

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION
7 APRIL 2021
6.30 - 9.00 PM**



Present:

Councillors Angell (Chair), Virgo (Vice-Chair), Mrs Birch, Brossard, Gbadebo, Mrs Mattick, Mossom, Porter, Temperton and Tullett

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors Mrs McKenzie-Boyle and McLean

Executive Members Present:

Councillor Birch, Executive Member for Adult Services, Health and Housing

Also Present:

Councillor Brown

In attendance:

Kevin Gibbs, Executive Director: Delivery
Ann Moore, Head of Democratic and Registration Services
Rachel Wakefield, Urgent and Emergency Care Director
Matthew Staples, Programme Manager – 111 First

68. Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 17 February 2021 be approved as a correct record, and signed by the Chairman.

69. Declarations of Interest and Party Whip

There were no declarations made and no indications that members would be participating while under the party whip.

70. Urgent Items of Business

There were no items of urgent business.

71. Public Participation

No submissions had been made by members of the public under the Council's Public Participation Scheme for Overview and Scrutiny.

72. Scrutiny of new arrangements at Brants Bridge

The Commission invited guests to address the meeting before considering the following question: "Are the new arrangements at Brants Bridge meeting the needs of Bracknell Forest residents?"

Rachel Wakefield, Urgent and Emergency Care Director and Matthew Staples, Programme Manager – 111 First, NHS East Berkshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) addressed the meeting on the current arrangements in place at Brants Bridge,

the data these arrangements were based on and the care pathways currently available to Bracknell Forest Residents.

During the subsequent discussion the following points were made:

- Councillors were concerned that there would be confusion for residents of where to go and who to ring first. Residents may assume services would reopen as the country moved out of lockdown.
- Acknowledgement that although the national advertising campaign for 111 had been paused to focus on pandemic related messages, it was crucial for this to restart and be followed by local campaigns.
- Residents would not be turned away in an emergency situation but it may not be the appropriate location for them or have the equipment their situation required.
- Concerns were raised regarding the primary care telephony systems and access to GP appointments and it was accepted that success of new arrangements relied upon the delivery of primary care as the systems were interdependent.
- There were concerns that the new arrangements had been implemented based on data derived during the pandemic, that residents would feel uneasy with the transition in stressful situations and that behaviours would be difficult to change.
- The temporary health pathways had been in place since November 2020 and would be tested with residents and more services were coming online, for example quick access services for paediatrics. A review would be undertaken within six months and the Clinical Commissioning Group would be keen to consult with the Commission on proposals going forward.

The following points were made by Councillor Birch, Executive Member for Adult Services, Health and Housing that:

- communications would be shared by local authority channels and by councillors with their residents as community leaders;
- results from early pilots of the work in Portsmouth had been requested to be shared; and
- behaviour change was required across the whole of the delivery of health for these changes to be successful

The Chairman thanked the officers for addressing the meeting and invited them to attend again once the arrangements had been reviewed.

73. Environment and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel Report: Registered Providers of Social Housing Review

Councillor Porter, Chair of the Environment and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel presented the Commission with the findings and proposed recommendations within the Registered Providers (RPs) of Social Housing review report.

Councillor Porter advised that the report would be updated to read:

The panel noted some of the RPs' complaints procedures did not have timeframes for resolution. Residents described having to chase issues, multiple teams being involved, lost reports and long periods of no contact from their RP. The panel observed this can cause anxiety, uncertainty and in some cases has a significant effect on the mental health of residents. The panel recommends that all RP complaints procedures establish clear timelines for resolution to give residents more certainty that their concerns will be addressed.

During the discussion on the proposed report the following points were raised:

- training for councillors to outline paths and practical help for their residents in terms of housing issues was supported and should be offered on a regular basis as it was a complex topic
- the names of key contacts at registered providers would be shared with councillors
- consideration to be given within training to the changes due to the white paper [The charter for social housing residents: social housing white paper - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/92222/the-charter-for-social-housing-residents-social-housing-white-paper-2019.pdf)
- the Assistant Director: Customer Experience, Digital and ICT spoke to the panel and believed that the council and RPs could integrate technical systems to work better together
- all four RPs had good working relationships with the council's officers and wanted to extend that to councillors
- all RPs had over 80% satisfaction rating from their residents
- the Public Protection Partnership were able to help investigate issues with private landlords

The Commission endorsed the recommendations within the Registered Providers of Social Housing review report for submission to the Executive on 27 April 2021 and agreed to review the implementation of these recommendations within a year.

74. **Wellbeing and Finance Overview and Scrutiny Panel Report: Isolation and Loneliness**

Councillor Tullett, Chair of the Wellbeing and Finance Overview and Scrutiny Panel presented the Commission with the findings and proposed recommendations within the Isolation and Loneliness review report. He thanked everyone involved in the activity.

- Although the community hub was a positive way to provide integrated support there was concern raised by the Vice Chair of the Wellbeing and Finance Overview and Scrutiny Panel that voluntary bodies were run by volunteers and there should be caution around expecting them to do more.
- Clarification was sought on the barriers to car sharing schemes supporting each other. It was explained that these included a cost barrier, some services had gone out of use and how they find volunteers to provide the transport. It was noted that there was a misconception that the service was free but it was designed with safeguarding in mind.
- The Chair of the Wellbeing and Finance Overview and Scrutiny Panel stated transport was an issue for each person providing evidence, services were not integrated and the system was fractured. The Panel's recommendation was aimed at focusing on mobility around the borough and how to make the service better in a holistic way through a paid-for service.
- It was noted that the review had highlighted the lack of awareness of the resources available and a concern was raised that the proposed community hub could similarly be underutilised. The Chair of the Wellbeing and Finance Overview and Scrutiny Panel confirmed that the digital deficit was a feature of the review and discussions were about how to improve signposting to existing resources and full inclusion. He considered there were three elements e.g. digital library, one stop shop and the bringing together of the services but the Panel were keen for the Executive to further consider the solution and how this would be communicated.
- Councillor Birch, Executive Member for Adult Services, Health and Housing thanked the Panel for their report and commented that Isolation and Loneliness is a key priority for the Health and Wellbeing Board and the emerging health and wellbeing

strategy. The report would inform the creation of the strategy. There would be a workshop and opportunity for councillors to provide an input to this during the summer. A draft strategy was due to be available for consultation with partners in September.

- It was recognised that the range of those affected or at risk of becoming isolated and lonely had increased such as single parent families, teenagers and those on furlough.
- It was clarified that the Commission would consider the recommendation regarding a further mental health review once a scoping document had been drafted.

The Commission endorsed the recommendations within the Isolation and Loneliness review report for submission to the Executive on 27 April 2021.

75. **Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report**

The Commission considered the draft report for Council which covered overview and scrutiny activities across two municipal years including the implementation of the new approach.

It was noted that the report demonstrated the quality of work, learning of councillors and the impact of overview and scrutiny activities on the community. The volume of overview and scrutiny activities in the period covered by the report showed that councillors were taking the function seriously and were supported by officers. Every department had some activity and overview and scrutiny was contributing to changing delivery of services. It was agreed that future annual reports would capture the impact of reviews through the follow up activities discussed in earlier agenda items.

The Chair requested that:

- the order of the draft be altered to insert details of the Commission's responsibilities after the Statutory Scrutiny Officers' section
- the missing quotation in the final section be added or deleted

The Chair concluded by thanking the Governance and Scrutiny officers for their effort and support in delivering the review reports.

Subject to the changes above, the Commission endorsed the Annual report for submission to Council on 21 April 2021.

76. **Work Programme Update**

Each Panel Chair provided a verbal update on work programme progress.

Environment and Communities

The Food Waste in flats and HMOs with bulk bins review programme of activity had been scheduled from 15 April 2021 and evidence pack had been circulated. Councillors were encouraged to get involved in the sessions to consider how food waste could be implemented for flats and houses of multiple occupancy (HMOs).

Education, Skills and Growth

The Chair proposed that the Panel's next review should be on Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to understand the barriers preventing CIL allocation and spend.

The Panel would be following up on the recommendations made in the Careleavers review and progress would be reported back to a future Commission meeting.

Wellbeing and Finance

The Blue Badges review programme of activity had been scheduled between 21 April and 4 May and the evidence pack had been circulated. Councillors were encouraged to get involved in the sessions to investigate whether the process was fair for applicants with non-visible disabilities.

Overview and Scrutiny Commission

The Executive had agreed a cross-party Advisory Panel for Climate Change and this was due to be set up at Annual Council.

The Commission agreed that the proposed scope for the Community Infrastructure Levy review be approved and the review commissioned.

CHAIRMAN

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