

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

2 March 2021

6.30 - 7.13 pm

PRESENT

Committee Members

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

Officers

Andrew Bramidge, Head of Environment and Planning
Hannah Criddle, Governance Support Officer
Simon Hill, Head of Governance
Brian Keane, Chief Executive
Lisa Thornett, Corporate Governance Support Officer

72. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Andrew Johnson and Russell Perrin.

73. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Simon Carter declared a pecuniary interest as a remunerated Council appointed Director of HTS (Property and Environment) Ltd.

Councillor Joel Charles declared a pecuniary interest as a remunerated Council appointed Director of HTS (Housing and Regeneration) Ltd.

74. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting on 2 February 2021 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

75. **MATTERS ARISING**

None.

76. **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 the infection rate had fallen to 89.6 per 100,000 and was now below the national average. Andrew Bramidge also confirmed that local vaccination figures were now being received on a weekly basis.

The Working Group expressed concerns over the vaccination figures for the BAME community. Andrew Bramidge advised that figures relating to this community were only available at a regional level. The Working Group noted the work of the Harlow Ethnic Minority Umbrella in reaching out to the more reluctant groups.

The Working Group was also concerned about the impact of Covid-19 on various economic factors including job losses, universal credit and free school meals. Andrew Bramidge advised that the data was available at a local level, however, the impact would most likely be felt at the end of the furlough scheme. Andrew Bramidge confirmed the data would be monitored and brought to the Working Group.

77. **RESPONSE TO THE GOVERNMENT'S COVID-19 ROADMAP**

Brian Keane, Chief Executive, advised the Working Group that, following the Government's four step road map being published, a road map for Council services re-opening was being produced. Brian Keane also confirmed that a separate HTS road map was being produced and that the HTS backlog would have a separate plan.

The Working Group noted that 2021 was the 50th anniversary of the Playhouse. Simon Hill, Head of Governance, confirmed celebrations would start in November 2021 and would run until November 2022.

Councillor Charles suggested that the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018-2028 needed updating in response to the pandemic.

Councillor Edwards also suggested that a non-online communication strategy was needed as some residents weren't online.

78. **MATTERS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

Brian Keane advised the Working Group that the funding that the CAB received for two debt advisors would cease at the end of March. The Working Group supported the Senior Management Board decision to provide funding to the CAB for a one year contract for two debt advisors.

Brian Keane also advised that the Covid-19 Recovery Working Group Sub Group met last week. The group would be meeting again to consider the strategic objectives of the Working Group and the road map for Council services. These items would be brought back to the Working Group.

CHAIR OF THE WORKING GROUP