

**MINUTES OF THE COVID-19 RECOVERY WORKING GROUP
HELD ON**

2 February 2021

6.30 - 7.32 pm

PRESENT

Committee Members

Councillor Eugenie Harvey (Chair)
Councillor Joel Charles
Councillor Tony Durcan
Councillor Tony Edwards
Councillor Maggie Hulcoop
Councillor Mark Ingall
Councillor Andrew Johnson
Councillor Nancy Watson

Officers

Andrew Bramidge, Head of Environment and Planning
Hannah Criddle, Governance Support Officer
Emma Crouch, Corporate Support Officer
Simon Freeman, Head of Finance and Deputy to the Chief Executive
Jane Greer, Head of Community Wellbeing
Brian Keane, Chief Executive
Andrew Murray, Head of Housing

65. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Simon Carter and Russell Perrin.

66. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

67. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting on 14 January 2021 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

68. **MATTERS ARISING**

Councillor Edwards asked whether free school meal arrangements had been made for the February half term. Brian Keane, Chief Executive, confirmed that arrangements had been made.

69. **UPDATE ON COVID-19 POSITION**

The Working Group received an update on the Covid-19 position in Harlow. Andrew Bramidge, Head of Environment and Planning, advised that both the infection rate and admissions to PAH had fallen.

Councillor Johnson advised he would be interested in the number of people from Harlow who had received the vaccine. Andrew Bramidge confirmed he was expecting to receive this information within the next week. Councillor Johnson was also interested in the vaccination rate in care homes. Brian Keane agreed to write to Essex County Council to request this information.

Councillor Ingall raised concerns over the new South African variant of the virus which had been detected in Broxbourne. Councillor Ingall was concerned that Broxbourne residents are advised to come to Harlow for their vaccine appointments and suggested that a satellite vaccine station was set up in Broxbourne to avoid Broxbourne residents travelling to Harlow. Brian Keane confirmed he was meeting with the CCG tomorrow and would discuss this issue.

The Working Group agreed that the re-opening of the playgrounds would be formally reviewed on 18 February. It was suggested that it may be more appropriate to re-open the playgrounds once the primary schools were also re-opened.

Councillor Johnson raised concerns on the lack of uptake from the black community for the vaccine. Councillor Johnson also noted that there was limited communications from the CCG on the vaccine. Brian Keane confirmed he would be meeting with the CCG shortly to discuss their communications.

Councillor Charles suggested that the Council had discussions with wider Essex groups to ensure the town was prepared in case of a sudden surge in infections. Brian Keane confirmed that the Council was working with other councils and the Essex Director of Public Health for planning for the future.

Councillor Johnson suggested that a route map for the escalation and de-escalation of services be created to provide some milestones for residents and to ensure transparency on decision making.

70. **FEEDBACK FROM BUSINESS FORUM**

Councillor Harvey confirmed the event was well attended and received. Both Covid-19 and Brexit were discussed. She confirmed the event was recorded and the link to the recording would be circulated to the Working Group. The date of the next meeting is 26 February 2021.

71. **MATTERS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

Councillor Harvey advised it had been agreed with Councillor Johnson and Brian Keane that smaller working groups would be coming together to focus on specific topics. The smaller sub groups would feed back to the main Working Group.

CHAIR OF THE WORKING GROUP