

Overview and Scrutiny Select Committee

Tuesday 14 July 2020 at 6.00pm

This meeting will be held remotely via MS Teams with audio access to the public for the items via registered dial-in only

Members of the Committee

Councillors J Furey (Chairman), T Gracey (Vice-Chairman), A Alderson, M Brierley, J Broadhead, S Dennett, R Edis, L Gillham and S Mackay.

In accordance with Standing Order 29.1, any Member of the Council may obtain remote access via MS Teams to the meeting of this Committee, but may speak only with the permission of the Chairman of the Committee, if they are not a member of this Committee.

AGENDA

Notes:

- 1) Any report on the Agenda involving confidential information (as defined by section 100A(3) of the Local Government Act 1972) must be discussed in private. Any report involving exempt information (as defined by section 100I of the Local Government Act 1972), whether it appears in Part 1 or Part 2 below, may be discussed in private but only if the Overview and Scrutiny Select Committee so resolves.
- 2) The relevant 'background papers' are listed after each report in Part 1. Enquiries about any of the Agenda reports and background papers should be directed in the first instance to **Mr J Gurmin, Democratic Services Section, Law and Government Business Centre, Runnymede Civic Centre, Station Road, Addlestone (Tel: Direct Line: 01932 425624). (Email: john.gurmin@runnymede.gov.uk)**.
- 3) Agendas and Minutes are available on a subscription basis. For details, please ring Mr B A Fleckney on 01932 425620. Agendas and Minutes for all the Council's Committees may also be viewed on www.runnymede.gov.uk.

'see overleaf'

4) If you wish to hear the debate for the items on this Agenda by audio via MS Teams you must register by 10.00 am on the day of the meeting with the Democratic Services Team by emailing your name and contact number to be used to dial-in to democratic.services@runnymede.gov.uk

5) **Audio-Recording of Meeting**

As this meeting will be held remotely via MS Teams, you may only record the audio of this meeting. The Council will not be recording any remote meetings.

LIST OF MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

PART I

Matters in respect of which reports have been made available for public inspection

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Matters involving Exempt or Confidential Information in respect of which reports have not been made available for public inspection.

- a) Exempt Information
(No reports to be considered under this heading)
- b) Confidential Information
(No reports to be considered under this heading)

1. **NOTIFICATION OF CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**
2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

If Members have an interest in an item, please record the interest on the form circulated with this Agenda and e-mail it to the Legal Representative or Democratic Services Officer by 5.00 p.m. on the day of the meeting. **Members are advised to contact the Council's Legal section prior to the meeting if they wish to seek advice on a potential interest.**

Members are reminded that a non-pecuniary interest includes their appointment by the Council as the Council's representative to an outside body and that this should be declared. Membership of an outside body in their private capacity as a director, trustee, committee member or in another position of influence thereon **should be regarded as a disclosable pecuniary interest, as should an appointment to an outside body by the Council as a trustee.**

Members who have previously declared interests which are recorded in the Minutes to be considered at this meeting need not repeat the declaration when obtaining remote access to the meeting. Members need take no further action unless the item in which they have an interest becomes the subject of debate, in which event the Member must withdraw from the meeting if the interest is a disclosable pecuniary interest or if the interest could reasonably be regarded as so significant as to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest.

4. **CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE REVIEW (CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE – SARAH WALSH)**

Synopsis of report:

At its meeting on 2 July 2020, the Committee agreed Terms of Reference to set the framework for it to review the Council's response to the coronavirus pandemic in a series of three meetings. This report relates to those matters which the Committee agreed should be considered at its second meeting.

Recommendation:

The Committee considers whether it wishes to amend or make any additional recommendations in the Debrief Report for the Corporate Management Committee following the evidence heard at this meeting on any of the following elements of the Council's response:

1. **The speed at which the Welfare Cell was set up.**
2. **The operational links of the cell with calls to vulnerable people, shielded list (proactive support) as well as Customer Services (reactive request support).**
3. **The range of matters dealt with.**
4. **How the support requests were managed.**
5. **The effectiveness of the partnership working with the Foodbank.**
6. **The effectiveness of the partnership working with the official volunteers.**

1. **Context of report**

- 1.1 COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. It spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

- 1.2 Most people infected with the COVID-19 virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment. Older people, and those with underlying medical problems like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer are more likely to develop serious illness and there is no specific curative treatment for coronavirus infection at present.
- 1.3 It is hard to establish precise death rates from COVID-19 given the lack of definitive data on infection rate but estimates range between less than 1% to well over 3%. It is also becoming apparent that rates vary according many different factors such as age and possibly black and minority ethnic (BAME) background.
- 1.4 On the 16 March the Prime Minister requested people avoid pubs, bars, restaurants and clubs, effectively establishing the concept of social distancing in the UK. On 23 March, the Prime Minister announced a series of further measures to restrict the spread of the coronavirus, which in effect put the UK on its current “lockdown”. People were required to stay at home unless travelling to and from work, where the work could not be done from home; for shopping for essentials, for medical needs, or for one form of exercise a day. The Government directed all non-essential shops to close, and closed schools apart from the children of key workers and those who are most vulnerable including disabled and those with Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs).
- 1.5 In addition to the general lockdown, a smaller subset of the population with serious underlying health conditions were advised to ‘shield’ themselves for a period of 12 weeks. Individuals who are shielding are advised to stay at home at all times and avoid any face-to-face contact. The Government identified a group of around 1.5 million people who this applies to and wrote to all. In addition, it encouraged any person who believed they had a serious health condition but who had not received a letter to contact their GP to discuss any concerns they had.
- 1.6 On 19 March, the Surrey Local Resilience Forum declared a Major Incident.
- 1.7 These measures required an urgent response from the Council to put in place provisions which support residents and businesses. This included measures directly prescribed by central Government, such as the Business Support Grant, as well as discretionary measures like the proactive calls to vulnerable residents and the support provided to Runnymede Foodbank and volunteer groups.
- 1.8 The highest number of new cases using a three day average occurred in mid-April and on 30 April, Prime Minister Boris Johnson declared that [the UK was “past the peak”](#) of the coronavirus outbreak.
- 1.9 Following the peak there have been a series of lockdown easing measures as the country tries to safely recover. These have included lifting restrictions on: the number of times people are allowed to exercise in a day, the distance people can travel to exercise, the activities people can take part in to exercise/recreate, the allowance of one person to meet a person from another household outdoors, and a phasing of ‘non-essential’ business sectors returning to work.

2. **Report**

- 2.1 As of 8 June 2020, it is reported there have been 40,597 COVID-related deaths in the UK.
- 2.2 At its meeting on 2 July 2020, the Committee noted that given the significant impact the Coronavirus pandemic had had on the local communities and Council operations and finances, Officers and Members considered that it would be appropriate for the Council’s response to the pandemic to be reviewed.

- 2.3 The Committee agreed that it would be appropriate for it to undertake this review and agreed to hold three meetings in order to complete the review.
- 2.4 The first of these three meetings took place on 2 July 2020 when the Committee agreed its Terms of Reference and received a draft Coronavirus Response Debrief Report which provided an overview of the response and lessons learnt.
- 2.5 This meeting is the second of three meetings that the Committee agreed should be held to review the Council's response. The full Terms of Reference for the review can be found at Appendix 'A'. The Committee agreed that at this meeting it should review the Council's internal welfare support operations and the external welfare support in partnership with Foodbank and Voluntary Support North Surrey.
- 2.6 At this second meeting the Terms of Reference state that the Committee will review:
- The speed at which the Welfare Cell was set up.
 - The operational links of the cell with calls to vulnerable people, shielded list (proactive support) as well as Customer Services (reactive request support)
 - The range of matters dealt with.
 - How the support requests were managed.
 - The effectiveness of the partnership working with the Foodbank.
 - The effectiveness of the partnership working with the official volunteers.
 - Testimonies from recipients.
- 2.7 In order to undertake the elements of the review referred to at paragraphs 2.5 and 2.6 above, the Committee agreed that the following Council Officers should be witnesses – Darren Williams, Linda Norman, Peter Burke and Sarah Walsh and that the following Council Members should be witnesses – Cllr Theresa Burton and Cllr Nigel King. The Committee also agreed to invite an official volunteer to be a witness and Mr Spencer Doran has kindly agreed to take on this role. It was also agreed that the Committee should receive testimonies from people who have received support from the Council during the coronavirus pandemic and these testimonies are attached at Appendix 'B'.

3. **Policy framework implications**

- 3.1 The Council's pandemic response activities primarily support the Corporate Theme of Supporting Local People.

4. **Resource implications**

- 4.1 The financial impact of the pandemic for the Council is being reviewed on an ongoing basis by Corporate Management Committee in separate reports.

(To resolve)

Background papers

None stated

TERMS OF REFERENCE: CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE REVIEW

Purpose of the review:

Given the significant impact the Coronavirus pandemic has had on the communities of Runnymede and the Council's operations and finances, Officers and Members feel it would be appropriate for the response to be reviewed.

Objectives of the review

Meeting 1

- 1) The Overview and Scrutiny Select Committee will review the Coronavirus Response Debrief Report and have the opportunity to advise Officers which elements they would like to understand in further detail for the subsequent meetings.

Witnesses: Paul Turrell, Sarah Walsh, and Nick Moon (Applied Resilience)

Meeting 2

- 2) The Overview and Scrutiny Select Committee will review:
 - The speed at which the Welfare Cell was set up.
 - The operational links of the cell with calls to vulnerable people, shielded list (proactive support) as well as Customer Services (reactive request support)
 - The range of matters dealt with.
 - How the support requests were managed.
 - The effectiveness of the partnership working with the Foodbank.
 - The effectiveness of the partnership working with the official volunteers.
 - Testimonies from recipients.

Witnesses: Darren Williams, Linda Norman, Peter Burke, Sarah Walsh, Cllr Theresa Burton Cllr Nigel King, Mr Spencer Doran - an official volunteer, *plus testimonies from recipients*

Meeting 3

- 3) The Overview and Scrutiny Select Committee will review:
 - The essential services chosen and how they were managed differently.
 - HR-related policies to manage staff during the pandemic.
 - Agile working effectiveness.
 - Internal governance and monitoring.
 - Wrap up of any other matters

Witnesses: Cllr Prescott – Leader of the Council, Paul Turrell, Fiona Skene, Linda Norman, Sarah Walsh

Testimonies from people receiving support from RBC during the coronavirus pandemic

The following testimonies were received over the telephone after randomly selecting a number of proactive welfare call recipients and users of the Meals on Wheels service. Each person was asked to provide a comment on the specific support they had received from RBC during the pandemic.

Proactive welfare calls support

RBC's vulnerable people list

Recipient	Comment
Ian, age 57, Addlestone	"Most definitely made a difference, looked forward to the weekly calls, as I was on my own."
David, age 88, Addlestone	"Thought good idea for somebody capturing my back. I live on my own, comforting getting weekly calls."
Catherine, age 77, Addlestone	"At the beginning when I didn't know what was happening – when everyone was shopping for toilet rolls, it was comforting to know somebody bothering, but by week 4, whilst I did appreciate them, I didn't need it any more. I think it was excellent, I'm sure a lot of people in a weaker state needed it. Ten out of ten!"
Jane, age declined, Chertsey	"James was marvellous! It reassured me that Runnymede cared enough weekly. (James) was happy and chatty and only thing he couldn't do was get a slot with [local supermarket], (he) resolved that and got a Runnymede helper to get shopping list and pay Runnymede. [Local supermarket] were appalling, had a letter this week from them but declined slots and wrote back to complain. Runnymede, all I've got is praise, James should be patted on the back for finding helpers – not awkward paying, as paid Runnymede, lady was fab, went back to get items if not available, sadly can't remember her name to thank her. Kept saying to James, the refuse workers, sewers etc needed praise, well done to key workers not mentioned. I am vulnerable."
Iris, age 93, Chertsey	"Yes, James called, out of it I did have weekly shops."

NHS Shielded list *(these calls were a slightly different format to the proactive calls given to RBC's existing vulnerable people list as the county council requested all councils use their provided script)*

Recipient	Comment
Carol, age 76, Egham	"I found it unusual, I'm not used to getting calls about a virus! Having weekly calls was good because I was not able to go out. It puts your mind at rest and reassures you."
Ruth, age 84, Ottershaw	"Fantastic! Can't speak highly enough, sooo good, really appreciated it. Great to check up, really appreciated it very much, couldn't fault it."
Liubuca, "young", Egham	"Good to speak to someone weekly to know someone is looking out for you."
Harry, "elderly", Staines	"Very helpful, one of the things – 'Andy' (RBC caller) - I was pleased with his advice, not only about the virus but other things around it."
Richard, age 47, Addlestone	"Nice to know someone to check up on you, reassuring."

Meals on Wheels service

Recipient	Recipient's comment	Next of kin's comment
Cecelia, age 84, Egham	"The meals are very good and substantial thank you very much."	"Thank you very much, this has given us peace of mind knowing Mum is getting at least one decent meal a day."
Eddie, age 88, Egham	"I'm very impressed with the meals except Fridays I do not like fish! My wife died and she did all the cooking so this has been a life saver. The guy that delivers is a really nice friendly bloke!!" <i>(The manager has since changed Eddie's meals choice so he does not get fish any more!)</i>	"This has been a huge weight off our minds; it is a real lifeline. We are so glad to know that he is eating. Thank you so much!"
Shirley, age 65, Egham	"The service and the meals are absolutely brilliant, it has surpassed all expectations. The drivers are fantastic and always check I am all right."	"I am very grateful this service has really helped us out when needed. It has given peace of mind."
Isabelle, age 75, Chertsey	"I am lost for words, I can not thank you enough. The meals are so very nice and tasty and I am so grateful to all of you."	"I am grateful for what you are doing for my Mum. Thank you."
Marcelle, age 88, Ottershaw	"The meals are quite good and well worth the money, I have had a stroke and find it difficult to cook. These meals are very convenient and it is lovely to talk to the driver as I am on my own and don't see anyone."	"Thank you these meals are really helping my Auntie and it is reassuring knowing the drivers keep an eye on her."
Keith, age 90, Ottershaw	"The meals are good but a bit small. It is nice I don't have to cook and the driver is always happy and smiley."	"Very impressed with the menu choices and pleased that he is getting something substantial to eat."

5. **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that –

the press and public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the following report (s) under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the report (s) in question would be likely to involve disclosure of exempt information of the description specified in appropriate paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Act.

(To resolve)

PART II

Matters involving Exempt or Confidential Information in respect of which reports have not been made available for public inspection

a) Exempt Information

(No reports to be considered under this heading)

b) Confidential Information

(No reports to be considered under this heading).