and (iii) the adoption of unadopted roads be added for consideration in the 2021/22 Work Programme.

This page is intentionally left blank



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

**THURSDAY, 25 FEBRUARY 2021**

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

Bethan (Young Person Representative) Paul Dobson (Project Manager STEP), Jo Osorio (Healthwatch Swindon), Alison Paul (Swindon Association of Special School Headteachers) Jacqui Watt (Swindon SEND families Voice)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Matthew Courtliff and Oladapo Ibitoye and Vanessa Scott (Healthwatch Swindon).

**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 and non-prejudicial declaration of interest as she worked for Kingsdown School.

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.

**22. Public Question Time**

No public questions were received during the meeting.

**23. Minutes**

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**24. Children's Health, Social Care and Early Help Quarter 3 Performance report**

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 3 of the current Municipal Year.

The Interim Director of Children's Social Work introduced the report and responded to Members' challenge, questions and comments in respect of:

- Areas of strength and areas for further improvement and the areas of performance where Swindon is compared with other Local Authorities and how that information is used by the Council and external bodies such as the Department for Education and Ofsted.

- Key headlines relating to the Children's Services Early Help and Social Care Service which continued to provide help to families throughout the pandemic period at a higher rate than previously through the Early Help Hub and that a parenting hub had been established in Swindon for pre-birth to 16 years parenting support.
- Support also included the introduction of evidence based parenting programmes in Swindon.
- There had been an increase in the number of new mothers experiencing anxiety issues during the pandemic who were being helped by Health Visitors.
- The MASH continued to experience a higher level of demand between October and December 2020 with 4199 contacts received between October and December 2021 compared with 3595 in the same quarter in the previous year which is a 16.8% increase. Many of these families were supported through the Early Help Hub, although there had been an increase in Social Work Assessment referrals and completed assessments but a reduction in repeat referrals to the service.
- There had been a slight increase in the number of Child Protection Plans and management and performance of this team had remained strong.
- The recruitment and retention of Social Workers remained a challenge and work continued to reduce the Council's dependence on locum Social Workers.
- The percentage of children in care in Swindon had reduced which was slightly below national average and statistical neighbours.
- There were currently 16 unaccompanied asylum seeking young people in the Council's care.
- Key performance indicators in respect of Children in Care and Care Leavers continued to improve, apart from long-term placement stability (short-term placements were improving).
- Dental checks were a challenge in the context of COVID-19. The Children looked after health team is persistent in arranging dental checks for children and young people, but performance has been impacted in relation to 12 month check-ups due to the availability of dentists.
- Support for Care Leavers was also strong with 60% of Care Leavers were in Education, Employment, or Training at the end of December 2020 and 88% of Swindon's Care Leavers were in suitable accommodation at the end of December 2020 which were both above the national average.
- The introduction of the Independent Living Programme and embedding of the Care Leavers Panel has led to the cohort being tracked to support improvements in timely and assisting in effective planning.
- The Welfare Education Service was supporting more children who were receiving elective home education which was reflective of the national trend.
- There had been a reduction in the number of children tracked as missing education. This reduction was due to a review of all long-term cases. A dedicated officer and a new automated reporting system has been embedded. Cases were reviewed weekly and appropriate actions taken.
- Progress on the Written Statement Action Plan was progressing with an increase in the number of children requiring an Education Health and Care Plan.
- The lack of availability of dentists for Children Looked After was a significant issue; as was it to the wider public although there were tentative signs of

more dentists reopening.

- Reasons, including the challenging nature of the work, for the local and national shortage of Social Workers which made it harder to recruit and retain them and work to improve this situation.
- Benefits for Social Workers employed by the Council as opposed to undertaking agency work.
- Healthy Child Programme visits had been through telephone contact, virtual meetings and physical visits (the number of which were increasing).
- That over 80% of Social Workers with direct contact with families had received their first round of vaccinations for Covid-19 and there had also been a good take up of vaccinations by carers and foster carers in Swindon.
- There had been a constant supply of PPE equipment for Council employees and this was allocated where it was needed following a risk assessment.
- Support for families in order to get their children with SEND back into school education from home education.

That the key performance messages in relation to the performance data position at the end of December 2020 and activity during quarter 3 for Children's Early Help and Social Care services be noted.

(2) That it be noted that the Quality Assurance, Performance and Improvement Board continues to have oversight of all key performance measures within children services and raises key lines of enquiry based on the triangulation of performance data, contextual factors including COVID 19 and routine quality assurance processes. In addition it be noted that this service uses external audits and reviews as part of its quality assurance work where there are benefits from an external view and insight to support key lines of enquiry and audit work.

## **25. Children's Social Care Progress on Improvement against the Pillar Plan**

The Interim Director of Children's Social Work submitted a report setting out an update in relation to progress made against the priorities of the Service's Pillar Plan and the recommendations from the Ofsted ILACS inspection in July 2019 are referenced and included in the pillar plan progress updates.

The Interim Director of Children's Social Work introduced the report and responded to Members' challenge, questions and comments in respect of:

- That the Pillar Plan was developed to assist the service in its improvement journey from 2018 to 2020 and had been largely successful.
- The four key areas of the Pillar Plan, Quality of Practice of social work with children and families to achieve greater consistency, Children Looked After and Care Leavers including child placement sufficiency, Recruitment and Retention and Information Technology.
- Work to reduce dependency on agency social workers and the integration of a new children's computer system. This should help to avoid unnecessary changes in Social Workers looking after Children Looked After.
- The embedding of a quality assurance framework to raise the standard of quality and practice which had been confirmed through audits although additional work was on-going.
- Specific improvement plan in place for Children Looked After and Care Leavers and this was monitored through the Children Looked After and Care

Leavers Board.

- Improvements to the Corporate Parenting Board. The Cabinet Member, who chairs the Board increased Councillor Membership to ensure resilience and promote meaningful Corporate Parenting.
- The recruitment of Foster Carers which had shown strong interest during the pandemic which should enable more children to be placed with Swindon foster carers.

Resolved – That the progress made against the Pillar Plan improvements, including the actions identified by Ofsted during the ILACS inspection in July 2019 be noted.

## **26. Outcomes of the Ofsted Inspection Focused Visit December 2020**

The Interim Director of Children's Social Work submitted a report setting out the Focused Visit by Ofsted in December 2020, the findings of which were published by Ofsted on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2021.

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

- Focused Visits are part of Ofsted's framework of Inspections of Local Authority Children's Services and are carried out to evaluate an aspect of a service, a theme or the experiences of a cohort of children.
- Focused Visits are undertaken in-between standard and short Inspections of Local Authority Children's Services inspections. They visits are not graded, but their findings could influence the frequency of further inspections, and a poor outcome would negatively impact on the Council's reputation.
- Interim inspection arrangements, from September 2020 were intended to evaluate and provide assurance that vulnerable children are getting the help, care and protection that they need, amid concerns that some may have fallen out of sight during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The inspection was originally intended to commence on 2<sup>nd</sup> November but was suspended due to the second national lockdown and took place from 8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> December 2020 and was undertaken remotely.
- Requested information was sent to Ofsted in advance of the visit, which included child level data, performance reports, our Self-Assessment, examples of quality assurance activity undertaken and relevant policy documents.
- There were 5 Her Majesty's Inspectors who gathered evidence over the 3 days of the visit by meeting with Social Workers, Foster Carers and Councillors remotely.
- Ofsted concluded "The local authority has maintained the effectiveness of its front door services, despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the introduction of a new electronic casework system and a rise in referrals over the recent weeks. Decision-making is timely and appropriate actions are taken to protect vulnerable children. Management oversight and the rationale for decision-making is well recorded. Thresholds for statutory action are appropriately applied, with managers and social workers demonstrating a clear understanding of risk."
- Ofsted also commented favourably on a number of areas and these were set out in paragraph 3.11 of the report and areas identified for development and improvement together with responses were set out in the report.

- That the success set out in the Ofsted letter was very positive.
- The multi-agency Child Exploitation work was expected to move forward at the start of April 2021 and would be reported to the Committee at the appropriate time.
- The removal of acronyms from letters sent to parents in order to make them easier to understand.
- Work with children and young people to mitigate any adverse issues arising from the changing of Social Workers overseeing their cases and to inform the young person of what was happening. This also included work to transfer caseloads when social workers left the employment of the Council.
- Risks to future budgetary spend should the Council not be able to reduce its use of agency social workers and work to diversify the workforce and enhance business support work of Locality Safeguarding Teams to support the work of qualified Social Workers and allow them to focus on the high quality work with children.

Resolved – That the contents of the report, and the appended Ofsted letter, be noted.

**27. Inclusion and Achievement Position Report: Assessments and Examinations, Response to Covid-19, meeting the needs of BAME pupils and well-being of children and young people in school**

The Director of Inclusion and Achievement submitted a report setting out the update on the impact of Covid-19 on school attendance and opening including arrangements for children who meet the criteria set out by the DfE as “vulnerable”.

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

- The impact of Covid-19 on school attendance and opening arrangements with particular reference of those children with Special Education Needs or from black and minority ethnic communities.
- The current position relating to assessment and examination arrangements for 2020/2021. Also learning and catch-up arrangements and emotional and mental health support for young people.
- Work was on-going to support schools fully reopening from 8<sup>th</sup> March in line with Government guidelines which was being received on a daily basis. All schools in Swindon were preparing for reopening although there were a number of logistical arrangements for secondary schools, including testing arrangements.
- Different arrangements have been needed following each of the three lock-down periods.
- Until young people are back in school it will be difficult to properly assess the impact on their learning and emotional and social wellbeing.
- Staff were identifying risks and impacts as they come to light such as; the impact on services would affect families, a decrease in the number of funded places and representations on the financial impact of this were being made to the DfE (funding is based on the number of children in settings and retrospectively adjusted). Early years providers had been consulted on the projected budget deficit.
- There is a sense from early years that listening skills have reduced and that

speech and language problems are being identified later than if those young people had been in a setting. A survey had been completed with early years providers and 57% of the responders supported this view.

- Work was on-going to identify activities to support young people as early as possible around speech, language and communication.
- Young people with SEND post-16 and post-19 have had a disruptive year and haven't been able to undertake their work placements and a number of requests for repeat years are being made this has both an impact on the young people involved and financially.
- There had been a significant increase in the number of referrals to Early Help and help offered through the family service although the full impact on children and their families was still unknown.
- MIND had conducted national research that indicates that in 2020 1 in 9 children are experiencing difficulties with their emotional and mental health and in 2021 they are estimating it to be 1 in 6 children.
- Some of the impacts on children were not attending school, being isolated, being covid positive, stress from remote learning, missing learning or not receiving help needed, loss of routine, not seeing friends, not being able to take assessments or exams they have worked for, worrying about their future, relationships with parents, concerns with re-engaging with schools and safety. During the pandemic work had been on-going to mitigate these issues as far as possible, identifying themes and building structures.
- Four themes identified to focus on; Our children in education, Our children achieving and learning the right skills, All services inclusive and Our children, staff and families being well.
- The structures set up during the pandemic to offers help and assistance to young people and their families with a group overseeing each theme and under the inclusion theme have worked under a written statement of action.
- The work of the Children in Education and Including Children in Education Action Groups who monitored children in education, including vulnerable children, through DfE returns (this included work with schools to check for authorised absences) and also risk assessed vulnerable children (under the DfE definition).
- The monitoring of children access remote learning and whether schools felt children were benefiting from this. If schools felt remote learning wasn't being access a schools place would be offered following a risk assessment by the school and a quality check by the Council.
- The monitoring of outbreaks of Covid-19 allowed measures to be put in place to tailor and vary the size of isolation bubbles for young people.
- Actions to support learning included the distribution of over 700 laptops (all Looked After Children had a laptop), ensuring those children with Child Protection Orders had laptops, work with schools to order laptops and ensuring children were able to use their laptops (including having connectivity).
- Work with schools on the blended offer and use of virtual lessons and remote learning offer and the cording of webinars to support teachers.
- Wellbeing support for schools that would be provided into the New Year.
- All children with Special Educational Needs have been risk assessed to support outcomes and ensuring schools are making their best endeavours as part of education, health and care plan. Those children on part-time education through their education, health and care plan continue to be

monitored.

- Support for Children Looked After and Foster Carers including additional screening tools, additional support and personal education plan virtual meetings.
- Work to ensure the families of children eligible for free school meals and in need identified by schools received food vouchers.
- Further work on the effect of Covid-19 and educational responses was needed to identify the impact on BAME children.
- Pressures on the CAMHS and TAMHS services and the effect on waiting times.
- Element of new working practices that might be retained to improve the future educational offer and to support young people.
- The monitoring of authorised absences and reasons for Children Looked After who had missed schooling.

Resolved - That the report be noted.

## **28.**

### **Apprenticeships**

The Head of Skills and Education Partnerships submitted a report outline the role that Apprenticeships play in the Inclusion Early Years, Education and Skills Strategy to provide an alternative pathway to skills, qualifications and career progression for Employers and our residents.

The Head of Skills and Education Partnerships introduced the report and responded to Members' challenge, questions and comments in respect of:

- The report provides an overview of the work overseen by the Growing the Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee and had been presented to Cabinet on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2021.
- The identification of the key challenges to Apprenticeship Growth Key role that Apprenticeships play to provide skills for the businesses and careers route for residents through employment.
- The five year apprenticeship target 2015 – 2020 had not been met locally or nationally. Locally 73% of the target was achieved and nationally it was 70%.
- National changes that had led to the creation of apprenticeships stalling across the country.
- The report provides an overview of the work overseen by the Growing the Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- Identification of the key challenges to Apprenticeship Growth
- Key role that Apprenticeships play to provide skills for the businesses and to take on new recruits to train and careers route for residents through employment and to gain qualifications relevant to a particular area of work.
- The creation of a Swindon Employer Ambassador Network and an Action Plan, and in engaging employers in working together to support business.
- That the Inclusion, Early Years, Education and Skills Strategy provides an alternative pathway to skills, qualifications and career progression for employers and our residents.
- The Action Plan encompassed Pledge 9 of the Council's visions and priorities to increase the number of people starting apprenticeships This was a strategic role to champion the needs of employers and residents and work

with key stakeholders to maximise opportunities to increase Apprenticeships in the area.

- The second part of the Action Plan recognised the role of the Council as an employer. The Public Sector Apprenticeships Target was introduced in 2017 with a requirement to employ an average of at least 2.3% of staff as apprentices as new recruits or as part of career development of existing staff. This year the Council had 77 apprentices (2.5%) and it was hoped this would increase and include vulnerable young people.
- Objectives of the Action Plan included; enabling all businesses, and in particular small business, to access the expertise and resources to navigate the apprenticeship landscape and its complexities; and increasing awareness of apprenticeships as a pathway to careers, new skills, upskilling and reskilling (for employers and young people/residents) through working with schools.
- The creation of apprenticeships stories on the Council's Local Offer website, and question and answer sessions for Year 11-13 students and parents as part of the National Apprenticeship Week.
- The Apprenticeship Ambassador Network now well established and six employers agreed to be mentors for small businesses clinics for small businesses.
- The Council had worked with the SWLEP and Wiltshire Council with a Marketing Campaign. This resulted in a higher profile of apprenticeships during the week.
- Four Young Apprentice Ambassadors (this was originally targeted for June 21) to work with schools and young people to set out opportunities available.
- The establishment of a working group with providers to develop easy-guides to help simplify and enable easier navigation of the apprenticeship landscape
- The Institute of Technology website was in place and offer published for September 2021 with half the courses encompassing apprenticeships and routes to higher education.
- Work to improve labour market information and an outline of current market data and areas offering employment opportunities.

**Resolved** – (1) That the recommendations in the report including that apprenticeships specifically and vocational and technical pathways more broadly are firmly positioned in the Inclusion, Early Years, Education and Skills Strategy as a clear alternative to academic pathways to enable young people and residents to gain the skills and qualifications to achieve their potential in education, employment and training be noted.

(2) That the continuation of work with the Growing the Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee to support and challenge the progress made to achieve the priority activity to increase the (attached at Appendix One) be supported.

(3) That it be noted that Cabinet acknowledged the progress that has been made by the work of the Growing the Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee, led by Councillors Kevin and Barbara Parry and thanked them for their significant contribution.

## **29.**

### **Work Programme 2020/21**

The Committee considered (a) a report by the Chief Legal Officer on the proposed work programme for the Municipal Year, 2020/21, and (b) the comments Bethan



(Young Person) and Paul Dobson (Project Manager STEP) in respect young people's representation and participation in the work of the Committee.

Resolved – (1) That Bethan (Young Person) and Paul Dobson (Project Manager STEP) be thanked for their attendance and participation in the meeting.

(2) That the Committee's work programme be approved.

This page is intentionally left blank

**GROWING THE ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**WEDNESDAY, 10 FEBRUARY 2021**

PRESENT:- Councillors Kevin Parry (Chair), Junab Ali, Abdul Amin, Nick Burns-Howell, Mark Dempsey, Jenny Jefferies, Roger Smith and Timothy Swinyard.

**16. 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 7 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.

**17. Public Question Time**

Mr Roy Worman asked a public question regarding using the principle “building what people want” for future developments. The Chair responded at the meeting.

**18. Minutes**

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2020, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**19. Town Centre Masterplanning**

The Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Strategic Infrastructure, Transport & Planning, and Cabinet Member for the Town Centre, Culture and Heritage and the Director of Economy, Growth and Place and Director of Strategic Development submitted a joint report on work to date by Swindon Borough Council officers in engaging with property owners and business on planning and other interventions to support the regeneration of Swindon Town Centre.

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 value of town centre workshops between Members, officers and businesses in understanding what businesses, landowners and developers require for the town centre and how the Council can add value.
- The positive reaction from developers and landowners in respect of schemes coming forward for the town centre and the need for the Council to engage with more positive messaging in respect of those schemes.
- The workshop attendees had shown interest in investing in the town centre.

- The focus on culture and how the public and private sectors could work together to develop this was welcomed.
- The repurposing of the retail core to increase the flexibility of usage. This would include providing a greater steer on development form and a push for quality.
- The need to invest in the evening economy and the food and beverage sector.
- Whilst there was a need for retail there was also an opportunity to create more residential opportunity in the traditional town centre area.
- The creation of a flagship office area, encompassing the cultural quarter, tri centre Zurich development Kimmerfields, Bus Boulevard and Sheppard Street underpass.
- This would utilise the Kimmerfields area attract businesses from the London and the south-east area to a clean and safe location.
- There was a need to work with private land owners to create a vision and co-ordinate development of the Fleet Street/Bridge Street area.
- When looking at residential properties in the town centre area it was important to consider a mix of quality homes for people who chose the town centre as a lifestyle choice.
- The showcasing of existing and forthcoming schemes within the town centre to show the viability of the town centre moving forward.
- Work with potential developers, including workshops, following the development of infrastructure to support future schemes.
- The use of feedback and information from workshops to help shape the future sustainable development of the town centre.
- Work to enable developers to liaise with landowners in the town centre area to enable potential developments.
- The potential for smaller businesses to establish themselves in the town centre.
- The increased promotion of Swindon on-line both as a Council and in liaison with partners.
- The re-purposing of the town centre to reflect the national downturn in retail outlets; this situation had been accelerated due to the pandemic and as shopping habits change.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

## **20. Business Retention and Expansion and Inward Investment Update**

The Business and Economy Manager, Growth and Regeneration submitted a report updating the Committee in respect of the current status, recent progress and next steps for the Council's Business Retention and Expansion and Inward Investment services, with a particular focus on business grants, TechSwindon, the ESIF Inward Investment programme and Switch On To Swindon.

The Business and Economy Manager, Growth and Regeneration highlighted the following issues as part of their presentation and members' scrutiny:

- The majority of work in the past twelve months had been based around business retention and managing the Coronavirus business grant schemes since March 2020. This included interpreting the Government guidance and

rules; designing a scheme and working with Finance, Audit and Programme Management to create and application and checking process, then physically checking the applications and responding to several hundred email enquiries and complaints each week.

- Support work for Coronavirus business grant schemes had been progressing well with around 100 applications being processed daily with backdating grant payments to 2<sup>nd</sup> December following a change in tier level.
- The delivery of the inaugural Tech Swindon campaign in 2020 highlighting the technology sector in the town and those businesses relying on technology to operate which was a strong and growing sector.
- The Tech Swindon summit week in November 2020 which comprised of around 30 events with presenters from a range of organisations such as the British Computer Society BT; Intel; Catalent; Tech Nation and UK Research and Innovation. This was attended by many entrepreneurs and small businesses across Swindon.
- The events had excellent on-line coverage through social media creating over 900,000 social media impressions, approximately half of which were overseas, and had received excellent feedback from companies attending.
- These events promoted Swindon as an ideal tech location for businesses and to support existing micro-start-up companies grow, develop and innovate.
- Work on bids for European Structural Investment Funds in partnership with Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership and Wiltshire Council to fund inward investment activity which would continue for another 18 months.
- The £600,000 project aims to support and attract SMEs from outside Europe to invest and settle in Swindon and Wiltshire. This focused work was currently undertaken through Artificial Intelligence tools and on-line meetings.
- There were still inward investment enquiries, despite COVID and the team responded to these whilst building an understanding of the requirements of interested companies and to identify potential sites.
- The Switch On To Swindon network of Ambassadors and brand were created in 2017 to harness local energy and communication reach to promote the town and now had 800 ambassadors.
- The priorities of companies seeking to move to Swindon, including the available of a skilled workforce, which given the current situation with Honda could be provided.
- The development of the Institute of Technology was also proving to be beneficial.
- The ability to match companies with appropriate facilities, infrastructure and sites was also very important.
- Overseas investors were also looking for a business supportive Local Authority and Government and the United Kingdom has for a number of years been seen as an easy place to set up and operate a business.
- The tangible metrics showing the positive effect of the work being undertaken to support and attract business to the town and in creating employment and how this would be recorded moving forward.
- How the Council could be reactive to encourage and support local companies to expand production/products quickly to meet either local or national needs.
- The increased use of IT and virtual technology to promote Swindon.

Resolved - (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That it be noted that COVID-19 has required a heavy emphasis on the 'Business Retention' part of the service, and plans for future activity, assuming the team has

some time away from business grants also be noted.

## **21. Honda & Supply Chain Coordinating Steering Group Update**

The Business and Economy Manager, Growth and Regeneration updating Members on the recent Honda the Supply Chain Coordinating Steering Group and Task Groups' activity and plans for the imminent future.

The Leader of the Council and Business and Economy Manager, Growth and Regeneration highlighted the following issues as part of their presentation and members' scrutiny:

- A forthcoming meeting of the main task group, chaired by the Secretary of State for business, scheduled to be held on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021.
- Support currently being offered to Honda, its partners and workforce, including comprehensive re-training packages, alternative employment opportunities and educational opportunities as well as well-being support.
- On-going work of sub-groups supporting Honda, its suppliers and workforce.
- Advice being offered to Honda employees and supply chain employees affected by the closure either for transitioning to alternative work, self-employment or in preparing for retirement.
- Upcoming virtual events for those affected by the Honda closure, including employment opportunities in other sectors.
- The role of the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership in funding Transport and Energy Studies to help Honda to attract high-value operators of the main site.
- The use of virtual information and pre-recorded events to help as many employees as possible to access information regardless of shift patterns.
- The role of other organisations, including The Local Enterprise Partnership and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector, in providing support to employees and their families.
- Work on the future use of the Honda site, including the Leader of the Council's approach to Tesla, and consideration of infrastructure changes that might be required to support a change of use. It was noted that Honda owned the site and any negotiated would be private.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

## **22. Town Centre Assets**

The Business and Economy Manager, Growth and Regeneration updating Members to update members on the use of Town Centre Assets for Development Schemes.

The Town Centre Management Team highlighted the following issues as part of their presentation and members' scrutiny:

- The Bus Boulevard scheme had been awarded £25m of funding from the Future High Street Fund, and would receive £3million from the Local Growth Fund as well as £5 million Council funding. This would help transform Fleming Way, improve the experience of people visiting the town centre by public transport and would support the wider Kimmerfields development.
- The Bus Boulevard scheme was complex with a number of utilities situated

beneath the public highway and pieces of privately owned land. Issues relating to this and the design were currently being finalised for tendering.

- The scheme was expected to commence in the spring of 2022 and would take approximately two years to complete.
- The Kimmerfields project would link the town's business centre with the retail space.
- Zurich had commenced their office project in July and was on programme with staff moving in in 2022.
- The Council had recently purchased the north part of the site to enable it to drive the project forward as a sole developer.
- A revised masterplan for Kimmerfields, Swindon's flagship regeneration scheme, was currently being produced. This mixed use development, including the cultural quarter in the north west of the plot, would deliver new opportunities to live, work and play in the town centre.
- The Council had applied for a £6million grant from the Town Investment Fund to support the Kimmerfields project infrastructure.
- The current bus station site would form part of the proposed cultural quarter.
- Work was on-going with a number of key partners, developers and stakeholders to produce a plan for the town's cultural assets which had identified five key projects which where a new 1,200 seat theatre, a renewed Swindon museum, a new art pavilion/gallery, a new media production centre and a new dance centre.
- These projects would bring economic, cultural and social benefits to the town and its residents and would widen the use of the town centre area. It would also make local and national organisations based within the town more visible and would be partly funded by the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership through a feasibility study and the production of an investment prospectus.
- A broad range of experts were involved in the planning and design of these projects.
- The finances of the project and future investment both through grant funding and Council investment.
- Work was on-going to find a future use for the Mechanics Institute and to be able to bring the building back into a usable state following an options appraisal in December 2019.
- A Hazardous Materials report is awaited on the Mechanics Institute on receipt of which a structural engineer will be appointed to undertake a structural survey, condition report and cost plan for the Mechanics Institute.
- Works to complete Phase 2 of The Carriage Works to deliver units 7&9 would be in contract in spring 2021 following a successful bid to the Getting Building Fund administered by the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Council providing an extra 15,000 sq foot of quality space.
- The Royal Agricultural University has taken occupation of unit 11 of the Carriage Work in September 2020.
- Phase 3 to upgrade the West Shed was being planned and grant funding sought from the Town Fund.
- The scheduling of phases 2, 3 and 4 of the Carriage Works and the type and mix of space available.
- The importance of the Bristol Street underpass to link the proposed cultural quarter and Outlet Centre.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

### **23. Visit Swindon update**

The Business and Economy Manager, Growth and Regeneration submitted a report setting out pre-COVID-19 plans and activity to promote Swindon as a visitor destination.

The Business and Economy Manager, Growth and Regeneration highlighted the following issues as part of their presentation and members' scrutiny:

- Most recent work had been to support and protect businesses involved in the tourism and leisure sectors which had been hardest hit by COVID-19 restrictions.
- Prior to COVID-19 work had commenced on a tourism strategy and had met with local tourism, sport and hospitality businesses and organisations to discuss creating a small tourism strategy, which could be delivered in partnership.
- Following productive discussions partners had agreed to help to provide web and social media content to promote the town. Due to the effect of the COVID pandemic this work had to be put on hold as many businesses have been closed or severely restricted for almost a year.
- The Council continued to work with Jazzbones (local creative marketing and design company) to promote the town. Jazzbones provides, maintains, and updates the Visit Swindon website and media accounts in partnership with the Council.
- A video had also been produced about leisure and historical facilities within the town.

Resolved – (1) That progress to date on Visit Swindon be noted.

(2) That it be noted that plans put on hold due to COVID-19, will be resumed at the appropriate time.

### **24. Work Programme 2020/21**

The Committee considered (a) an oral update on Apprenticeships, and (b) a report by the Chief Legal Officer setting out the Committee's proposed Work Programme for the Municipal Year 2020/21.

Resolved – (1) That the update on apprenticeships be noted.

(2) That the report be noted and Work Programme for the current Municipal Year be approved.



## RESOURCES AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**MONDAY, 25 JANUARY 2021**

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

Also in attendance were: Councillor Russell Holland (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Commercialisation, Education and Skills), Councillor Robert Jandy (Cabinet Member for Organisational Excellence) and Councillor Maureen Penny (Cabinet Member for Highways, Maintenance, and Waste Service).

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Oladapo Ibitoye.

### **13. 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.

### **14. Minutes**

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2020 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

### **15. Public Question Time**

There were no public questions submitted.

### **16. Impact of Covid-19 on the Council's Budgets**

The Committee considered a report, which provided an update on the impact of Covid-19 on the Council's budgets. Mr Mick Bowden, the Corporate Director of Finance and Assets, introduced the report and highlighted the following points:

- The overall summary of the key financial issues arising from Covid-19 which, though predominantly a public health issue, has had financial implications for residents, businesses and the Council.
- The type of spending the Council has undertaken, along with the funding received from Government, which can be broken down in to four main areas as follows:
  - Where the Council has acted as an agent on behalf of the Government to apply business rate relief, along with a number of various other business grant schemes, throughout the course of the pandemic.
  - Service related pressures, the most significant being the grant from Government to fund the programme of work by the Public Health Team (which has been leading the Council's response to the pandemic). This has included the work done on test and trace, and communications with residents, partners and employee organisations across the Borough.
  - Supporting the other financial pressures faced as a result of the impact on the Council's income from Covid-19. There are two strands to this support, the first being the Government scheme to reimburse proportionately losses

on the general sales, fees and charges income (up to 75% of lost income above the first 5% which the Council is expected to meet). The second strand is a scheme relating to the Collection Fund (where Council collects business rates income for those who do not have relief and council tax income from residents), which will largely follow the same 5% / 75% principles as set out above. The Committee noted that where the Council has less income than might have been anticipated normally there would be an ability to spread those losses over three years, but there will also be a degree of support to help meet those shortfalls.

- Cross-council funding received to address all other pressures (income types not caught by the sales, fees and charges scheme, and other service related pressures, particularly in social care, listed in the report) of which the Council has received £16.7m in total so far.
- That specific Council budget issues are not being predicted as a result of Covid-19 this financial year, which has been based on current forecasts, the pressures being faced, and the funding the Council has received.
- Looking forward, the Government has announced a funding package, which includes a grant of £5.7m for this Council for the next financial year (2021/22). The sales, fees and charges scheme will continue into the first quarter of the next financial year (up until 30 June 2021).
- That it is still uncertain as to what the pressures will be in the next financial year at both a national and local level. The Government has stated its intention to keep its support under review, which gives reassurance to local authorities in terms of any ability to plan normal council budgets whilst recognising the timing and extent of pressures from covid. The Council will be looking to work with other authorities on putting a case to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, which will subsequently put a case to the Treasury.

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

- How the vaccination programme should not have any significant impact on the Council's funding since it is the NHS leading on that.
- That no funding announcements are expected for the remainder of this financial year, and it currently being unknown whether the impact of this most recent lockdown may trigger additional payments.
- That the impact on the Council's budget as a result of Covid-19 is broadly neutral at the moment, with further funding expected in the current financial year from the existing schemes to recoup for lost income. The Committee noted that should matters become worse on non-income matters and the Council incurs unexpected additional costs, then claims would be submitted to Government for extra funding.
- That the Hardship Fund is specifically for residents, with £150 additional support for council tax support claimants having been automatically credited to accounts and some of the fund having been set aside for social inclusion. There are a number of other schemes for businesses covering business support grants and business rates relief.

Resolved – To note the funding received to meet the COVID-19 financial pressures faced by the Council.

The Committee considered a report that provided an update on key progress in the Human Resources and Organisational Development (HROD) service, including the Covid response and how HROD has supported staff. The report set out how the service has been supporting the organisation through Covid response and into recovery whilst maintaining business as usual activity over the last 12 months, and highlighted some areas that had been deprioritised across the Council as a result of Covid, any potential impact of that and forward plans to mitigate this. The report also gave a brief overview of performance, priority projects for both last year and the forthcoming year, and the progress made on initiatives relating to the workforce.

Ms Sonia Grewal, the Director of HROD, introduced the report and gave a presentation to the Committee (the slides from which are attached to these Minutes). Ms Grewal highlighted the following points:

- The last year has been exceptionally busy for the HROD teams in supporting the organisation and its staff through Covid related activities, as well as continuing to deliver core activities and key projects.
- A priority continues to be the health and wellbeing of staff and ensuring that sickness related absence is reduced.
- The largest demand seen during the last year has been across areas of mental health and wellbeing, with a range of support interventions having been delivered through digital platforms, which have been well received by staff across the Council.
- Significant progress has been made on the complex Pay and Reward project over the last six months. Part of the first phase has been the introduction of an agreed career family structure, and the matching of current roles across to the new framework is near completion.
- 'At Our Best' is the Council's large scale cultural programme, which includes a range of focussed leadership and learning and development programmes at all levels to move the Council's performance towards being as modern, efficient and effective as possible. Digital work on this has continued, but the face-to-face activity is currently paused.
- The Council's new Public Sector Equality Duty Report is due to be published later this month and captures some key achievements such as the introduction of 'All Together', the Council's new internal ambassador group, and the Unconscious Bias training programme that was rolled out across the Council late last year.
- Additional projects planned for the forthcoming year include:
  - The modernisation of HROD processes and systems to ensure they are as efficient and effective as they can be, and to maximise digital opportunities in order to support staff.
  - Resourcing and talent management, which focusses on strengthening the approach to attracting, recruiting, developing and retaining the best talent.
  - Estates optimisation, which builds on previous work around the buildings that staff work from. Every organisation will be facing a shift in the expectations from staff around how they can work in a modern, efficient and effective way, and the future of workplaces will look very different. Officers have started to identify the types of workers the Council has and the approaches needed to ensure that the appropriate work environments, technology and training are available to them.

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

- Regular surveys and interventions with staff have taken place to ensure that the staff has remained positive about working from home. Members of staff are missing the interaction with colleagues during face-to-face meetings and training but, on the whole, there has been positive feedback on the way in which IT has been set up and online meetings are being run, and the support provided to staff via webinars.
- How, for the purposes of writing the report, a Diversity Impact Assessment was not required. The Committee was reassured, however, that in terms of the wider work undertaken individual assessments had been completed which capture the requirements of staff.
- The package of support in place to provide additional support to frontline workers, which includes Care First, drop-in sessions, and ensuring that individual assessments are regularly completed which give staff an opportunity to address concerns. There are also a number of Mental Health Champions to whom frontline staff can.
- There has been an increase in the demand for, and uptake in, the support provided around mental health and wellbeing, and the demand for access to Care First has also increased. The trends in demand for these services will be circulated to members subsequent to the meeting.

Resolved – To note the contents of the report.

## **18. Reviewing 2020 Performance**

The Committee considered a report that reviewed performance in 2020 and covered the performance framework, an overview of the Council Pledges, key performance indicators, the impact of Covid-19 on performance reporting, and an overview of key research and consultation undertaken. The report summarised the work planned for the Data Strategy, and set out how robust performance management is crucial to ensuring the Council delivers against the Vision, Priorities and Pledges and delivers modern services in an efficient and financially sustainable way.

Mr Simon Phillips, the Head of Data Performance and Insight, introduced the report and highlighted the following points:

- The golden thread that exists from the Council Plan (which includes Priorities and Pledges) down through to Service Plans, and then to Performance Development Plans for staff, and how this is supported in the performance arena by a suite of scorecards and key performance indicators that are reported at a corporate / directorate / service area level.
- The impact on performance reporting from Covid-19 given the number of additional reporting requirements. Staff members were also seconded to the Public Health Team to help identify and understand the outbreaks occurring within the Borough.
- How progress against the Pledges is largely on track, with some having to be re-baselined in terms of deliverable timescales for a period of roughly three to six months as a result of Covid-19. These typically were for schemes dependent on the delivery of construction where the industry itself has been subject to disruptions.
- Making the performance management process more modern, efficient and effective by introducing a greater sophistication of analysis through new opportunities and tools available in the market place.
- The work being undertaken looking at the current people, skills, technology, policies

and processes at the Council which will instigate a number of further pieces of work developing performance arrangements within service areas.

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

- The significant manual input required to report on resident communications on a Ward basis and the difficulties this presents.
- That demand within the organisation for enhanced reporting, such as geo-spatial reporting by Wards, has been recognised and should be addressed as part of the Data Strategy. It should also be easier for staff and members to take a self-serve approach for their information needs in future.
- How members would find it helpful to see a dashboard layout when they log in to view their cases on the system.
- How, as part of the Data Strategy, the information needs of the organisation will be captured to ensure that the tooling, skills and capability are in place to serve requirements.
- How the answering of calls by the Call Centre staff within the service level agreement (SLA) has seen a large increase, with 77.6% answered within the SLA in November 2020 compared to 33.2% in November 2019, the explanation for which will be circulated to members subsequent to the meeting.

Resolved – To note the contents of the report.

## **19. 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 21<sup>st</sup> September 2020 and updated during the course of the Municipal Year.

The Committee agreed to add the following items to its Work Programme for the March 2021 meeting:

- Investigation in to the impact of Covid-19 on Leisure and the Oasis.
- A review of leisure lease agreements using GLL as a case study.

This page is intentionally left blank

## **Section 3**

# **Regulatory Committee Minutes**

This page is intentionally left blank



**PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**TUESDAY, 26 JANUARY 2021**

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Stan Pajak and Vera Tomlinson.

**36. 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.

**37. Public Question Time**

Mr Ben Williams asked a public question regarding parking standards for houses in multiple occupation. The Chair responded at the meeting indicating that Officers would respond to points raised during their presentation of the item.

**38. S /OUT/20/0356/TB - Outline application for the erection of 1 No. dwelling - access not reserved, 17 The Lodge, Swindon Road, Highworth**

In respect of application numbered S /OUT/20/0356/TB - Outline application for the erection of 1 No. dwelling - access not reserved, 17 The Lodge, Swindon Road, Highworth, Swindon the Committee considered: -

- (a) An application for permission to develop;
- (b) Recommendations of the Director of Strategic Development contained in the officer's report;
- (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>
Alan Bishop	Ward Councillor
Steve Weisinger	Ward Councillor
Dan Norman	Applicant

Councillors Alan Bishop, Malcolm Davies, Nick Martin and Jane Milner-Barry spoke in respect of this application.

The application can be broadly summarised as:

- The application sought outline planning permission with all matters reserved apart from access for one detached dwelling on land at 17 The Lodge, Swindon Road, Highworth.

- The dwelling will be located on part of the existing back garden to the south of the Lodge which is considered to be of significant local interest and therefore a heritage asset.
- The result of the siting of the dwelling so close to the gatehouse lodge building would be that the development would reduce the historic value of this heritage asset and its existing status.
- The development would also represent uncharacteristic development creating an out of keeping residential frontage and create an urbanising effect.
- Future residents of the dwelling would suffer from poor amenity with the small garden being overshadowed by nearby trees.

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

- The wider setting of the application was a town of 9,000-10,000 people which was rapidly growing, particularly to the east.
- The town clerk of Highworth Town Council had forwarded the application to 15 Town Councillors for comment, two supported it and three opposed it. Since this time many things had changed with a nearby development of 70 houses on the opposite side of the road being approved, this development would be visible from the main road.
- Road works including a nearby roundabout on the A361 had been agreed for a nearby development.
- The development approved opposite the site had also seen the removal of a hedge to facilitate that development.
- A further 12 existing houses are located approximately 250 yards to the south of the site.
- This meant that this was not a standalone development.
- There was also a 125 development planned to be sited off Shrivenham Road, a far busier road with an application for a further 250 properties off Shrivenham Road which was recommended for approval.
- The Lodge, bought in 1958 was small and had been the subject of a number of alterations/extensions including a kitchen, three bedrooms, on-suite shower room and a four car garage. This removed any historical value.
- It was understood that there were no heritage or highway objections.
- The dwelling would sit on a larger plot of land than other local developments provided with its own access off Swindon Road.
- The applicant would be willing to provide screening between the existing and proposed dwelling, providing privacy to both properties.
- The property would also count against the current shortfall in the required five year housing supply.
- The application had sought to address all planning issues raised.
- Given its local the proposed dwelling could not be considered unsustainable or to have an uncharacteristic impact on the locality.
- Before reaching this site the road had a varied ribbon development on the approach to Highworth which would not adversely impact the area.
- The existing building had lost most of its significance and charm due to the number of alterations had had been undertaken to it and would be further impacted by forthcoming developments in the vicinity, including one that was seven metres from the front boundary of the existing property.

- The officer's view on the amenity of the proposed property was subjective with the landscape a major benefit. There would also be natural light due to the positioning of the new building within the site.
- If required, the owner of the trees had offered to cut them back to the south, the trees to the east were much lower and were part of a Forestry Commission hardwood project; softwood in this area would be thinned out.
- The accepted development opposite would be in a similar situation regarding tree coverage on three of its sides, although a number of shielding trees had been removed.
- Access and egress from the site was supported by highways officers.
- The application was not contentious locally with no objections from neighbours and was intended to provide accommodation to the applicant's family.

Submissions opposing the application can be broadly summarised as:

- The loss of trees might harm the diversity of local wildlife; these were not currently protected.
- The approved development site opposite differs in that it is an allocated site within the Neighbourhood Plan Area and was a planned development.

Resolved – That the outline planning permission for the erection of 1 No. dwelling - access not reserved be granted subject to appropriate conditions, including drainage, approved by the Director of Strategic Development.

### Reasons

1. The current dwelling could not be considered a non-designated heritage asset due to development that has already taken place within its setting and the number and scale of alterations undertaken to it. Minimal weight was therefore applied to the impact on the non-designated heritage asset.
2. The development was not out of character or size with a number of dwellings and other buildings along the approach which comprised a ribbon development.
3. The site provided a plot size and amenity that was not out of character with other proposed developments in the vicinity.

### **39. S /20/1198/PEKO - Erection of 1no. dwelling (Retrospective), Costow Farm Cottages, 3 Track To Costow Lane, Wroughton**

In respect of application S /20/1198/PEKO - Erection of 1no. dwelling (Retrospective), Costow Farm Cottages, 3 Track To Costow Lane, Wroughton, Swindon the Committee considered: -

- (a) An application for permission to develop;
- (b) Recommendations of the Director of Strategic Development contained in the officer's report and provided verbally at the meeting;
- (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 Brian Ford	Ward Councillor

Councillor Cathy Martyn	Ward Councillor
Stuart Rackham	Agent
David Martyn	Parish Councillor

Councillors Nick Burns-Howell, Matthew Courtliff, Paul Dixon, Jenny Jefferies, Nick Martin, Carol Shelley and Peter Watts spoke in respect of this application.

The application can be broadly summarised as:

- The Application was brought to Committee at the request of Ward Councillors as there were specific local circumstances that should be considered by the Planning Committee.
- The proposal was for the retention of a new build dwelling at Costow Farm that was being built without planning permission.
- In 2018 permission had been given to the conversion of an office building, itself being a former agricultural building, into a dwelling under the prior approval regime.
- Instead the former building had been demolished and a new building erected in its place.
- There is no part of the former building to convert therefor the prior approval that was granted is extinguished and is no longer valid.
- The site does not have any consents or approvals that can be lawfully implemented for any purpose including residential use.
- The agent has provided Members with photographs of the former and current premises. The isolated location is also identified.
- Costow Farm is located well away from any settlement and not in a location where new settlement would be encouraged and as such is contrary to national and local planning policy.
- In correspondence the agent refers to the fall-back position but the former building has been removed and therefore the prior approval cannot be implemented there is no fall-back position or consents relating to that site that can be implemented.
- The Parish Council have not objected but expressed displeasure at the development and design of the building.
- Financial stress to the applicant was not a material planning consideration on this application.
- The design is inappropriate due to its scale and appearance with no empathy to its surrounding, and which would be more in place in a business park setting.
- An identical application to retain the building was refused in 2019 and this decision was not appealed; rather the application was re-submitted and is before Members.
- Planning history is a material consideration which is set out in paragraphs 10 to 18 of the report with this building appearing to be the third built on site with retrospective permission sought later. However, the fact that the application was retrospective was not a material planning consideration.
- Paragraph 12 shows the former office building now demolished took place without the benefit of planning permission and the applicant sought a Certificate of Lawfulness on the basis that it had remained undetected for 10 years.

- Paragraph 11 shows the details of an outbuilding erected and later converted into a separate dwelling without the benefit of planning permission, this too became a lawful dwelling through the passage of time.
- The lack of five year housing land supply did not mean that all planning policy should be set aside or that all applications for housing should be approved.
- There was a lack of exceptional circumstances to support planning policy being set aside.
- The dwelling represented an unacceptable and undesirable application set in countryside with which to set aside planning policy.

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

- The existing building was an improvement on that which it replaced.
- The agent's belief that some of the information within the report was inaccurate or incorrect.
- The dwelling was the same height and size as the building it replaced.
- The personal circumstances of the applicant and family, including a death in the family leaving the family in considerable distress and constituted exceptional circumstances.
- Paragraphs 7 to 18 in the applicant's agents letter could form the basis of conditions should the application be approved.
- Originally planning permission (Prior Approval) was granted for the conversion of an office building to a residential property; regardless of this being rendered void as the building has been demolished Swindon Borough Council has indicated but that permission for conversion and change of use that the site is suitable for residential accommodation.
- The existing building is no better or worse than the converted permission and therefore would likely be granted on appeal and so there is no reason for the refusal of the retrospective application for planning permission.
- The agents have worked with officers to ensure certain windows use obscured glass and landscaping has been changed to improve the appearance and to prevent any potential or perceived overlooking.
- The impact is no worse than if the office had been converted.
- There was no sense in demolishing the house.
- The applicant apologised for the retrospective application.
- The applicant's late husband oversaw the development of the dwelling and the applicant had to pick up outstanding planning and financial issues and that an outstanding loan on the property could only be repaid following the completion and sale of the dwelling.
- Prior approval had been granted for conversion from offices to a dwelling in 2018. The building was a metal shed of similar height and on the same footprint as the new dwelling.
- When the planning authority discharged the approval and approved materials of brick, tiles and upvc windows in 2019 this was interpreted by the former applicant and his architect as permission for a building on the footprint rather than a conversion with those approved materials.
- When this mistake became apparent, an application was immediately submitted and meeting regarding mitigation with officers and the parish was held. These included detailed landscaping, additional planting on the boundary and glazing to prevent overlooking nearby properties.

- The site is brownfield, previously developed land with a cluster of five houses and farm buildings.
- It is no higher and more dominant than the office building it replaced and occupies the same footprint.
- The new materials used in the construction of the building enhanced the character of the area in accordance with Policies SD1 and DE1.
- The Parish Council would have preferred the application to have been determined prior to commencement but any demolition would create significant financial hardship and distress to the applicant.
- Given the mitigating circumstances the Parish Council did not oppose the application.
- The previous building had no planning merit but the new dwelling could be made more rural in character with more sympathetic cladding materials.
- The building was not dominant when viewed from the road forming part of a cluster of buildings.
- It could be argued that there was a moral approval for residential dwelling on the site given previous approvals, although this would probably carry little legal weight in an appeal scenario.
- If the dwelling was in place for four years it would become legal although this timescale would be suspended during any enforcement appeal process.

Submissions opposing the application can be broadly summarised as:

- Development on the site constituted creeping development and showed a continual disregard of planning regulations.
- Although the Committee might sympathise with the applicant's personal circumstances only limited weight should be attributed to it as a material consideration as generally personal financial circumstances should not be considered.
- The misinterpretation of the agreement of materials as permission for development was not one that should have arisen either by the applicant or architect.
- Financial hardship should not form a precedent for retrospective planning permission.
- Planning permission is required when completely demolishing and rebuilding a building, even where the building is to be rebuilt exactly the same as that demolished; the application before members, if approved, would not result in the exact same building as that demolished.
- If planning permission were not granted it would be an unauthorised building requiring enforcement action to ensure the land is returned to its previous use.
- The applicants could appeal both a planning refusal and any subsequent enforcement action.
- Morality is not a material planning consideration.

Resolved – That, subject to agreeing appropriate alternative external cladding and/or rendering materials to be applied to the building to improve its appearance, planning permission be granted by the Director of Strategic Development.

Reasons for resolving to grant permission

1. That the visual impact of the development can be mitigated by the use of sympathetic cladding materials to make it acceptable within the character of the established setting and would meet the requirements of Paragraph 78 of the National Planning Policy Framework on sustainable housing in rural areas and enhance the local community.
2. That the property was materially the same height and occupied the same footprint as the previous building.
3. The building did not represent an overly dominant structure given its setting, nor did it erode the rural setting, when considering other properties in the ribbon development of the vicinity; other measures such as tree planting would further mitigate the development.
4. That subject to appropriate conditions and exterior materials the building would accord with the standards required in the Core Policies of the National Planning Policy Framework.
5. That if granted the application would help meet the Borough's shortfall in the five year housing land supply.
6. The lack of neighbour or Parish Council objections indicated that the amenity of neighbouring properties would not be unacceptably affected.

#### **40.                                      Parking Standards for New Development**

The Committee considered (a) Service Manager – Transport Planning, Development and Street Works Management seeking approval for an updated Parking Standards document, and (b) issues raised during Public Question Time relating to parking requirements for houses in multiple occupation.

Resolved - (1) That the further work undertaken to refine the Parking Standards Document (Supplementary Planning Document), along with the associated amendments to the document since it was presented to Planning Committee in May 2019 be noted.

(2) That the revised draft Parking Standards as a development management Document be approved.

(3) That the Service Manager - Transport Planning, Development and Street Works Management be authorised to make the necessary minor typographical corrections to the document required in advance of publication, in consultation with the Chair of the Planning Committee.

This page is intentionally left blank



**PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**TUESDAY, 9 FEBRUARY 2021**

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

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Vera Tomlinson.

**41. Declarations of Interest**

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

Councillor Jenny Jefferies made a declaration of interest in respect of application numbered S/18/1783/SASM as she had previously worked with the agent over ten years previously. As the interest was personal but not prejudicial the Councillor remained in the room during the discussion and voted on the application.

Councillor Tim Swinyard made a declaration of interest in respect of application numbered S/18/1783/SASM as he was a season ticket holder at Swindon Town Football Club. As the interest was personal but not prejudicial the Councillor remained in the room during the discussion and voted on the application.

**42. Minutes**

Resolved – That, subject to Minute 30(d) being amended to read:

“(d) Information from the applicant circulated to Members prior to the meeting, which the Director of Strategic Development advised could not be used as a reason for approval”, the minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020, be confirmed and signed.

**43. Public Question Time**

There were no public questions

**44. S/18/1783/SASM - Erection of 18no. dwellings with parking, open space, landscaping, cycle access and associated works, Twelve Oaks Golf Club, Lechlade Road, Highworth**

In respect of application numbered S/18/1783/SASM - Erection of 18no. dwellings with parking, open space, landscaping, cycle access and associated works, Twelve Oaks Golf Club, Lechlade Road, Highworth 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;
- (e) The comments at the meeting of the following interested persons:-

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address/Organisation</u>
Councillor Steve Weisinger	Ward Councillor
Councillor Alan Bishop	Ward Councillor
Councillor Maureen Penny	Ward Councillor
Danielle Wyatt Bond	Agent
Julie Murphy	Parish Councillor
Sarah Freeman	Local Resident

Councillors Matthew Courtliff, Nick Martin, Jane Milner-Barry, Stan Pajak and Carol Shelley spoke in respect of this application.

The application can be broadly summarised as:

- The application had been brought before the Committee at the request of Highworth Town Council for the reasons set out within the agenda report.
- The golf course and driving range closed in 2015 and the application sought to re-develop part of the club and construct 18 dwellings with vehicular access from Lechlade Road to the north of the site and separate pedestrian/cycleway access from Lechlade Road.
- A food retail store had been given planning permission to the south of the site and there are two detached dwellings facing Lechlade Road to the east.
- A change of use of land for the siting of 18 holiday let lodges had been allowed on appeal September 2015. The applicant's agent confirmed that this permission has been commenced and remains extant and could be fully implemented although no Certificate of Lawfulness application has been made to confirm this.
- However the appeal decision for the grant of planning permission for the holiday lets was based upon policies for rural tourism development and did not support the creation of housing in this location to which different policies applied.
- The development did not fit in any of the categories for development in the countryside permitted in the countryside by the Local Plan and therefore the principle of development is in conflict with the adopted Local Plan. It was necessary to ask whether any other material considerations outweigh that conflict with local policy and indicate in favour of the grant of permission.
- In relation to residential development in the countryside, Paragraph 78 of the National Planning Policy Framework supports housing in rural areas where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Officers considered that 18 dwellings on this site could contribute to enhancing the vitality of Highworth in terms of supporting local shops, services and schools.
- Paragraph 11 (part d) of the National Planning Policy Framework states that where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless, (i) the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development; or (ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.
- There were no areas or assets of particular importance which provide a clear reason for refusing the development in this location.

- The Council was unable to demonstrate a 5-year supply of housing; however, this position is under review and was not in itself a reason for approval, rather, those local policies which concern the provision of housing cannot alone be the basis of a refusal, and the proposal has to be assessed against the policies within the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole. However, the proposal would make a modest contribution to the Borough's housing supply.
- In this particular instance the element of Policy SD2 referring to settlement boundaries, specifically that pertaining to Highworth, cannot be considered as a reason for refusal alone. The contribution of the additional dwellings to the housing supply has to be balanced against any identified harm.
- Policy HA2 (Affordable Housing) requires 30% affordable housing on sites capable of accommodating 15 dwellings or more; this would require 5 or more affordable housing units and would need to be secured through a Section 106 Agreement. There is therefore some conflict with the Local Plan and National Planning Policy Framework policy in terms of the non-provision of affordable housing and a housing mix which does not respond to local need.
- However the Housing Officer did not consider that this location would be suitable for on- site provision and the type of housing under consideration but that an off- site contribution to affordable housing would be appropriate subject to the conclusions of the independent review of the Viability Assessment.
- Given national appeal decisions the development was not considered as being isolated new homes in the countryside.
- The land immediately to the south of the application site is allocated in the Local Plan for employment development and in part has Planning Permission for a supermarket.
- In addition planning permission for the Swindon Town Football Club Headquarters and Training centre to the north is subject to a resolution to approve by Planning Committee in October 2020 and shared the same vehicular access as the proposed development. Therefore although not adjacent to the development boundary the proposed residential development would not be isolated from the town of Highworth.
- The Inspector at the Hill Cottage, Broad Blunsdon appeal gave that conflict limited weight because of the existence of some transport choices for residents. The proposed development at Twelve Oaks would provide some level of choice to residents, who, through a proposed new footway/cycleway, would be able to walk to destinations in the town, including bus stops.
- In summary it is considered that the development of 18 dwellings would represent a modest contribution to the ability of the Council to demonstrate a five year housing land supply. In addition regarding residential development in the countryside, the National Planning Policy Framework supported housing in rural areas where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. It is considered that 18 dwellings on this site could contribute to enhancing the vitality of Highworth in terms of supporting local shops, services and schools. It could also afford an opportunity for the delivery of larger properties on larger plots to meet that part of the market under-provided in the Borough in general. Although very finely balanced in this respect the proposal in principle, in the absence of a 5 year housing land supply, is supported by officers.
- Highway Officers had no objection to the development subject to conditions, including the securing of a contribution to the travel plan through a Section 106 agreement.

- The development comprised 17 five bedroom dwellings and 1 four bed dwelling of traditional appearance comprising of four designs with garages.
- Overall the plan was considered appropriate given its location and the site was not considered suitable for a higher density scheme and was acceptable in respect of residential amenity.
- All matters relating to ecology, archaeology, landscape and drainage had been resolved subject to conditions.
- A viability study had indicated that a contribution in the region of £615,000 was achievable for off-site affordable housing as well as contributions for off-site open space provision.
- It was not considered that the adverse effect of granting permission would outweigh the benefits of granting the application. Therefore subject to the completion of a Section 106 agreement and planning obligations to off-site affordable housing, open space and the satisfactory completion of the travel plan and conditions the application was recommended for approval.

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

- The application had been redesigned to meet the planning requirements of the Council, including space and highways requirements.
- Over the previous eighteen months the applicant had worked closely with planning, highways and ecology officers to secure a positive application and planning permission.
- The application aimed to bring young families to the area, improving the local demographics and would complement neighbouring developments that had been approved.
- Paragraph 20 of the officer's report addressed how the application was in accordance with paragraph 78 of the National Planning Policy Framework and that it would contribute to the vitality of local amenities and business.
- Although the Housing Officer did not consider the location suitable for affordable housing a contribution had been agreed for provision outside of the site in a more appropriate location.
- Paragraph 27 of the report confirmed that the development would not constitute an isolated development and the applicant believed that it would add to the prosperity of the town.
- The development was designed to support young families.
- The Hill Cottage appeal decision indicated that government planning inspectors may be unlikely to consider concerns over access on foot, by bicycle and by public transport to be a reason on their own to withhold planning permission for new housing in these particular circumstances.
- Appropriate financial contributions had been identified through a viability study.
- The four and five bedroom homes would allow growing families to grow without the need to move and helped address housing mix within the Borough.

Submissions opposing the application can be broadly summarised as:

- The application was for the development of land outside of that allocated in the Neighbourhood Plan and within the Thames Valley Landscape Area and would adversely affect the area's perception of remoteness.
- Following the approval of a nearby equestrian centre and a football training centre, when added to by this development would increase traffic excessively.

- Should approval be given no work should be permitted on residential properties until work on the equestrian centre and a football training centre had been completed to ensure that those works were undertaken.
- The Parish Council had been unanimous in objecting to the application and its rationale was set out in paragraph 6 of the officer's report.
- The Borough Council had recently refused an application for a single dwelling, adjacent to a plot of 70 houses (elsewhere) and accessing the site from the same road because, it was outside of the Neighbourhood Plan and the Local Plan.
- Football related traffic and residential traffic would access the A361 from the same point and with a 50mph speed limit this would be potentially hazardous.
- The Local Government Association supported affordable housing and this development provided none on site contrary to Policy HA2 of the Local Plan, and the £615,000 contribution for off-site only went part way to meeting the affordable housing obligation.
- The applicant, Swindon Town football Club, was effectively seeking permission for a free standing footballer's village of eighteen large dwellings.
- The mix of dwellings did not respond to local needs and was situated well away from the existing residential built-up area of Highworth.
- The Town Council was disappointed with the positive recommendation and had serious concerns relating to the proposal; these reasons were set out within the report.
- The Town Council's concerns regarding the development included its location outside of the development boundary, the site not being allocated within the Neighbourhood Plan, the application running contrary to the Borough Council's Local Plan, the creation of an urban sprawl detracting from the hilltop status of the town, its isolation and lack of accessibility to the town, the additional scale of traffic on a busy and dangerous road, the visual impact on the landscape and setting of the town, and the development provided no benefits to the local community.
- The development was contrary to Local Plan Policies SD2, TR2 and EN5.
- The development was justified on the basis of other developments coming forward (a supermarket, business park and training facility) although there is no guarantee all of these will be built.
- Access to the site was questionable from a safety standpoint and therefore failed to meet Policy TR2.
- The replacement of holiday lets (supporting rural tourism) with large houses was not acceptable from a visual and landscaping perspective and was a harmful intrusion into the countryside and failed to protect the local landscape in accordance with Policy EN5 changing it forever.
- Should the application be granted, any Section 106 monies should be ring fenced to Highworth.
- The development was not sustainable and did not protect the rural character of the landscape and in line with national and local policies should not be granted approval. It would not add to the vitality of Highworth.
- The diverse nature and number of reasons opposing the application should support its refusal under Policy SD2.
- No travel plan had yet been produced for a busy, unlit and dangerous road and traffic from the site would further stretch the limited parking available in the town centre and local road infrastructure.

- The traffic survey was undertaken at a time that was not reflective of the peak usage, nor were the number of accidents in the vicinity reflected in the report.
- The Infrastructure Plan that is due to be presented to the Planning Committee suggests the infrastructure in Highworth is stretched and this development will add further demand.

### Summary

Members raised questions about the lack of affordable housing and why it could not be provided on site and questioned whether Councillors have sufficient grounds to refuse the application. The officer referred to the Viability Assessment and discussions with the Housing department in respect of finding a suitable site where the S106 monies could be spent elsewhere in the town. Councillor Courtliff stated that whilst young families may not be able to afford the proposed dwellings growing families may be able to do so. Councillor Milner-Barry raised the issue of it being outside the settlement boundary and accessed off a dangerous road and contributions not compelling.

Resolved - That the Director of Strategic Development be authorised to grant Planning Permission subject to:-

- (a) the completion of a legal agreement to secure planning obligations in respect of affordable housing and off-site open space and to secure the satisfactory completion of the Travel Plan, 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.

(Councillor Jenny Jefferies made a declaration of interest in respect of this application as she had previously worked with the agent over ten years previously. As the interest was personal but not prejudicial the Councillor remained in the room during the discussion and voted on the application.)

(Councillor Tim Swinyard made a declaration of interest in respect of this application as he was a season ticket holder at Swindon Town Football Club. As the interest was personal but not prejudicial the Councillor remained in the room during the discussion and voted on the application.)

**LICENSING COMMITTEE**

**THURSDAY, 14 JANUARY 2021**

PRESENT:- Councillors Vinay Manro (in the Chair), Abdul Amin, John Ballman, Alan Bishop, Steph Exell, Steve Heyes, Nick Martin, Stan Pajak, Bazil Solomon, Caryl Sydney-Smith, Rahul Tarar, Nadine Watts and Robert Wright.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Imtiyaz Shaikh and Vera Tomlinson.

**12. 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 Abdul Amin made a non prejudicial declaration of interest in respect of Agenda Items 5 and 6 as he was a licensee within the Borough.

**13. Public Question Time**

No public questions were received during the meeting.

**14. Minutes**

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2020, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**15. Statement of Licensing Policy - Review**

The Council's Licensing Manager submitted a report setting out a review of the Council's Licensing Policy and seeking authorisation to go out to consultation in accordance with Section 5(1) of the Licensing Act 2003.

Resolved – (1) That the Licensing Manager be authorised to arrange for the current Statement of Licensing Policy, attached at Appendix A of the report to be subject to public consultation for a six week period from 25 January to 8 March 2021 in accordance with the arrangements set out in paragraph 3.7 of the report.

(2) That the Licensing Manager be authorised, in liaison with the Chair of the Licensing Committee, to make any minor typographical amendments to the document prior to consultation if required

(3) That the Licensing Manager report the outcomes of the consultation exercise to the Licensing Committee at the earliest opportunity.

(Councillor Abdul Amin made a non prejudicial declaration of interest in respect of this item as he was a licensee within the Borough.)

**16. Cumulative Impact Policy - Review**

The Committee considered (a) a report of the Council's Licensing Manager setting out a review of a Cumulative Impact Policy, set out within the report, and seeking authorisation to undertake a consultation exercise for its renewal in accordance with

Sections 5 and 5A of the Licensing Act 2003, and (b) information provided by Sargent Neighbour and PC Diffin (Wiltshire Constabulary) in respect of the operation of the current Cumulative Impact Policy.

Resolved – (1) That the Licensing Manager be authorised to arrange for the current Cumulative Impact Policy, attached at Appendix A to the report, to be the subject of public consultation for a six week period from 25 January 2021 to 8 March 2021.

(2) That the Licensing Manager, be authorised in liaison with the Chair of the Licensing Committee to make any minor typographical amendments to the document prior to consultation if required.

(3) That the updated evidence provided from Wiltshire Police in support of retaining the current Cumulative Impact Policy be noted.

(4) That the Licensing Manager report the outcomes of the consultation exercise, and evidence collated as part of the cumulative impact assessment, to the Licensing Committee at the earliest opportunity following the closure of the consultation period.

(Councillor Abdul Amin made a non prejudicial declaration of interest in respect of this item as he was a licensee within the Borough.)



## EDUCATION TRANSPORT APPEALS SUB-COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 13 JANUARY 2021

PRESENT:- Councillors Jenny Jefferies, Carol Shelley and Caryl Sydney-Smith.

### **26. Appointment of Chair**

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

### **27. 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.

### **28. Minutes**

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2020 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

### **29. 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 30 refers).

### **30. 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 – That due to the exceptional circumstances set out in the appeal, the appeal for AG be upheld and a place on a school bus or a shared taxi (opt for cheaper option) be provided.

This page is intentionally left blank

## **Section 4**

# **Children Services Bodies Minutes**

This page is intentionally left blank

**SCHOOLS FORUM**

**TUESDAY, 19 JANUARY 2021**

**PRESENT: -**

**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
Gary Evans	Mainstream Academy
Fiona Godfrey	Mainstream Academy
James Povoas	Mainstream Academy
Karen Pyman	Mainstream Academy
Jackie Smith	Special Academy

**Non-School Representatives**

Andrew Henstridge	Clifton Diocese
Margaret Clark	Diocese of Bristol
Jo Morris Golds	Early Years
Debbie Brown	Trade Unions

**Officers:**

Annette Perrington	Director: Inclusion and Achievement
Gareth Cheal	Head of Access and School Partnerships
Dawn Sexstone	Head of Finance, Children Services
Danielle Maundrell	Strategic Commissioner, Early Years
Jo Goodwin	Interim SEND Lead, Education

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

Apologies for absence were received from Nick Capstick, Sherryl Bareham and Clive Zimmerman.

**20. Declaration 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.

**21. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**22.****Public Question Time**

In accordance with Standing Order 28, Mr Alastair Dixon-Patterson of Lydiard Park Academy, Swindon, submitted written questions regarding the Wellbeing for Education Grant.

The Chair thanked Mr Dixon-Patterson for his question and said that a written response had been provided and circulated to all members. Mr Dixon-Patterson requested further clarification to the responses circulated. The Director: Inclusion and Achievement responded at the meeting but due to the nature of the subject, undertook to provide an in-depth written response.

**23.****2021/22 Dedicated Schools Grant Settlement - Early Years Block**

The Strategic Commissioner: Early Years and Childcare submitted a report providing Schools Forum members with an update on the estimated value of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and other funding that will be available in 2021/22. She explained that there are four funding blocks in 2021/22. These were a) Schools, b) High Needs, c) Early Years and d) Central Schools Services Blocks. It was noted that the report submitted would only cover the Early Years Block.

The Strategic Commissioner: Early Years and Childcare drew attention to the 2021/22 Early Years block DSG settlement that was being revised by the Department for Education (DfE) in light of Early Years census information. It was noted that the final settlement will not be confirmed until July 2022. She advised that no increase for growth had been included within Swindon's 2 year old DSG funding and that the DfE has yet to confirm the funding rate for 3 and 4 year old provision.

Resolved – (1) That the Strategic Commissioner: Early Years and Childcare be requested to submit a report to Schools Forum on the 9<sup>th</sup> March 2021 giving an update on the DSG consultation undertaken.

(2) That further to (1) above, the Early Years Funding Settlement figures be included in the report.

**24.****Schools Block and Central School Services Block update including 2021/22 DSG Settlement and Budget**

The Head of Access and School Partnerships and the Head of Finance: Children Services submitted a joint report that updated members on the estimated value of the Dedicated Schools Grant ('DSG') and other funding that will be available in 2021/22. The Head of Finance: Children Services explained that there are four funding blocks in 2021/22, Schools, High Needs, Early Years and the Central Schools Services and that this report covered the Schools and Central School Services Blocks.

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

- The release of information on the Dedicated Schools Grant Settlement for 2021/22 on 17th December 2020 by the Education and Skills Funding Agency ('ESFA').
- How the Schools Block DSG 2021/22 funding can be accurately determined due to

the funding calculation being based on the October 2020 school census, multiplied by two DfE determined rates of £4,345.79 per primary pupil or £5,702.33 per secondary pupil.

- How the Central School Services Block ('CSSB') contained the funding for the Local Authority's (LA's) statutory services for all pupils in maintained schools and academies and also covered the funding for the centrally retained budgets for Admissions, Schools Forum, Travellers Children, National Copyright licences for all schools and academies and the Equal Pay annual repayments.
- Whilst the report addressed various proposals, an adjustment to the settlement figures was expected.
- An update on the DSG balances and how the DfE's grant conditions affirm that the DSG must be treated by the LA as ring-fenced funding for specific educational purposes.
- That the notional SEN calculation also includes all High Needs pupils funded by the LA irrespective of pupils having an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or not.
- That details of the 2021/22 pupil led funding calculation will be provided to March 2021 Schools Forum and that these will exclude Rates, Lump Sum and PFI allocations.
- The process of de-delegation where funding is deducted from maintained schools budgets to provide services centrally.
- Meetings were held in November 2020 to establish the local funding formula to be used to calculate 2021/22 budgets for maintained mainstream schools and mainstream academies. The proposals put forward were: (A) All pupil lead factors are paid at 100.316% of the National Funding Formula values; and (B) All pupil lead factors are paid at 100% of the National Funding Formula values and a transfer to the High Needs Block of £191.1k. Members agreed Option (A).

Following her presentation, the Head of Finance: Children Services, together with the Chair, Director: Inclusion and Achievement, and the Head of Access and School Partnership, responded to members' comments and questions in respect of the following matters:

- Budget implications for LA maintained schools due to de-delegation, particularly as the number of academies was now higher than in previous years.
- The meaning of trigger funding and how this would be allocated to assist start-up schools and those schools that have unplanned in-year pupil number increases.
- Comparison between 2021/22 and 2020/21 data for the central schools service block and that a) the increase was in line with current staffing and there were no inflationary increases for the Admissions block; b) Schools subscriptions and licences were up by 6.1k; and c) there was no increase in (i) Schools Forum administration, (ii) the Travellers' children and (iii) Equal Pay budgets.
- How the opportunity to re-finance or re-negotiate equal pay loans in light of the current low interest rate charges would be investigated.
- The robust challenge by maintained schools on the Education Function Charge (EFC) rates, particularly in addressing the effect on their budgets of the decrease in the number of maintained schools.
- How the EFC rates needed to be agreed at the meeting as the decision had to be included in the Authority Proforma Tool sent to the Education and Skills Funding Agency.
- How further discussions between the LA and the maintained schools group needs to be undertaken to review items included in the EFC.

Councillor Russell Holland, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Commercialisation, Education and Skills, updated the Forum on the current position of the general fund and the position of the Council's finances. He explained that a draft budget went to Cabinet on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020 and there was a budget gap of £3.8m for 2021/2022. There has been positive movement since then and an update was given at the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021. An updated budget will be submitted to the Cabinet meeting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2021 for consideration and a final report will then be submitted at the Council meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2021 for ratification. He advised that due to the increase in demand for Adult Social Care, coupled with Children Services, there will be a corresponding effect on Council tax.

Resolved – (1) That Schools Forum notes that:

- a) The estimated DSG balance at the end of 2020/21 is expected to be a deficit of £4.125m.
- b) Swindon expects to receive a total DSG settlement of £216.131m in 2021/22.
- c) The Notional SEN funding budget for 2021/22 is a total of £0.326m.
- d) The value of the Statutory Services for all pupils budget.

(2) That School Forum agrees:

- a) That with regards to schools formula funding factors for 2021/22, Option "A" be implemented for Primary Maintained Schools only (Option A - All pupil lead factors are paid at 100.316% of the National Funding Formula values).
- b) The following de-delegations for one year from April 2021:
  - i. Swindon Association of Primary Headteachers (SAPH) - Free School Meal eligibility administration will be charged at £4.80 per pupil in 2021/22 and is supported until 31st March 2022.
  - ii. SAPH and Association of Swindon Special Schools Headteachers - Trade Union release time will be charged at £1.25 per pupil in 2021/22 and is supported until 31st March 2022
  - iii. SAPH Maintained schools only – Social, Emotional and Mental health team will be charged at £15.40 per primary pupil in 2021/22 for the first 6 referrals and is supported until 31st March 2022.
- c) A total 2021/22 pupil growth budget of £0.479m.
- d) The Admission budget
- e) The Schools subscription and Licences budget
- f) The Schools Forum budget
- g) The Travellers Children budget
- h) The Equal Pay budget
- i) The Education Funding Charge is set at 20/21 flat rate of £17.00 maintained school per pupil rate.

(3) That, with regards to de-delegation, an update regarding the financial impact on maintained schools following the increase in the number of academies be included in a School Forum report at its meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

(4) That information regarding the feasibility of re-brokering equal pay loans be circulated before the next meeting of the Forum.

(5) That the Head of Finance - Children Services, be requested to add EFC as an agenda item at a meeting of the maintained schools group.

(6) That the Head of Finance - Children Services be requested to invite Kate Higham to the next meeting of the maintained schools group.



## **25. High Needs Block update including 2021/22 Dedicated Schools Grant Settlement and Budget**

The Head of Statutory SEND Services: Children Services and the Head of Finance: Children Services submitted a joint report updating members on the estimated value of the Dedicated Schools Grant ('DSG') and other funding that will be available in 2021/22. The Head of Statutory SEND Services explained that there are four funding blocks in 2021/22, Schools, High Needs, Early Years and the Central Schools Services and that this report focused on the High Needs funding block. She explained that the report includes expenditure proposals for all High Needs block funded items including: High Needs students in Mainstream schools, Special schools, Special Resource Provisions, Alternative Provision, Post-16 and Further Education, Independent and Non-Maintained Special Schools and Other Commissioned High Needs provision.

The Head of Statutory SEND Services: Children Services presented the report and drew the following key issues to member's attention:

- The 2021/22 High needs proposals reflecting a budget of £38.8m funding of £37.5m, leaving a pressure of £1.37m on the budget.
- How Swindon had a higher than national average of pupils with an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP).
- Since 2015, there has been a 71% increase in requests for EHCP assessments against an annual national average increase of 10%.
- The need for special school and special resources provision for the anticipated 900 commissioned places during 2021/22.
- How the current band and supplement values had remained static since 2019/20. This reflected the financial impact of Covid on school's budget and that some schools will not be able to reflect a surplus in their budget.
- Following the LA's modelling of the 2021/22 budgets, no minimum funding guarantee had been identified.
- The LA centrally held alternative provision funding amounted to £2.95m.
- No changes to the advisory teachers high needs services were proposed for 2021/22.
- The variance in the mainstream high needs budget had resulted from the increase in specialist provision for the high needs cohort.

Following her presentation, the Head of Statutory SEND Services: Children Services, together with the Chair, responded to members' comments and questions in respect of the following matters:

- The savings to be made by the therapeutic paediatric services, particularly relating to administration fees and how resources were being better utilised to deliver services directly to children.
- The work being undertaken by the high needs sensory teachers.
- The LA support for the Inclusion Forum.
- The centrally retained high needs budgets following the move for some services to be taken back in-house by the LA, enabling improved cooperation with and access to specialists, ensuring improved service provision.
- The increase in the number of children with special needs transferring to a special school in September 2021 and how discussions were taking place with the special schools to ensure they were able to meet the increase in demand and meet the

needs of the young people.

- How, with regards to out of borough education fees, an income of £0.193m was being received from the Children's Social Care and Health general fund after criteria had been met.

Resolved – That the Head of Statutory SEND Services: Children Services, be requested to submit an update at the next meeting of the Forum on special schools and special resource provision.

## **26. Dedicated Schools Grant Recovery Plan**

The Head of Access and School Partnerships submitted a report updating Schools Forum on the current and projected position for the Swindon Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and that it included an update on progress made by the DSG Recovery Plan Task and Finish Groups following their meetings. He explained that the report supports the SEND and Inclusion Strategy, the Written Statement of Action and that the proposals contained a link to the 3-year action plan agreed by the Strategic SEND Board. Members noted the partnership approach between parents and carers, leaders in education across all settings in Swindon, political leaders, officers and members of Schools Forum is recognised as essential to systematically address the need to achieve a balanced DSG budget position. This approach is necessary to ensure a sustainable, fair and equitable use of all budgets.

The Head of Access and School Partnerships gave a presentation (attached) and drew the following key issues to member's attention:

- The DSG funding allocation by block for 2020/21.
- That there would be an increase of £3.335m increase for the 2021/22 High Needs funding.
- A breakdown of pressures contributing to the DSG deficit.
- The successful strategic approach taken to address issues within the high needs block has resulted in increased confidence for parents, investment over the past years in special resource provision and the launch of the outreach pilot in September 2020.
- A breakdown of key activities, including their progress, 2020/21 budget and potential savings for each activity.
- Activities identified through the Task and Finish group to address in-year pressures.
- The discussion by the Task and Finish groups regarding the allocation of funding to be received following the disapplication request to the ESFA and the various options on its use to be considered by Schools Forum.
- The current success in various area by implementing a strategic approach and the actions within the five year plan to continue building on this success.

The Chair advised that this report was for information only as it was still within the consultation period and stated that this was submitted in order to be transparent in terms of sharing thoughts and processes.

The Director: Inclusion and Achievement confirmed that the activities that were presented at the meeting will form part of a diversity impact assessment and welcomed member's views regarding the proposal being recommended. She thanked those members who took part in the start and finish group meetings for their contribution in drawing up the strategic

plan and proposals for the disapplication funding.

Resolved – (1) To note that Members of Schools Forum considered and commented on changes to the recommendations for the strategic aims and priorities for the DSG Recovery Plan and the actions to deliver a balanced budget.

(2) That further to (1) above, members of Schools Forum considered long-term proposals for the use of disapplication funding and to support:

- An approach to the DfE/ESFA requesting an extension of the recovery plan from 3 to 5 years.
- A 2-year investment funding into the activities in paragraph 3.21.
- Actions to be taken against the deficit in years 3 to 5.
- A future contribution level of 0.5%, 0.25% or another level.

(3) That further to (1) above, members of Schools Forum considered activities and the potential savings against the DSG deficit.

(4) That members of Schools Forum be requested to submit their thoughts or ideas on the items discussed in this report to the Head of Access and School Partnerships.

## **27. Schools Forum Membership Update**

The Head of Access and School Partnership submitted a report on Schools Forum membership. He gave a presentation and explained that a Schools Forum should reflect the profile of education provision across the local authority to ensure that there is no in-built bias towards any one phase or group. He explained that the Local Authority had conducted a short review of Schools Forum through a Task and Finish group to ensure that the current membership is appropriate in the light of the evolving balance of schools in Swindon and with regards to the 2002 Education Act, Schools Forum (England) regulations 2012 and Schools Forum Operational and Good Practice Guide 2015. He further explained that the Task and Finish group considered the proportion of, membership, different categories of membership and the terms of office for the Schools Forum. He confirmed that the group agreed that the current membership would remain the same and requested that an invitation be extended to the Swindon SEND Families Voice.

In response to concerns raised regarding representation from the secondary sector, the Director: Inclusion and Achievement confirmed that the task and finish group members did not feel there was mis-representation of secondary schools in terms of members and pupils and that membership properly represented the range of schools in Swindon.

Resolved – That School Forum agrees:

(1) That the number of school representative remains as per the current membership.

(2) That a representative from Swindon SEND Families Voice be invited onto the Forum to specifically to advise on the use of high needs funding and impact upon children with SEND.

## **28. Status of Requests for Action and / or Information**

Please note attached.

This page is intentionally left blank

## **Section 5**

# **Minutes of Wiltshire Police and Crime Panel and Fire Authority**

This page is intentionally left blank



**DORSET & WILTSHIRE  
FIRE AND RESCUE  
AUTHORITY**

**Minutes of the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority meeting at 10:00 hours on 10 December 2020. This was an online meeting held in Microsoft Teams and open to all members of the public.**

Members present:

Cllr Rebecca Knox (Chair)  
Cllr Steve Baron  
Cllr Richard Biggs  
Cllr Malcolm Davies  
Cllr Peter Hutton  
Cllr Bob Jones  
Cllr Christopher Newbury  
Cllr Garry Perkins  
Cllr Kevin Small

Cllr Byron Quayle (Vice Chair)  
Cllr Pete Barrow  
Cllr Ernie Clark  
Cllr Paul Hilliard  
Cllr Toby Johnson  
Cllr Brian Mattock  
Cllr Paul Oatway  
Cllr Pip Ridout  
Cllr Ann Stribley

Officer attendance:

Chief Fire Officer (CFO), Ben Ansell  
Clerk and Monitoring Officer, Jonathan Mair  
Head of Financial Services and Treasurer, Ian Cotter  
Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO), Derek James  
Director of People Services, Jenny Long  
Director of Community Safety, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO), Jim Mahoney  
Director of Service Support, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO), Byron Standen  
Head of Information and Communications, Vikki Shearing  
Head of Strategic Planning & Corporate Assurance, Jill McCrae  
Area Manager (AM), Service Support, Andy Cole  
Area Manager (AM), Prevention and Protection, Marc House  
Democratic Services Support, Steph Howard  
Strategic Planning Manager, Clare Morgan

**20/36 Welcome**

- 20/36.1 The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed attendees. Members introduced themselves and the Chair gave a roll call of officers in attendance.

*Initials* \_\_\_\_\_

**20/37 Apologies**

20/37.1 No apologies were received.

**20/38 Code of Conduct, Declarations of Interest and notifications of any other business**

20/38.1 The Chair asked the meeting for any disclosures of pecuniary interests under the Localism Act. There were no disclosures.

**20/39 Review the minutes of the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority meeting on 30 September 2020 and any matters arising**

20/39.1 The Chair asked Members to review and approve the minutes from the last meeting.

20/39.2 Chief Fire Officer (CFO) Ben Ansell confirmed that all actions had been completed. He drew Members' attention to paragraph 20/28 on pages 19 and 20, noting that both himself and the Chair attended the Wiltshire Public Service Board and formally presented the Annual Report which was very well received.

20/39.3 **RESOLVED that the minutes be confirmed without amendment and signed by the Chair as a correct record.**

**20/40 Receive the minutes of the Finance & Audit Committee meeting on 17 September 2020 and a verbal update from the 4 December meeting**

20/40.1 Cllr Bob Jones presented the minutes of the meeting of 17 September, which he confirmed had been signed as a true record. He gave a verbal update on the meeting of the 4 December 2020. Cllr Bob Jones explained that the draft Statement of Accounts for 2019-20 were approved in principle at the meeting on 17 September, subject to there being no material change. However, Cllr Bob Jones confirmed that the financial disclosures in the statements had been amended to reflect adjusted liabilities, therefore, the Accounts were brought back to the 4 December meeting and subsequently approved.

20/40.2 **RESOLVED: Members received the minutes of the Finance & Audit Committee meeting of 17 September 2020 and a verbal update from the meeting of 4 December.**

**20/41 Treasury Management Mid-year report 2020-21**

20/41.1 The Head of Financial Services & Treasurer, Ian Cotter presented the report which covered performance for the six months to 30 September 2020. He drew Members' attention to page 3 paragraph 3, explaining that the Authority

*Initials* \_\_\_\_\_



had outstanding borrowing of £14.174m and confirmed that no new loans were taken out in the first six months of this financial year. In part, this was due to the significant increase in Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) borrowing rates in October 2019 and the impact of the pandemic, which has meant that capital programme spending was less than previously anticipated. He advised Members that the recent Spending Review announcement had included a reversal of the previous PWLB rate increase. He also explained that a provision for borrowing a further £4m had been included which was reflected in the revised estimates for the Prudential Indicators and shown as new debt, referring to the table on page 11.

20/41.2 Ian Cotter reported that investment activity was impacted due to the reduction in the base rates, so any actual returns the Service would see were very low. He reported that expectations were that interest rates and inflation will remain low, so any investment returns would be minimal. However, with low interest rates on long-term borrowing as well, overall financial pressures on the Authority would be eased.

20/41.3 **RESOLVED: Members noted the Treasury Management position as at 30 September 2020.**

## **20/42 Six-month Service Performance Review - presentation**

20/42.1 CFO Ben Ansell reported the performance review for quarter 1 and 2 in a new presentation format. He reminded Members that quarterly scrutiny of Service performance was carried out. Strategic priorities 1, 2 and 3 were scrutinised by the four Local Performance and Scrutiny Committees and the Finance & Audit Committee scrutinised priorities 4 and 5. He explained that the presentation would provide an overall performance update against the five strategic priorities.

20/42.2 The presentation was made available on the Service's website within the Fire and Rescue Authority meeting pages and found here:  
<https://www.dwfire.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/20-42-Presentation-slides-Six-month-Performance-Review-2020-21.pdf>.

20/42.3 A discussion took place with Members over the format of this report and how, in the future, it should be presented.

20/42.4 **RESOLVED: Members noted and commented on the performance of the Service over the past six-months.**

Initials \_\_\_\_\_

**20/43 Update from the Local Performance & Scrutiny Committees - verbal**

20/43.1 The Chairs of each Local Performance & Scrutiny (LPS) Committee provided their feedback from the meetings held in November 2020.

**20/43.2 Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole**

Cllr Stribley provided feedback from the Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole LPS Committee. She reported that the presentation given by Officers was well received by the Committee and informative. Cllr Stribley highlighted the Members' continued satisfaction with the work carried out by Officers during the pandemic restrictions, especially the Premise Information Plates and Safe Drive Stay Alive (SDSA) initiatives.

**20/43.3 Dorset**

Cllr Barrow provided feedback on the Dorset LPS Committee meeting. He reported the Service continued to perform well across the Dorset area. He highlighted that Members were pleased the teams continued to develop educational packages for schools. Cllr Barrow reported that Members were complimentary of the revised virtual SDSA course, that staff continued to be trained throughout the pandemic and work collaboratively with partners. He confirmed there were no issues that would negatively impact corporate targets.

**20/43.4 Swindon**

Cllr Garry Perkins provided feedback from the Swindon LPS Committee. Highlights of the meeting were achieving 100% performance against the attendance time target for first appliances at sleeping risk incidents, and that savings had been achieved due to the new initiative for responding to unwanted automatic fire alarm calls.

**20/43.5 Wiltshire**

Cllr Paul Oatway provided feedback from the Wiltshire LPS Committee. He highlighted the positive work of the Service generally, the ongoing Coronavirus work being carried out under the tripartite agreement, and the continued delivery of education during the pandemic through virtual packages for schools and the Ministry of Defence. Cllr Oatway also confirmed that the Committee had been updated on some significant emergency incidents within the Wiltshire area.

**20/43.6 RESOLVED: Members noted the verbal updates from all LPS Committee meetings.**

**20/44 Members podcast**

20/44.1 CFO Ben Ansell introduced the Members podcast.

*Initials* \_\_\_\_\_

**20/45      Date of next meeting**

20/45.1      The Chair confirmed the date of the next Authority meeting as 11 February 2021 from 10am.

Meeting closed at 11.53hrs

*Signed:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Initials* \_\_\_\_\_

This page is intentionally left blank

## **Wiltshire Police and Crime Panel**

---

### **MINUTES OF THE WILTSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL MEETING HELD ON 10 DECEMBER 2020 AT ON-LINE MEETING.**

#### **Present:**

Cllr Junab Ali, Cllr Abdul Amin, Maime Beasant, Cllr Alan Bishop, Cllr Richard Britton, Cllr Ross Henning, Cllr Vinay Manro, Cllr Brian Mathew, Cllr Tom Rounds, Cllr Jonathon Seed and Cllr John Smale

#### **Also Present:**

Angus Macpherson – Police and Crime Commissioner  
Kier Pritchard – Chief Constable  
Kieran Kilgallen - OPCC  
Chris McMullin - OPCC

---

#### **99     Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Anna Richardson

#### **100    Minutes and matters arising**

##### **Decision:**

- The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 3 September 2020 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

#### **101    Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest

#### **102    Chairman's Announcements**

That Cllr Brian Mathew – Wiltshire Council had replaced Cllr Peter Hutton – Wiltshire Council as a panel member. Cllr Hutton was thanked by the Chairman for his attendance and contribution to the panel

#### **103    Public Participation**

There was no public participation

104 **Chief Constable update**

Kier Pritchard – Chief Constable, Wiltshire Police gave a presentation on the key operational challenges over last 12 months for Wiltshire Police.

*A copy of the presentation was circulated to the PCP members*

Points raised by the members included:

- Moral – that there was low moral across all police forces, Wiltshire Police were faring better than most forces. Wiltshire Police were facing challenges including pay freezes, lack of numbers, as well as permanent major incidents since 2018. It was felt that a lot was expected from our officers, but a good level good level of support for police mental health was being provided.
- Tasers – that a solid roll out of taser training was being carried out.
- Virtual crime scene reporting – what the feedback from both officers and residents had been pretty positive. Feedback, received indicated that Virtual crime scene reporting had been a useful experience, but Wiltshire Police were surprised by the low uptake.  
That technology had moved quickly during the pandemic, and that it would be useful to offer a blended approach going forward.
- That the level of sickness and availability of police resources to provide a viable presence with absentees due to psychological raised concerns. Levels of sickness had improved during the pandemic.  
That Wiltshire Police were in a stronger position than may forces.
- On the whole it was felt that Wiltshire Police had done a good job of policing during the pandemic.

The Chairman thanked the Chief Constable and his staff for their hard work during the pandemic.

105 **Quarterly data (Q2)- Risk / Performance / Finance / Complaints**

The Commissioner presented his report for data reported for Quarter 2 - 2020/2021 Performance Overview which was contained in the agenda pack.

Points made included:

- That the volume of Crime for Wiltshire in terms of national position remained low

- On average, for Wiltshire 54.56 recorded crimes per 1000 population, was significantly below the Most Similar Group average of 68.97
- An average reported national decrease was 6.9%; South West Region average reduction of 5.5%; MSG average reduction of 5.6%. Just five forces nationally reported an increase within the same time period
- That Wiltshire Police reported a 10.1% reduction in volume of crime for the 12 months to Sep-20 compared to the previous 12 months
- That all crime groups were being reported within the volumes of what was considered to within the bounds of statistically normal
- That Wiltshire's crime commission was demonstrating a long term decreasing trend with no recent monthly exceptions since the first government lockdown March-2020
- That Crime recording compliance for Sept-20 was 93.9% for quarter 2 2020/2021 and remained consistently high
- That the Positive Outcome rate had returned to statistically normal levels at 16.7% for the rolling 12 months to Sep-20

#### Priority 1

Points made included:

Recording compliance issues – that Wiltshire Police were confident that the figures given were accurate.

Hate Crime – that Independent Assessment – how and why would be included as part of the Performance Overview data under Priority one at future meetings.

Speed enforcement – that auto speed enforcement was an excellent way to generate large amounts of data. That this would be beneficial to community SpeedWatch groups. That a more detailed report would be beneficial and the experiences of other forces that are using them. *Note: A report on road safety work in Wiltshire and Swindon was scheduled for the March 2021 meeting.*

Special Constables – It was felt that there appeared to be regular pauses in recruitment, with many then becoming regular officers or getting posted into community policing teams.

Call answering rates – That Wiltshire Police should not use the pandemic as an excuse for falling statistics for the answering rate. The importance of not undoing the good work that had been carried out over the last two years or so.

Priority 2 – no comments

### Priority 3

Domestic Abuse – IQuanta statistical information, Wiltshire Police were confident with accuracy of the data

Domestic Abuse - Wiltshire Police scrutiny panels – how many and what do they cover. *Note it was agreed that Wiltshire Police OPCC would put together a list of all its scrutiny panels and circulate to the Panel members.*

### Priority 4

Complaints – That most complaints relate to single officers.

Psychological absences – the importance of detailed checks on possible applicants as to how they may fare under stress as a Police officer.

### Risk register

The Panel noted the Risk register.

### Community Policing Model

Chris McMullin outlined the report in the agenda pack that provided a summary of the performance measures for the PCC and Police and Crime panel related to areas of Community Policing Teams (CPT). The report continued to assess working days “lost” to short- and medium-term sickness and annual leave and calculated how many FTE posts this equated too.

The Panel noted the report and the updated measures for monitoring CPT resourcing levels

The Chairman thanked Chris McMullin for a useful report.

## 106 **Operation Uplift progress**

Chris McMullin outlined the report which provided an update on the progress of Operation Uplift.

Points made included:

- That the Force remained on track to deliver the requirements of Uplift and increase the number of officers in Wiltshire Police. Plans were in place to achieve the first phase of the requirement by the end of 2020/21, and assessments by the national programme team placed Wiltshire in a good position.



- As raised within the previous paper presented at the September Panel meeting, the national Uplift programme was an opportunity to increase resourcing and re-invest in policing further to a ten-year period of austerity and a fall in police officer numbers.
- That the service had been asked to introduce 2,000 extra officers by March 2020, rising to 6,000 extra officers by March 2021.
- That Wiltshire had been allocated 49 extra officers by March 2021. High level assumptions continued to be made on financial and workforce plans for beyond March 2021, which suggested a total number of 147 extra officers by March 2023. This was likely to change as more information became available about regional and national functions receiving a proportion of the officer uplift.
- In order to achieve the uplift numbers, in addition to maintaining the numbers required due to officers leaving the organisation, Wiltshire would be required to recruit approximately over 400 officers up to March 2023. It was estimated at this stage that one in eight applicants get through the process, resulting in needing approximately 3,200 applicants for police officer jobs in Wiltshire – this was a huge requirement.

The report was noted by the Panel

The Chairman thanked Chris McMullin for the report.

#### 107 **Key impacts of COVID on Wiltshire Police**

At the request of the PCP chairman, Cllr Richard Britton, the report contained in the agenda pack provided a brief update on the organisational impact of COVID 19 on Wiltshire Police, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) and victim services, since the previous Police and Crime Panel (PCP) on 3 September 2020.

It was felt that the Chief Constable had covered this item under his update presentation.

The Commissioner thanked Police staff for their hard work and cooperation during the pandemic.

The report was noted by the Panel.

#### 108 **Members Questions**

The members questions document contained in the agenda pack was noted.

Cllr Jonathon Seed circulated photos re his question dated 17 September 2020, contained in the members questions document.

*On Sunday 13 September, Wiltshire Police Officers failed to break up an illegal gathering in Trowbridge choosing instead to watch the 500 people, some 470 more than the legal limit for an outside gathering, and the non compliance with social distancing rules. The local police commander said that, "it would have been unsafe for Officers to break up the gathering" and "in line with the way we police large gatherings, Officers monitored the incident..."*

It was agreed that the Commissioner would re-look at Cllr Seed's question, photos of the event in question would again be submitted to the OPCC.

#### 109 **Future meeting dates**

The future meeting dates were noted as:

- Thursday 7 January 2021
- Thursday 4 February 2021
- Thursday 18 March 2021

(Duration of meeting: 10.00 am - 1.05 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Kevin Fielding of Democratic Services, direct line 01249 706612 EXT 21612, e-mail [kevin.fielding@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:kevin.fielding@wiltshire.gov.uk)

Press enquiries to Communications, direct line (01225) 713114/713115

## **Wiltshire Police and Crime Panel**

---

### **MINUTES OF THE WILTSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL MEETING HELD ON 7 JANUARY 2021**

#### **ON-LINE MEETING**

##### **Present:**

Cllr Junab Ali, Cllr Abdul Amin, Maime Beasant, Cllr Alan Bishop, Cllr Richard Britton, Cllr Ross Henning, Cllr Vinay Manro, Cllr Brian Mathew, Anna Richardson, Cllr Tom Rounds, Cllr Jonathon Seed and Cllr John Smale

##### **Also Present:**

Angus Macpherson – Police & Crime Commissioner  
Naji Darwish – OPCC  
Clive Barker – OPCC

Kevin Fielding – Wiltshire Council

---

#### **110 Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies.

#### **111 Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **112 Chairman's Announcements**

That the panel members should remember that they were at the meeting to listen to the Commissioner's proposals, and not to approve the precept.

#### **113 Public Participation**

Two written questions were received from Paul Sunners - Chair Wiltshire NHW Association

*What support has been given by the PCC to the Chief Constable's statement in respect of all front line workers being prioritised to receive the Covid vaccine?*

*The need for enforcement of lockdown restrictions seems only likely to increase with obvious implications for the police as the prime law-enforcement agency.*

*Following Brexit, the view held generally is that the UK is less secure as British policing has now forfeited some of its most valuable tools including the Schengen Information System, a vast database providing real-time alerts to locate terrorists and serious criminals. The UK has also lost its influential seat at the EU's policing agency, Europol. In light of these changes, does the PCC anticipate any practical difficulties for Wiltshire Police in crime prevention and detection as it relates to multi-national collaboration?*

It was agreed that written replies would be provided by the OPCC.

#### 114 **PCC Budget 2021/22 and MTFS**

The Commissioner introduced his draft budget settlement 2021-22 and outlined how he was consulting on three options:

- Option A – To increase council tax by £15 per annum (6.9%)
- Option B – To increase council tax by £12 per annum (5.5%)
- Option C – To increase council tax by £10 per annum (4.6%)

The Commissioner reported that on the 17 December the provisional settlement was announced by the government. This settlement confirmed that PCCs would be able to increase Band D Council Tax by £15 and that £415m had been provided to fund an additional 6,000 officers nationally. Whilst this was good news the usual letter to PCCs identifying requirements and detailing the settlement was still outstanding, when this was received it may lead to some changes in the proposals.

The MTFS forecasts the estimated financial position over the next 4 years and the impact this had on the Commissioner's ability to commission services. There remains no certainty surrounding future years funding, this was a one-year settlement.

With the lack of funding information, it meant that financial planning beyond 2020-21 was more uncertain than usual. The impact of Covid 19 on the economy and future settlements alongside the government's desire to continue increasing officers made estimating future settlements very difficult. These risks were in the Commissioner's mind as he looked to secure the viability of the service in future years.

Clive Barker - Chief Financial Officer, explained the detail of the budget proposals and the Medium Term Financial Strategy and answered questions.

The chairman thanked Clive Barker for a comprehensive and professional paper and presentation.

## **Decision**

- **That the Wiltshire Police and Crime Panel endorses the Commissioner's decision to consult on Option A - To increase council tax by £15 per annum (6.9%)**

The Chairman thanked the Commissioner and Clive Barker for their reports.

### **115 Forward Work Plan**

The Forward Work Plan was noted with the following additions:

#### **March**

- Commissioning budgets and delivery objectives
- Road safety work in Wiltshire & Swindon

#### **June**

- Complaints system, including local performance and governance mechanisms

### **116 Future meeting dates**

Future meeting dates were:

- Thursday 4 February 2021 - 10am (On-Line meeting)
- Thursday 18 March 2021 - 10am (On-Line meeting)

### **117 Any Other Business**

Cllr Jonathon Seed advised that he was still waiting for a satisfactory response from the Commissioner on the question re the car show in Trowbridge which was emailed to the OPCC on the 18 September 2020. Cllr Seed had again raised the same question at the 14 December PCP meeting.

*It was agreed that the Commissioner would re-visit Cllr Seed's question and a response would be given.*

Brian Mathew advised that re Cllr Richard Britton's question re auto speed watch cameras which was emailed to the OPCC on the 5 January 2021, that a local company had a product that Wiltshire Police may be interested in using.

*It was agreed that the OPCC would get back to the panel on this matter. The Deputy Police Commissioner was aware of this company and its product.*

118 **Close**

(Duration of meeting: 10.00 - 10.50 am)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Kevin Fielding of Democratic Services, direct line 01249 706612 EXT 21612, e-mail [kevin.fielding@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:kevin.fielding@wiltshire.gov.uk)

Press enquiries to Communications, direct line (01225) 713114/713115

## **Wiltshire Police and Crime Panel**

---

### **MINUTES OF THE WILTSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL**

#### **ON-LINE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 4 FEBRUARY 2021**

##### **Present:**

Cllr Junab Ali, Cllr Abdul Amin, Mamie Beasant, Cllr Alan Bishop, Cllr Richard Britton (Chairman), Cllr Brian Mathew, Cllr Tom Rounds, Cllr Jonathon Seed and Cllr John Smale

##### **Also Present:**

Angus Macpherson – Police & Crime Commissioner  
Kieran Kilgallen – OPCC  
Clive Barker – OPCC

---

#### **119    Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr Ross Henning – Wiltshire Council and Anna Richardson – Co-opted Independent member

#### **120    Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest

#### **121    Chairman's Announcements**

The chairman explained that he intended to consider the results of the PCC's consultation on the precept before the precept paper itself

#### **122    Public Participation**

There was no public participation

## 123 **Formal consideration of PCC Precept proposal**

The Commissioner outlined the report on the consultation process which sought to provide the Police and Crime Panel (PCP) with a summary of the PCC's public consultation and the public's view on the proposed £15 a year, per household, increase in the policing precept on a band D property.

Points made included:

- The public consultation on the policing precept began at 11am on Tuesday 5 January 2021 and closed on Tuesday 2 February.
- The consultation strategy was built on experience in recent years and the increased public awareness. This year, the priority had been to direct all consultation responses through a short and simple survey. The survey consulted on views on the proposed increase, priorities and age/location of those taking part.
- A range of channels were used to raise awareness and encourage completion and feedback, including; high-profile media campaign launching the precept proposal, social media awareness campaign, video setting out the proposal, community messaging, engagement with local media and press statements, PCC and D/PCC virtual engagement with local communities at area boards and parish councils in January.
- Despite the response rate being down on last year, the Commissioner was pleased with the response from the public and the comments received. In total, 1526 responses to the consultation were received.

The PCP were concerned re the low response rate and hoped that the OPCC would look into how the response rate particularly amongst young people could be improved for future consultations.

Clive Barker - Chief Finance Officer outlined the Proposed Precept for 2021-22 report.

Points made included:

- That in January 2021 the PCP were presented a report that identified the initial thinking on the 2021-22 budget and the draft MTFS (Medium Term Financial Strategy).
- The paper identified that whilst overall funding levels had been announced no specific information had been received, this remained the case.
- During January more information had been released on the Local Council Tax support grant and the Local Tax Income Guarantee for



2020-21. Information on these was included in the paper however there remained great uncertainty surrounding their implementation.

### **Central Grant**

- That as detailed in the January paper the grant for Wiltshire had risen by £3.383m to £72.944m (excluding Pensions Specific Grant). This was Wiltshire's portion of the £415m provided by the government to fund nationally an additional 6,000 officers. No funding had been provided to finance any inflation or growth pressures.

### **Local Funding Grants**

- That Local funding was the sum of the precept plus collection funds.
- With the pandemic and higher unemployment the cost of local support had increased. This and a reduction in payments, which in the long term may be collectable, had led to deficits being forecasted.
- To assist precepting authorities the government had proposed two financial support schemes.

The OPCC advised that the savings contained in the report were achievable.

Cllr Abdul Amin raised concerns that the precept continued to be raised year on year and that many residents living in his ward in Swindon could not afford the increases.

The Commissioner advised that local MPs had shown little appetite to fight Wiltshire Police's corner re its lack of central government funding. Only one MP had shown any interest in pursuing this issue.

*It was agreed that the Commissioner would consider the level of policing in Cllr Amin's wards in Swindon and update Cllr Amin directly on this matter*

*It was agreed that the OPCC would provide details of the Top slicing costs of membership support to Cllr Jonathon Seed*

### **Decision**

- **That the PCP supported the Commissioner's precept proposal to increase council tax by £15 per annum (6.9%)**

The Chairman thanked the Panel members and Commissioner for their input in the discussion

124 **Forward Work Plan**

The 2021 Forward Work Plan was noted

125 **Future meeting dates**

The next meeting of the Police and Crime Panel will be on Thursday 18 March 2021 at 10am

Future meeting dates were:

- Thursday 10 June 2021 – 10am
- Thursday 9 September 2021 – 10am
- Thursday 9 December 2021 – 10am

126 **Close**

(Duration of meeting: 10.00 - 11.00 am)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Kevin Fielding of Democratic Services, direct line 01249 706612 EXT 21612, e-mail [kevin.fielding@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:kevin.fielding@wiltshire.gov.uk)

Press enquiries to Communications, direct line (01225) 713114/713115